

**ARCHITECTURE IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE**

*Die Architektur der neuen Weltordnung*



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*Architekturtheorie“, im gleichen Jahr Wahl zum Rektor der Hochschule, 1996 Wiederwahl für weitere vier Jahre. Publikationen zur Architekturtheorie, Konzeption und Veranstaltung der Internationalen Bauhaus-Kolloquien, internationale Programme mit der WASEDA Universität Tokyo, dem IIT Chicago, seit Mitte der 90er Jahre jährliche Entwurfsakademie in Rom. 2003 Wahl zum Dekan der Fakultät Architektur und 2004 erneute Wahl zum Rektor der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.*

# DAS KOLLOQUIUM

## *Eröffnungsrede*

Das Bauhauskolloquium – heute ist es das, was man eine Institution nennen kann.

1976 zum ersten Mal veranstaltet, eröffnen wir heute das 11. Internationale Bauhaus-Kolloquium. Ich freue mich sehr, Sie alle als Rektor der Bauhaus-Universität, aber auch als Mitveranstalter der Konferenz, hier und heute sehr herzlich begrüßen zu können.

Die letzten fünf Konferenzen – *Architektur und Macht* (1992), *Technofiction* (1996), *Global Village* (1999), *Medium Architektur* (2003) und *Die Realität des Imaginären* (2007) – konzentrierten sich auf die Auswirkungen veränderter sozialer und technischer Bedingungen auf die Praxis der Architektur.

Das diesjährige Kolloquium wird sich unter dem Thema „*Architecture in the Age of Empire - Die Architektur der neuen Weltordnung*“ vornehmlich mit den politischen Herausforderungen unserer Zeit und den Konsequenzen für die Architektur befassen. Es geht also um das Heute und die Zukunft.

Zugleich schlagen wir, im neunzigsten Jahr der Gründung des Bauhauses in Weimar, den Bogen zurück zum Diskurs des Bauhauses, das ja von der Vision einer „neuen Welt“ getragen war. Eindringlich formuliert z.B. von Hannes Meyer in seinem Aufsatz 1926 mit eben diesem Titel: „*Die neue Welt*“. Hannes Meyer entwarf dort das durchaus faszinierende Bild einer auf globalen Kommunikations- und Mobilitätssystemen basierten, kosmopolitischen Weltordnung – verblüffend nahe an der Wirklichkeit von heute.

Und wir können einen Bogen zurückschlagen zum ersten Bauhaus-Kolloquium 1992 nach dem Fall der Mauer: Unter der Titelzeile „Architektur und Macht“ verhandelten wir damals die Frage, ob und gegebenenfalls wie sich Herrschafts-

form und Bauform wechselseitig bedingen. Friedrich Nietzsche hatte der Architektur, vor allem auch den Architekten, eine nahezu bedingungslose Affinität, ja Unterwürfigkeit gegen die Macht und die Mächtigen unterstellt, wenn er schrieb: „Die mächtigsten Menschen haben immer die Architekten inspiriert, der Architekt war stets unter der Suggestion der Macht. Im Bauwerk soll sich der Stolz, der Sieg über die Schwere, der Wille zur Macht versichtbaren; Architektur ist eine Art Machtberedsamkeit in Formen, bald überredend, selbst schmeichelnd, bald bloß befehlend.“<sup>1</sup> Präziser kann man dies kaum formulieren. Und die Fälle sind auch bekannt: Knobelsdorff und Friedrich der Große, Speer und Hitler, ...

So wie die Architekten den Mächtigen anhängen, so artikuliert sich die Macht mit Vorliebe im Medium der Architektur, jenem „steinernen Buch der Menschheit“ (Victor Hugo), das die Suggestion von der Ewigkeit der Macht quasi selbstverständlich mit sich führt. Kurz gesagt: Tyrannen bauen. Und sie bauen zu ihrer eigenen Erhöhung und Verewigung im Triumph der Architektur über die Schwerkraft und die Vergänglichkeit.

Manche, wie etwa Claude Schnaidt, hegen zudem die Vermutung, dass eine „Architecture Parlante“, eine „sprechende“, semantisch aufgeladene Architektur automatisch einem Machtimpuls folge. „Wenn die Architektur spricht, schweigt das Volk“ (Claude Schnaidt).

Nun, dies ist eine Aufforderung zum semiotischen Rückzug der Architektur, der wir nicht sofort nachgeben sollten, denn es ist ja nicht so, dass jegliche Botschaft der Architektur eine der Macht oder sogar der Tyrannei sein muss. Aus der Architektur kann auch das „Volk“ sprechen, und nicht nur im Folkloristischen. Die Frage ist eben, ob es eine gegenüber der Macht widerständige Architektur geben kann, die nicht schweigt, quasi in die innere Emigration geht, sondern die „anders spricht“, wie es Claude Schnaidt ja auch tat.

Unser Kolloquium 2009 ruft solche Fragen unter dem Thema „Architecture in the Age of Empire“ erneut auf, allerdings unter den Konditionen einer weitgehend neuen Weltordnung. Die Mechanismen der Macht sind ebenso andere wie die Produktions- und Zirkulationsformen der Architektur. Und entscheidend dürfte sein, dass beide heute global entfaltet sind.

Michael Hardt und Antonio Negri haben in ihrem Buch „Empire“, von dem Slavoj Žižek meint, es wäre ein neues Kommunistisches Manifest, die These aufgestellt, dass der Kapitalismus quasi in eine neue Phase seiner Selbsttransformation bzw. Selbstüberwindung eingetreten sei. Diese neue Weltordnung, die

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1 Nietzsche, Friedrich: „Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemäßen“, in: *Götzendämmerung*, 1888, zitiert nach: Friedrich Nietzsche's Werke, Bd. 10, Leipzig 1906, S. 301–302.

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sie als ‚Empire‘ bezeichnen, überschreitet alle althergebrachten Grenzen des politischen Denkens wie Staat und Gesellschaft, Krieg und Frieden, Zentrum und Peripherie. In diesem globalen Geflecht sind Kriege nicht nationale Eroberungszüge, sondern gleichen vielmehr Polizeiaktionen einer Weltinnenpolitik. Das „Empire“ ist ein diffuses Foucault’sches Netzwerk ökonomischer, militärischer, politischer, kultureller und sozialer Macht, in „permanentem Ausnahmezustand, [...] unter Berufung auf essenzielle Gerechtigkeitswerte.“ Und dieses dezentrierte und de-territorialisierende „Empire“ regiert durch „Biopolitik“, eine Form der Machtausübung, die das soziale Leben von innen reguliert, indem es über Medien, Maschinen und soziale Praktiken direkt in das Denken und den Organismus des Bürgers eingreift.

So unscharf manches an dieser Konzeption sein mag, so bemerkenswert ist, dass die Machtmechanismen des globalisierten Zeitalters hier neu in den Blick genommen werden. Und es wird nicht angenommen, wir würden uns die Verwaltung der Welt weiterhin in den Figuren des Herrschers, der Machtblöcke und der national fundierten Imperien wie etwa im Kolonialismus denken. Es wird auch nicht angenommen, dass die Welt in Kulturkreise zerfällt, wie Samuel Huntington vermutet hatte. Und es wird schließlich nicht angenommen, dass ein Weltstaat mit globaler Autorität alle Regularien an sich reißen wird.

Während die Welt sich ändert, scheint der Mechanismus der Architektur der alte zu sein. Rem Koolhaas baut den absolut zeichenhaften Prestigebau des chinesischen Staatsfernsehens, Herzog & De Meuron mit dem „Vogelnest“ den einbildungskräftigen Zentralbau der Olympischen Spiele. Und in Peter Eisenman’s Kommentar, dass sinngemäß die autoritäre Macht der beste Bauherr sei, weil sie dem Architekten die größte Freiheit gibt und damit „progressive“ Architektur ermöglicht, zeigt sich das pervertierte Bild dieser Architektur: modernistischer Prunk und formale Freiheit, zweifellos hervorragende Exemplare von Architektur, und doch erkaufte durch politischen Opportunismus.

Dagegenzusetzen wäre eine Konzeption von Architektur, welche die Bedingungen des neuen Empire ins Auge fasst, so eben, wie Mies van der Rohe seinerzeit

**Während die Welt sich ändert, scheint der Mechanismus der Architektur der alte zu sein: modernistischer Prunk und formale Freiheit, erkaufte durch politischen Opportunismus.**

die Architektur als „raumgefassten Zeitwillen“ verstand. In der Entfaltung dieses „Empire“ steckt aber die Vermutung einer Überwindung der gegenwärtigen Verhältnisse, und nicht deren Zementierung. Es geht auch um eine neue Architektur, auch um Architektur als Vehikel jener Biopolitik, von der Hardt und Negri sprechen. Das Ethos dieser Architektur kann nur in einem *sozialen und kulturellen Begriff der Globalisierung wurzeln*, nicht in der plakativen Feier alter Mächte mittels einer hoch-dekorativen, glamourösen, aber im Kern fragwürdigen Architektur. So kommt der Begriff der „Multitude“ als Alternative ins Spiel.

Wie sieht das Wohnen der Zukunft aus, wenn die Privilegien des relativen Reichtums unhaltbar geworden sind? Wie die Mobilität und die Städte, die auf den Systemen der Mobilität basieren? Zu welcher Architektur zwingen uns die klimatischen, ökologischen Imperative? Wird Holland ein neues Venedig sein? Und wird die Photovoltaik das architektonische Ornament der Zukunft? Dies sind die architektonischen Fragen und Elemente einer neuen Biopolitik, welche intendiert, das Leben nachhaltig zu ordnen. Und dafür könnten Architekten jenes „Geheimwissen“, jene „architectural intelligence“ um die Konzeption und Wirkung von Architektur einsetzen, das bei ihnen vorzuliegen scheint. Ist aber der Architekt dieser Magier, fähig der subtilsten Manipulationen wie eine Abteilung des MI6?

Verehrte Kollegen, die vier Tage des 11. Bauhaus-Kolloquiums werden uns Gelegenheit geben, solche und verwandte Fragen der Architektur in Plenarsitzungen und Workshops zu diskutieren. Wir haben wiederum diese Konferenzstruktur gewählt, da wir uns so einen Dialog zwischen den renommierten Autoren und den jungen Forschern erhoffen. Ich denke, viele von Ihnen werden auch die Gelegenheit nutzen, die umfangreichen Ausstellungen anzusehen, die im neunzigsten Jahr der Bauhaus-Gründung in Weimar, aber auch in Jena, Erfurt, Apolda zu sehen sind.

Ich möchte allen danken, die das Kolloquium vorbereitet haben, allen Referenten, allen Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern des Lehrstuhls Theorie und Ge-

schichte der modernen Architektur, vormals „Entwerfen und Architekturtheorie“: Herrn Kristian Faschingeder, Herrn Olaf Pfeifer, Frau Birgit Röckert, vor allem aber Prof. Kari Jormakka, dem wesentlich die Konzeption zu danken ist, und Dr. Norbert Korrek, ohne dessen Ideen und organisatorische Kräfte das Bauhaus-Kolloquium an sich, aber auch das jetzige nicht denkbar sind. Mein Dank gilt auch Laura Collini und Philippe Schmidt für die Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Workshops und dem Tutor Frank Zimmermann für die Arbeit am Layout des Protokollbandes.

Wir erinnern in diesem Jahr an die Gründung des Bauhauses in Weimar vor 90 Jahren. Und wir sind sehr dankbar, dass Tomás Maldonado in seinem Vortrag die alte, aber immer wieder sich stellende Frage erneut aufwirft: „Ist das Bauhaus aktuell?“



## Tomás Maldonado

### Politecnico di Milano

*Geboren 1922 in Buenos Aires, ist Tomás Maldonado heute Professor Emeritus für Umweltplanung am Politecnico in Mailand. Er studierte an der Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires. 1954 bis 1967 war er Dozent an der Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) Ulm, 1955-1956 Prorektor, bis 1960 Rektor der HfG. 1965: Lethaby Lecturer am Royal College of Arts, London. 1966 wurde er zum Fellow des Council of Humanities an der University Princeton (USA) ernannt, von 1968 bis 1970 lehrte er an der School of Architecture dieser Universität. Die So-*

*ciety of Industrial Artists and Designers (GB) verlieh ihm 1968 die „Design Medal“. Er war von 1967 bis 1969 Vorsitzender des Präsidiums des International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID). Von 1971 bis 1983 lehrte er zusätzlich an der Universität von Bologna. 1976 bis 1981 war er der Herausgeber der Zeitschrift Casabella in Mailand. 1979 Research Fellow an der Graduate School of Design der Harvard University. Ausgewählte Schriften erschienen 2007 unter dem Titel „Digitale Welt und Gestaltung“ in Zürich.*



# IST DAS BAUHAUS AKTUELL?

## *Festrede zum 90. Gründungsjubiläum des Bauhauses*

Herr Rektor der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar,  
sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,  
liebe Freunde!

Der Titel, der mir für diesen Vortrag vorgeschlagen wurde – Ist das Bauhaus aktuell? – nimmt genau den Titel eines Artikels auf, den ich 1964 in der Zeitschrift der HfG Ulm veröffentlicht habe. Ich nehme an, dass diese Entscheidung implizit eine an mich gerichtete Aufforderung enthält, heute auf die gleiche Frage eine Antwort zu finden, die ich mir seinerzeit gestellt habe und auf die ich zu antworten versuchte.

Ich schließe allerdings nicht aus, dass die eigentliche Absicht erheblich höher zielt: nämlich mich aufzufordern, anlässlich des 90. Gründungsjubiläums des Bauhauses eine Art von Bilanz der erheblichen, in der Zwischenzeit seit den 1960er-Jahren eingetretenen Veränderungen zu ziehen, die der historischen Einschätzung dieser Institution widerfahren sind. Kurz, eine Geschichte der Geschichte – oder besser der Geschichten – des Bauhauses.

Wenn dem so wäre, muss ich von vornherein bekennen, dass ich mich nicht in der Lage sehe, diesem Anspruch gerecht zu werden. Zwar bin ich ein aufmerksamer Beobachter der Entwicklungen des Bauhauses und seiner zahlreichen und gegenläufigen Interpretationen, zu denen es Anlass gegeben hat, doch nicht bis zu dem Punkt, dass ich mich als Historiker dieser Institution betrachten kann.

Doch muss ich gestehen, dass ich einmal aufgrund eines lebhaften Briefwechsels mit Walter Gropius über einige der von mir im besagten Artikel vertretenen Thesen gegen meinen Willen in eine, wenn man will, „technische“ Kontroverse über die Geschichte des Bauhauses involviert gewesen bin.

Wohl aber trifft es zu, dass ich mir in diesen Thesen nicht zum Ziel gesetzt hatte, einschneidende geschichtliche Urteile zu fällen und gleichsam definitiv darüber zu befinden, was nach meiner Ansicht das Bauhaus gewesen ist (oder nicht gewesen ist). Nichts lag mir ferner.

Mir ging es um etwas Anderes: Ich hatte mir vorgenommen, mittels einer kritischen Reflexion der Bauhaustradition jene Aspekte herauszuschälen, die aus der Sicht der HfG Ulm, und nur aus dieser Sicht, es verdienten, als aktuell oder inaktuell beurteilt zu werden. Was mir vorschwebte, war weniger die Geschichte des Bauhauses an und für sich als vielmehr die Notwendigkeit, die Elemente der Kontinuität und Diskontinuität des „Ulmer Experiments“ im Vergleich zur Bauhausgeschichte zu erfassen.

Freilich, ein derartiges, nach meiner Ansicht gerechtfertigtes Unternehmen barg anfangs nicht wenige methodische Schwierigkeiten. Es sei daran erinnert, dass gerade zu jener Zeit einige Historiker sich der lobenswerten Aufgabe angenommen hatten, die bis dahin als offiziell geltende Geschichte des Bauhauses zu hinterfragen. An die Stelle des Bauhaus-Mythos trat allmählich die Bauhaus-Wirklichkeit. Das neue, sich langsam ergebende Bild war reicher als das vorangegangene Bild. Man entdeckt mit einem Mal ein anderes Bauhaus, eine vitale, ungemein reichhaltige Institution, in der eine Gruppe von außergewöhnlichen Persönlichkeiten neue, nicht immer einmütig geteilte Wege im Bereich der Ausbildung und der Gestaltung auskundschafteten. Also nicht mehr das Bauhaus als ein asketischer „Tempel des Rationalismus“, sondern als ein Ort, in dem der Rationalismus (sowie ein gelegentliches Ausscheren in einen Formalismus) intensiv, bisweilen mit dramatischer Zuspitzung gelebt wurde. Nicht mehr ein Bauhaus, das in seiner gesamten Entwicklung einer Einheitsvision unterworfen war, sondern ein Bauhaus, in dem verschiedene und gegenläufige Visionen vertreten wurden.

Wenn die Antwort auf die Frage „Ist das Bauhaus aktuell?“ schon zu jener Zeit schwierig war, als noch der praktisch unbestrittene Bauhaus-Mythos herrschte, scheint heute die Antwort noch problematischer. Warum? Weil das wirkliche Bauhaus – das uns von einigen abwegigen Idealisierungen der Vergangenheit befreit – die heute unüberbrückbare geschichtliche Kluft zutage treten lässt, die uns von jener einmaligen innovativen Erfahrung trennt.

Persönlich bin ich mehr und mehr überzeugt, dass der Moment gekommen ist, ohne Nostalgie und ohne vorgetäushtes Bedauern die Tatsache anzuerkennen,

**Was mich heute mit dem Bauhaus verbindet, sind die großen Lehren, die uns die Protagonisten des Bauhauses als Erbe hinterlassen haben. Also der unwiderrufliche Wille, mit allen Mitteln gesellschaftlich und kulturell innovative Antworten auf die Anforderungen der geschichtlichen Epoche zu suchen, in der zu leben uns beschieden ist.**

dass das Bauhaus als institutionelles Modell seine Aktualität eingebüßt hat, und das aus dem einfachen Grunde, weil es sich nicht mehr eignet, Antworten auf die drängenden und alarmierenden Anforderungen unserer Zeit zu liefern.

Indessen, gerade im Gefolge des Eingeständnisses, dass das Bauhaus nicht mehr aktuell ist, stellt sich nahezu zwangsläufig die Frage: Wenn dem wirklich so ist, wie ich glaube, warum bildet das Bauhaus dann immer noch Gegenstand eines diffusen Interesses, und weiter, warum treffen wir uns heute, um das neunzigste Gründungsjubiläum hier in Weimar zu feiern, wo alles begonnen hat?

Jeder wird seine eigene Antwort auf diese Frage haben. Meine Antwort fällt klar aus: Was mich heute mit dem Bauhaus verbindet, sind weniger die Tausende kleiner und großer Dinge, die durchweg Anerkennung und Wertschätzung genießen, als vielmehr die großen Lehren, die uns die Protagonisten des Bauhauses, eben die Bauhäusler, als Erbe hinterlassen haben. Also der unwiderrufliche Wille, mit allen Mitteln gesellschaftlich und kulturell innovative Antworten auf die Anforderungen der geschichtlichen Epoche zu suchen, in der zu leben uns beschieden ist.

Aus diesem Grunde und im Sinne dieser Erbschaft habe ich mich entschieden, hier nicht zum zehnten Mal beim Bauhaus und seiner zerklüfteten Geschichte zu verweilen – einer Geschichte, über die alles oder quasi alles bereits gesagt ist –, sondern einige der dramatischen Kernprobleme zu untersuchen, mit denen wir uns heute unausweichlich auseinandersetzen müssen. Ich meine die tiefe Krise, die in diesen Tagen mit voller Wucht die materiellen Grundlagen unserer Gesellschaft getroffen hat, eine gleichzeitige Wirtschafts-, Gesellschafts- und Umweltkrise.

Wenngleich die Auswege derzeit alles andere als vorhersehbar sind, so scheint zumindest ein Sachverhalt klar zu sein: Aus dieser Krise gerät man nicht ohne eine wesentliche Redefinition der gegenwärtigen materiellen Ausstattung unserer Gesellschaft. Auch nicht, ohne den Lebensstil infrage zu stellen, dessen Ursache und Wirkung eben mit dieser Ausstattung verknüpft ist.

Diese Herausforderung betrifft besonders und nicht nur am Rande genau jene, die bislang eine prägende Rolle für die formalen und funktionellen Entscheidun-

**Es wäre imprakti-  
kabel und geradezu  
kontraproduktiv  
zu versuchen, die  
heutige Krise mit  
Maßnahmen der  
Vergangenheit  
in den Griff zu  
bekommen. Das  
Jahr 2009 ist eben  
nicht das Jahr 1929.**

gen hinsichtlich der gebauten Umwelt und der Gebrauchsgegenstände gespielt haben – ich denke dabei in erster Linie an Architekten und Designer.

Ihnen kommt in der gegenwärtigen Lage die schwierige Aufgabe zu, die alten Entscheidungen mit anderen, für die gegenwärtig sich zeigenden Auflagen besser geeigneten Entscheidungen zu ersetzen. Ich glaube, dass wir die abwegige Vorstellung aufgeben müssen, dass die materielle Ausstattung unserer Gesellschaft, so wie wir sie bis heute kennen, unbeschädigt aus einer Krise derartigen Ausmaßes hervorgehen kann. Man muss zugeben, dass die gegenwärtige Krise nicht eine „Krise wie andere Krisen“ ist. Sie markiert einen kritischen Punkt in der Geschichte des Kapitalismus. Das neoliberale Modell, das bis vor Kurzem als gleichsam Universalheilmittel betrachtet wurde, ist sensationell gescheitert.

Diese Einschätzung – dessen bin ich mir bewusst – wird nicht von jedermann geteilt. In der Regel zieht man vor, das Geschehen zu relativisieren. Man versichert mit Argumenten, die eher einem *wishfull thinking* als der Wirklichkeit der Tatsachen entsprechen, dass es sich schlussendlich um eine der periodischen Krisen handelt, die regelmäßig aufgetreten sind (und die weiterhin auftreten), wie es für eine Marktwirtschaft typisch ist.

Man behauptet, dass es sich im Grunde um eine Konjunkturkrise handelt, weniger tiefgreifend als die Weltwirtschaftskrise von 1929. Und um uns zu beruhigen, fügt man – meiner Ansicht nach unbedacht – hinzu: „Nach zwei Jahren wird alles wieder sein wie gehabt.“ Diese Behauptung ist keineswegs beruhigend, denn sie lässt vermuten, dass sich in Zukunft die heutige bedrohliche Lage wiederholen könnte. Ohne dabei auszuschließen, dass ihre Auswirkungen jedesmal verheeren-der sein können.

Eine durchaus wahrscheinliche Aussicht – so fürchte ich –, vor allem, wenn man sich die Komplexität (und somit Unkontrollierbarkeit) des Kapitalismus in seiner heutigen Phase der furiosen Globalisierung vergegenwärtigt.

Wie dem auch sei, es scheint mir aufschlussreich, an diesem Punkt die Antikrisen-Maßnahmen von 1929 mit jenen zu vergleichen, die man heute unter wahrlich verschiedenen Umständen anwenden könnte. Ich möchte daran erin-

nen, dass 1929 eine Maßnahme, zumindest in einem Produktionssektor, relativen Erfolg zeitigte.

Ich meine den Sektor der Automobilindustrie in den USA. In diesem Fall handelte es sich um eine radikale Veränderung in der Produktionsweise, in den Entwurfsverfahren und im Vertriebssystem von Automobilen. Man kehrte der fordistischen Firmenpolitik (wenige Modelle mit langer Lebensdauer) den Rücken und ging zur Styling-Politik über (viele Modelle mit kurzer Lebensdauer).

Diese Strategie hat in jenem Augenblick zweifelsohne dazu beigetragen, einen erschöpften Markt zu reaktivieren; sie kann aber nicht zu einem heute erforderlichen Strategietyp zur Überwindung der Krise zählen. Man darf nicht vergessen, dass die gegenwärtige Krise einige Besonderheiten aufweist, die ihr aus verschiedenen Gründen einen Ausnahmecharakter verleihen. Es wäre impraktikabel und geradezu kontraproduktiv zu versuchen, die heutige Krise mit Maßnahmen der Vergangenheit in den Griff zu bekommen. Das Jahr 2009, sei die Krise weniger tief oder nicht, ist eben nicht das Jahr 1929.

Im Unterschied zu früher sind wir heute gezwungen, eine grundlegende Neuigkeit zu berücksichtigen: die stetige Verschärfung des Umweltnotstands auf planetarischer Ebene. Jahrelang ist diese Frage negiert, verheimlicht oder relativiert worden, eine Frage – wie man sagte – künstlich aufgebauscht von den Grünen und ultrakonservativen Naturschützern. Doch heute wird ihr Zentralcharakter auf der ganzen Welt anerkannt.

In der Tat ist die Umweltfrage zum Kreuzweg, zum unvermeidlichen Durchgangspunkt für einen großen Teil der Probleme geworden, die eine Antikrisenstrategie angehen muss. Dies zeigt sich allerorten. Man stößt auf sie bei der Notwendigkeit, die Vielzahl der verheerenden geopolitischen Konflikte zu überwinden, die mit dem Versiegen der nichterneuerbaren Energiequellen verknüpft sind und somit auch die innovativen Anstrengungen zur Entwicklung und größeren Verfügbarkeit erneuerbarer Energiequellen betreffen. Doch das ist nicht alles. Diese Frage zeigt sich auch unmissverständlich in der Forderung nach einem systematischen Eingriff mit einem Redesign des Produktparks unserer Gesellschaft, und zwar in Funktion der Energieeinsparung und größeren Nachhaltigkeit. So betrachtet wird die Antikrisen-Strategie gleichzeitig ein kritischer Diskurs über den maßlosen Konsumismus und den Lebensstil, dessen Ausdruck er ist.

Doch jedesmal, wenn man die Frage des Konsumismus stellt, wenn man von der Notwendigkeit spricht, den Konsum zu bremsen, läuft man Gefahr, verdächtigt – und oftmals explizit beschuldigt – zu werden, eine Sparpolitik moralischen Zuschnitts auferlegen zu wollen. Bei anderen Gelegenheiten dagegen wird solchen Mahnungen das vermeintliche Fehlen von Realismus (wenn nicht gar

schlichte Hypokrisie) entgeggehalten, was in nicht völlig von der Hand zu weisen ist.

Es dürfte klar sein, dass auf der einen Seite der Vorschlag der Austerität bei den wohlhabenden Klassen und reichen Ländern auf wenig Gegenliebe stößt, insofern sie nicht geneigt sind, die Privilegien ihres Lebensstils einzuschränken, und auf der anderen Seite eine sarkastische Ablehnung seitens jener erfährt, die im Elend leben, das heißt in sozusagen „chronischer Austerität“.

Doch die Lage wird noch komplizierter, wenn man, ausgehend von der Forderung nach Konsumminderung im Interesse der Gegenwart und der Zukunft der Umwelt, noch weiter geht und im Namen dieses Interesses ein viel anspruchsvolleres Programm formuliert: nämlich unsere Gesellschaft nicht nur zu zwingen, einige Aspekte ihres heutigen Lebensstils zu ändern, sondern die Gesamtheit seiner Ausprägungen und Voraussetzungen einer Revision zu unterziehen.

Wie bekannt wird ein derartig anspruchsvolles Vorhaben von Vertretern des New Age und deren Entourage gehätschelt, das wegen seiner plakativ utopischen Implikationen den Diskurs unmittelbarer Plausibilität – und mehr noch Wünschbarkeit – übersteigt. Seit je haben die Historiker – nicht notwendig konservativ – uns gelehrt, niemals die Trägheit der Lebensstile zu unterschätzen.

Trotz ihrer Legitimität im Idealfall und ihrer gelegentlichen Faszination glaube ich nicht, dass ihre Visionen radikaler Alternativen zur Gegenwart heutzutage als nutzbringend und nachhaltig beibehalten werden können. Damit ist nicht gesagt, dass andere allgemeine Betrachtungen ganz anderen Zuschnitts, scheinbar realistischer, sich als hinreichend erweisen können. Zum Beispiel reicht es nicht mit den mehr oder minder fantasievollen Rezepten jener, die bis gestern als treue Gefolgsmänner einer frisch und fröhlichen „De-regulierung“ fungierten und die sich nun als Förderer einer eisernen „Re-regulierung“ entpuppen. Auch nicht die Moralpredigten jener, die auf den Spuren des „Katechismus für Industrielle“ von Saint Simon aus dem 19. Jahrhundert nun vorschlagen, den Kapitalismus zu moralisieren, und gleichsam einen „Katechismus für Banker“ empfehlen. Vielmehr bin ich von der Notwendigkeit überzeugt, einen anderen Weg einschlagen zu müssen, also sich auf die Ebene der uns beschäftigenden Probleme zu begeben und aus der Nähe (und das kritisch) die Welt der materiellen und immateriellen Produktion zu betrachten. Und sich dabei zu fragen, welche der unter der Unzahl an Produkten, die sich heute auf dem Markt befinden, am stärksten, sei es direkt oder indirekt, zur gegenwärtigen konvulsiven Krise beigetragen haben. Es dürfte nicht der mindeste Zweifel daran bestehen, dass unter all diesen Kandidaten der erste Platz dem Automobil zusteht.

Die Krise von 1929 war eine Krise der Banken, aber auch eine Krise der Automobilindustrie. In dieser Hinsicht unterscheidet sich die Krise von 2009 nicht we-

sentlich von der vorangegangenen. Das sollte nicht zu Verwunderung Anlass geben, denn die Bank bleibt die Königsinstitution des Kapitalismus, so wie das Auto die Königsware des Kapitalismus bleibt. Wenn auch die Akteure hohe Ähnlichkeit aufweisen, so ist das Szenarium, wie schon erwähnt, nicht mehr das gleiche.

Heute wie früher befindet sich das Auto auf der Anklagebank, doch aus teilweise entgegengesetzten Gründen. Früher richtete sich die Anklage gegen das Automobilprodukt in der Form, wie es von Henry Ford konzipiert und realisiert wurde, insofern es als nicht mehr geeignet für die Anforderungen der Dynamik und Flexibilität einer Marktwirtschaft eingestuft wurde. Heute richtet sich die Anklage umgekehrt gegen das Automobilprodukt, wie es in den 1930er-Jahren unter der Ägide von Alfred S. Sloan, seinerzeit Präsident von General Motors, entstanden ist und das bis heute als Leitbild der Automobilindustrie in den USA, und nicht nur dort, fungiert.

Um das Ausmaß dessen zu verstehen, was in diesem Industriesektor vor sich geht, mag es genügen, die jüngsten programmatischen Erklärungen des Präsidenten Obama (und seiner Ratgeber) über die Rettungsmaßnahmen für die Autoindustrie in seinem Land anzuhören: der technologischen Innovation hinsichtlich Umweltverträglichkeit Vorrang zu geben, die Modellvielfalt zu vermeiden, die Formen der künstlichen Obsoleszenz zu drosseln, die Fertigung auf kompakte und wirtschaftlich erschwingliche Autos auszurichten. Viele sehen in diesem Rettungsprogramm der Automobilindustrie eine Revanche von Ford. Das ist eine übertriebene Vereinfachung, aber wenn man nachdenkt, ist sie nicht weit von der Wirklichkeit entfernt.

Hier stellt sich eine Frage: Lässt sich die heute im Automobilssektor zu beobachtende Tendenz zur Begünstigung eines Redesigns auch in anderen Industriebereichen feststellen? Genau betrachtet gibt es Industriesektoren, in denen sich diese Tendenz nur schwach bemerkbar macht.

Ich beziehe mich auf jene Industriebranchen, die der technischen und funktionalen Natur der Produkte selbst treu geblieben sind, wie zum Beispiel Konsumelektronik, Werkzeugmaschinen, Haushaltsgeräte, elektromedizinische Geräte, Produkte für den öffentlichen Verkehr, wissenschaftliche Laborinstrumente, Büroeinrichtungen usw. Also im Klartext: alle jene Branchen, in denen die technische Dienstleistung Vorrang genießt.

Ein wenig anders sieht es im Bereich des Wohnbedarfs aus – Möbel, Lampen, Einrichtungsgegenstände –, für die in den letzten Jahrzehnten das sogenannte *post-modern design* richtungsangehend war. Meiner Meinung nach wäre vor allem in diesem Bereich eine größere Dosis an formaler Strenge und eine größere Aufmerksamkeit für die funktionellen Auflagen empfehlenswert.

Ich verkenne nicht, dass dieses Thema, hauptsächlich in Italien, im Zentrum hitziger Kontroversen gestanden hat, in die ich in einigen Fällen, ohne sonderliche Begeisterung, hineingezogen wurde. Und zwar Kontroversen, die in der Regel in mehr als reduktionistischen Termini präsentiert wurden, wie ein Aufeinanderprallen zwischen den Vertretern des „kalten“ (cold) Designs und des „warmen“ (hot) Designs.

Kurz gefasst: Zwischen denen, die – wie es heißt – den alten, finsternen Rationalismus bauhäuslicher Provenienz, oder schlimmer noch Ulmer Provenienz verteidigen und jenen, die für die Werte einer neuen ästhetischen Kreativität in der Welt der Produkte eintreten.

Es handelt sich im Grunde um Kontroversen mit einer langen und verwickelten Geschichte. Ihre Wurzeln reichen, wie Sie wissen, weit bis 1914 zurück, als in einer historischen Sitzung des Werkbunds sich die zwei damals unvereinbaren Positionen gegenüber der Frage profilierten, welche Form die Industrieprodukte annehmen und nicht annehmen sollten. Unter den Antagonisten befand sich einerseits Henry van de Velde, der sich für die Notwendigkeit aussprach, die ornamental-dekorative Tradition der angewandten Kunst fortzusetzen (aber zu erneuern), und andererseits Hermann Muthesius, der sich frontal gegen diese Tradition wandte mit dem Ziel, eher neue, der aufkommenden Industriekultur entsprechende Formen zu entwickeln.

Es liegt auf der Hand, dass diese beiden Positionen von 1914 bis heute einige Änderungen erfahren haben. Sie mussten sich notgedrungen den unwiderstehlichen, sich überstürzenden Veränderungen im Bereich der Produktion und Kommunikation stellen. Diese Veränderungen betreffen die Technologie, den Vertrieb und den Konsum, aber auch als Folge die formalen und funktionellen Aspekte der Produkte. Wenngleich diese beiden Positionen auch heute noch als zwei unterschiedliche Auffassungen im Bereich der Produktgestaltung auftreten, haben sie ihren ursprünglichen Hegemonieanspruch verloren, was sicherlich eine begrüßenswerte Neuigkeit darstellt.

Zu Zeiten des Werkbunds wurden die beiden Positionen nicht als eine freie Wahl präsentiert, als zwei mögliche (und gleicherweise legitime) Ansätze, sondern als ein Existenzdilemma, als ein Entweder-Oder, als eine klare Dichotomie von Alternativen. Heute stellt sich das Problem nicht genau in diesen Termini.

Nach den bereits erwähnten Kontroversen hat man sich gleichsam auf ein schweigendes Übereinkommen eines Zusammenlebens und einer (quasi) gegenseitigen Legitimation geeinigt.

Mag es einem nun zusagen oder nicht, ist es eine Tatsache, dass auf dem heutigen Markt der Gegenstände die Käufer sowohl die Nippesfigur mit Reminiszen-



**Die Architekten, die in den Medien als Stararchitekten gefeiert werden, widmen sich nahezu ausschließlich dem Entwurf von Monumentalbauten. Diese Architektur offenbart sich als einer der höchste Besorgnis erregenden Aspekte der heutigen Krise.**

zen des Art Deco als auch die japanische Fotokamera mit „Ulmer“ Reminiszenzen finden können.

Wohl hat es nicht an Vermittlungsversuchen gefehlt: Man hat zum Beispiel versucht, ornamentale Motive auf Automobilkarosserien, Computern, Fotoapparaten, Küchengeräten bis hin zu einigen Werkzeugmaschinen zu applizieren. Dabei war es das erklärte Ziel, diese Produkte „menschlicher“, weniger „kalt“ wiederzugeben. Diesen Bestrebungen war kein Erfolg beschieden.

Der Grund dafür liegt auf der Hand: Bei einem Gegenstand, von dem man einer hohe Serviceleistung erwartet, bleibt der formale, vom Nutzer bevorzugte Aspekt überwiegend an die Vorstellung von Präzision und Effizienz geknüpft. Und von diesem Standpunkt aus wird das Anbringen dekorativer Elemente nur als Störfaktor beurteilt. Vielleicht liegt es im Fall des Handys ein wenig anders. In der letzten Zeit kann man in der Tat die Tendenz feststellen, dem Handy über seine spezifische Funktion hinaus eine Luxusfunktion zuzuschreiben. Also das Handy als Schmuckstück. Ein Beispiel: das Handy mit Diamanten und Saphirsteinen verziert. Doch handelt es sich um ein recht eingeschränktes Phänomen.

Ein Überblick über die möglichen Auswirkungen der gegenwärtigen Krise kann nicht die Fragen hinsichtlich der Gegenwart und Zukunft der gebauten Umwelt ausklammern. Die derzeit berühmtesten Architekten, die in den Medien als Stararchitekten gefeiert werden, widmen sich nahezu ausschließlich dem Entwurf von Monumentalbauten. In der Regel handelt es sich um Bautypen, die in erster Linie öffentliche Funktionen erfüllen: Bürogebäude, Luxushotels, Banken, Theater, Stadien, Kirchen und Regierungspaläste. Bei nicht wenigen dieser Gebäude handelt es sich um Wolkenkratzer. Vor allem von Shanghai bis Dubai, von London bis Mailand ist die Leidenschaft für Wolkenkratzer ausgebrochen. Sie nimmt riesige Ausmaße an. Wegen der erforderlichen finanziellen und materiellen Investitionen, wegen ihrer impliziten Tendenz, sich jeder Kontrolle der Umweltplanung und Umweltauswirkung zu entziehen, offenbart sich die Architektur – oder zumindest diese Architektur – als einer der höchste Besorgnis erregenden Aspekte der heutigen Krise.

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Um Missverständnisse zu vermeiden, betone ich, dass es mir nicht um Wolkenkratzer als einen besonderen Bautyp geht. Es scheint mir indessen auf der Hand zu liegen, dass ihre Existenz oder Legitimation infrage zu stellen darauf hinausläuft, sich außerhalb der zeitgenössischen Wirklichkeit zu bewegen. Das schließt aber nicht aus, dass sich, vom Standpunkt des Umwelteinflusses auf die Stadt betrachtet, unausweichlich tiefe Ratlosigkeit einstellt. Unter „Einfluss auf die Umwelt“ verstehe ich nicht allein den physischen Einfluss, sondern auch den visuellen Einfluss – ein oftmals unterbewerteter Aspekt. In den vergangenen fünfzehn Jahren hat der Computer nahezu unbegrenzte Möglichkeiten eröffnet, um mit dreidimensionalen Formen zu experimentieren, vor allem im Bereich der geometrischen (und topologischen) kontinuierlichen Transformationen. Die Architekten der Wolkenkratzer, berauscht und hungerig von dem neuen zugestandenen Freiheitsgrad, haben einen alles anderen als sparsamen Gebrauch davon gemacht. Das Ergebnis liegt vor aller Augen: gigantische Skulpturen, die nicht nur die Gesetze der Schwerkraft herausfordern, sondern die auch den Stadtbewohnern mit unerhörter Arroganz ästhetisch nicht akzeptable Entscheidungen aufnötigen.

Am Ende meines Vortrags angelangt, erlauben Sie eine abschließende Überlegung. Mir scheint, dass keine Zweifel mehr bestehen dürften – zumindest keine vernünftigen Zweifel –, dass wir in eine Zone heftiger sozialer, wirtschaftlicher und politischer Turbulenzen eintreten. Gleichzeitig aber neige ich zu der Annahme, dass wir letztlich in der Lage sein werden, unseren Nachkommen eine weniger feindliche, düstere und unsichere Welt zu belassen, als sie es heute ist. Das allerdings nur unter der Voraussetzung, dass wir eine gehörige Dosis an kritischem, kompromisslosem Engagement in politischen, sozialen und Umweltfragen aufbringen. Und mehr noch, dass wir uns unermüdlich im Bereich technisch-wissenschaftlicher und kultureller Innovation einsetzen.

Diese Haltung der Hoffnung scheint mir der Tradition des Bauhauses die Treue zu halten.

Danke





# ARCHITECTURE IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE

*Plenum*

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In 2005, Emaar Properties revealed that the design for their flagship project, the Burj Dubai, imitated a native plant, *hymenocallis* – except that the new flower would grow up to 500 meters high.<sup>1</sup> Claiming that “the shape of the desert flower has three major petals and three minor petals,” the architect Adrian Smith pointed out that the same configuration “is seen in plan and is a central organizing force in the building. ... Looking down from the sky you would be able to see these elements and discern the shape of the flower.”<sup>2</sup> Since then, few descriptions of the Burj Khalifa have failed to mention this inspiring vision of man’s genius following the eternal wisdom of Mother Nature. And yet, there are also those who complain that the *hymenocallis* is not actually a desert flower from Dubai but rather native to tropical and subtropical America, and that the three-lobed plan of the 828-meter tower is not particularly close to the six-petaled flower, concluding that the biomimicry argument is just subterfuge, ideology, or clever marketing.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it may not possibly be that the man-made *hymenocallis*, like Hardy’s chrysanthemum, is “but one mask of many worn by the Great Face behind.”<sup>4</sup>

In this case, the masked face would likely be that of Empire, the ubiquitous form of sovereignty composed of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of decentered and deterritorializing rule. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri describe this new world order as a diffuse, boundless and inclusive Foucauldian network of power – economic, military, political, cultural and social. Acknowledging no territorial or temporal boundaries and proclaiming the end of history, Empire remains in a permanent state of emergency and exception justified by the appeal to eternal values. Bathed in blood while preaching universal peace, Empire rules most efficiently through biopolitics, an insidious form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it. Mechanisms of command have become ‘democratic’ in the sense of being immanent

to the social field and distributed through the brains and bodies of the citizens by the use of communication technologies, information systems, monitored activities etc.<sup>5</sup> The Debordian spectacle that surrounds us is at once unified and diffuse in such a way that it is impossible to distinguish any inside from outside, the natural from the social, or the private from the public. Unfortunately, Hardt and Negri have little to say about architecture as a form of biopolitics, besides noting the disappearance of public spaces that used to constitute the place of liberal politics and the erection of fortress-like interiors such as malls and gated communities.<sup>6</sup>

The 11<sup>th</sup> International Bauhaus Colloquium convened in Weimar in April, 2009 to examine in more depth the role of contemporary architecture in Empire. It was the most recent in a series of colloquia focusing on the effect of changing social and technological conditions on the practice of architecture: *Power* (1993), *Technofiction* (1996), *Global Village* (1999), *Medium Architecture* (2003) and *The Reality of the Imaginary* (2007). In 2009, the goal was to lay down the premises for the resumption of political debate in and about architecture.

Admittedly, the political dimensions of architecture are not the main focus of contemporary discourse, as it is practiced in professional magazines. In fact, a major campaign was launched some years ago to call off all and any political concerns. Several critics declared that the time of ‘critical’ architecture was over and the endless present would forever belong to ‘projective practice.’ Criticality was associated with Peter Eisenman (as well as K. Michael Hays and Manfredo Tafuri) and described as reflective or past-oriented, representational and indexical, dialectic, hot, and difficult, while projective practice, spearheaded by Rem Koolhaas, was characterized as virtual or future-oriented, performative and diagrammatic, atmospheric, cool, and easy.<sup>7</sup> Spokesmen for projective practice felt that architects should no longer try to save the world

or stand up for the little man, but concentrate on internal matters of design, such as atmospheric effects, intricate ornamentation, the algorithmic generation of form, or the creation of brands.

However, this opposition may constitute too simple a diagram. Do we really have no choice other than to follow either Eisenman or Koolhaas? From a historical perspective, it is tempting to extend the oppositions a little further back. If Koolhaasian projective practice rejects the previous avantgarde, or Eisenmanian critical practice, then one should perhaps also see deconstructivism as a negation of postmodernism, and postmodernism as a repudiation of modernist ideology, and so on. To some degree, history seems to follow a Hegelian dialectic: the postmodernists replaced the modernist emphasis on function with a new interest in communication while retaining much of the social ideals of the previous generation; deconstructivists denied the possibility of successful communication without relinquishing the underlying semiotic theory; the projective practitioners refuse the intellectual agenda of deconstructivism but accept its conservative political orientation.<sup>8</sup> In this scenario, the original dichotomy unravels and the historical development proves more complicated – did not Hays once describe Mies van der Rohe as the emblematic critical architect whose architecture was a form of refusal or negation, resistant to the self-confirming, conciliatory operations of the dominant consumer culture?<sup>9</sup>

However, it could also be argued that Mies was not that critical, compared to the likes of Hannes Meyer, his predecessor as the head of the Bauhaus. Mies – who stayed in the Third Reich until 1938 – had told architects already fifteen years earlier to accept economic and social conditions as a fact because “all these things go their way guided by destiny and blind to values.” Of course, Walter Gropius also insisted that architects needed “a resolute affirmation” of the new conditions if they wanted to stay relevant in modern society.<sup>10</sup> Af-

ter the demise of expressionism around 1920, many modern architects relinquished any claims to autonomy, although they continued to issue ambitious social programs and claims to leadership positions in their manifestoes.

Clearly, opportunism was not invented by Koolhaas; it has been part of modern architecture from the beginning. As early as 1910, Karl Kraus declared that “modern architecture is a superfluity created out of the correct perception of a lack of necessity.”<sup>11</sup> Kraus and his friend Adolf Loos saw the *Jugendstil* and the German *Werkbund* as a giant confidence trick to extend the life of an obsolete profession that was dying out for a very good reason. For these critics, the theoretical obsessions of the art nouveau generation – issues such as ornament or mood – were no more than attempts to claim expertise in matters that in reality made no difference and divert the public’s attention from the real economic, political and structural questions of the day.

Today, some of these issues have resurfaced, enhanced by colorful new technologies. Should we follow Kraus and Loos in concluding that architecture again been reduced to an apolitical aestheticization of everyday imperial life – or has it, on the contrary, prepared an assemblage of abstract machines capable of reorganizing multiple economies, ecologies, information systems, and social groups into radically new forms of performance? Is the contemporary city a part of culture industry, replacing authentic experience with shallow spectacle, or is it on its way becoming that which Hardt and Negri envisage: “a material religion of the senses ... polytheism of the imagination and art” that will separate the multitude from every residue of sovereign power and from every long arm of Empire?<sup>12</sup> Is it that architects really can provide, is this their real expertise, and if not, what is it exactly that justifies the name of the architect?

These are not questions I can answer, and it would be both unnecessary and quite presumptuous of me to try to summarize the rich

panoply of views put forward in the plenary lectures or the workshops. Instead, I invite the reader to confront the arguments below and draw the right conclusions.

Kari Jormakka

## Notes

1 <http://www.burjkhalifa.ae/the-tower/design.aspx>

2 Interview with Adrian Smith - Emporis Community 01.09.10 13:2117 <https://community.emporis.com/pu/in/as/>

See also [http://www.ctbuh.org/Portals/0/Repository/P2\\_Smith.30b06d8d-a964-43a9-9f8f-857f52a4b512.pdf](http://www.ctbuh.org/Portals/0/Repository/P2_Smith.30b06d8d-a964-43a9-9f8f-857f52a4b512.pdf)

To drive the point home, a ring of *hymenocallis* was planted around the plaza in front of the tower. According to George Efstathiou of SOM, “the plaza that encircles the tower expresses the key imagery of the Hymenocallis, or spider lily, through an iterative pattern of banding including concentric and radiating arcs, criss-crossing lines and a cool gray palette of granite to convey the extension of the tower-inspired form and a feeling of comfort through the seasons.” <https://www.zawya.com/story.cfm/sidZAWYA20100104062845/An%20iterative%20pattern%20%20>

3 <http://www.burjofdubai.com/2010/03/burj-dubai-design-based-on-a-flower—part-i/>

4 See Hardy, Thomas, *The Last Chrysanthemum*. Cf. also Hardy’s poems “Architectural Masks” and “The Masked Face.”

5 Hardt, Michael, and Negri, Antonio, *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. xii, 18–23–24.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 188, 337.

7 Somol, Robert and Whiting, Sarah, “Notes around the Doppler Effect and other Moods of Modernism.” *The Yale Architectural Journal Perspecta* 33. Mining Autonomy. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003, pp. 72–78.

8 We could also attempt a historical analogy:

if Postmodernism is Renaissance in setting the rules of architecture as a language, then Deconstructivism is Mannerism that seeks to undermine these very rules, while Projective Practice takes up the role of Baroque Counter-Reformation in its anti-intellectualism, its emphasis on the senses and the body, its reliance on visceral persuasion as opposed to rational discourse. Indeed, the new theories of ornaments or atmospheres are usually not grounded on cultural traditions and other contingencies but rather on supposedly universal a phenomenological or physiological foundation, or some general scientific analogy. In arguing for his idea of moods, Jeffrey Kipnis, for example, exclaims: “Are we not and everything around us just a big Reynolds diagram?” *Mood River*. Exhibition Catalogue. Curators Jeffrey Kipnis and Annette Massie. Columbus, OH: Wexner Center, 2002, p. 7.

9 Hays, K. Michael, “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form.” *Perspecta*, Vol. 21. (1984), pp. 14–29.

10 Mies and Gropius as quoted in Conrads, Ulrich, *Programme und Manifeste zur Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Ullstein Bauwelt Fundamente 1. Berlin Wes: Verlag Ullstein GmbH, 1964, pp. 90, 95.

11 “*Moderne Architektur ist das aus der richtigen Erkenntnis einer fehlenden Notwendigkeit erschaffene Überflüssige.*”

Kraus, Karl, *Aphorismen und Gedichte, Ausgewählte Werke*, Band 4, her. Dietrich Simon, Berlin, 1974, p. 95.

12 Hardt and Negri, pp. 393, 396.



## **Philip Ursprung**

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# OUT OF EMPIRE

## *Architektur und die Multitude*

In ihrem Buch *Empire* machen Michael Hardt und Antonio Negri einen überraschenden Kommentar zu den NGOs, den Non Government Organizations, wie beispielsweise Amnesty International oder Médecins Sans Frontiers. Statt dass sie diese Organisationen, wie man es erwarten würde, als Instanzen des Widerstands gegen die Hegemonie des Empire interpretieren, verstehen sie sie als dessen Avantgarden, als diejenigen, welche die Expansion des Empire befördern. In ihren Worten:

*Solche humanitären NGOs gehören letztlich (auch wenn das den Intentionen ihrer Aktivisten zuwiderläuft) zu den machtvollsten friedlichen Mitteln der neuen Weltordnung – die Wohltätigkeitsveranstaltungen und Bettelorden des Empire. Diese NGOs führen ‚gerechte Kriege‘ ohne Waffen, ohne Gewalt, ohne Grenzen. Wie die Dominikanermönche im späten Mittelalter und die Jesuiten zu Beginn der Neuzeit bemühen sich diese Gruppen, universelle Bedürfnisse zu finden und Menschenrechte zu verteidigen. In ihrer Sprache und in ihren Taten identifizieren sie zuerst die Entbehrung als Feind (und hoffen damit ernstlich Schaden abzuwenden) und erkennen dann den Feind als Sünde.<sup>1</sup>*

Was wäre, wenn nicht nur die NGOs, sondern auch „wir“, also die europäischen, amerikanischen und südostasiatischen Architekten, Architekturtheoretiker und Architekturvermittler und „unser“ asketischer Heiliger, Rem Koolhaas – gegen unsere und seine Absicht, aber effektiv – den Weg für die Expansion des Empire ebnen? Wie stünde es in diesem Fall um die Möglichkeiten des Widerstands, der

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri: *Empire. Die neue Weltordnung*, Aus dem Englischen von Thomas Atzert und Andreas Wirthensohn, Frankfurt/M. 2002, S. 50.

**Was wäre, wenn auch „wir“, die Architekten, Architekturtheoretiker und Architekturvermittler und „unser“ asketischer Heiliger, Rem Koolhaas, den Weg für die Expansion des Empire ebnen? Wie stünde es in diesem Fall um die Möglichkeiten des Widerstands, der kritischen Korrektur, der Reflexion, also um alle jene Praktiken, mit der wir unsere Praxis gerne gesellschaftlich legitimieren?**

kritischen Korrektur, der Reflexion, also um alle jene Praktiken, mit der wir unsere Praxis gerne gesellschaftlich legitimieren? Ist es nicht so, dass auch wir uns für „universelle Bedürfnisse“ einsetzen? Und identifizieren nicht auch wir den „Feind“ in Form des Abwesenden, also beispielsweise des Mangels an formaler Qualität, an ökologischer Nachhaltigkeit, an Ortsspezifität und historischer Kontinuität sowie am theoretischen Potenzial, dem internationalen architektonischen Diskurs angeschlossen zu sein? Wo soll unser Ort sein, wenn es, wie Hardt und Negri sagen, keine Subjektivität außerhalb des Empire gibt? Wo soll der Ort der Kritik sein, wenn alle Orte unter einem allgemeinen „Nicht-Ort“ subsumiert sind und, wie sie sagen, „wir alle vollständig im Bereich des Sozialen und Politischen“ existieren“?<sup>2</sup>

**Atmosphären des Empire**

Hardt und Negri schrieben ihr Buch, welches 2000 zuerst auf Englisch erschien, in den 1990er-Jahren, also nach dem Ende des Kalten Kriegs und nachdem Präsident George Bush Senior anlässlich des Beginns des ersten Golfkriegs die „Neue Weltordnung“ verkündete. Die Autoren machen aber klar, dass das Empire keineswegs identisch sei mit den USA. Es ist auch unabhängig von der politischen Verfassung eines Staates, also von der Frage, ob es sich um eine Demokratie oder eine Diktatur handle. Der Begriff „Empire“ beschreibt die Tendenz des Kapitalismus, sich grenzenlos auszubreiten, er bezeichnet einen Trend, sozusagen die Fortsetzung dessen, was in den 1980er-Jahren „Spätkapitalismus“ hieß und seit den späten 1990er-Jahren mit dem Schlagwort „Globalisierung“ umschrieben wird. Die Autoren entwerfen in ihrem Buch das Szenario eines weltumspannenden Reiches, in dem ewige Gegenwart herrscht. Im Unterschied zum Imperialismus des 19. Jahrhunderts, als einzelne Nationalstaaten ihre Territorien in Konkurrenz zueinander ausdehnten, stellen sie das Empire als eine neue Weltordnung dar, welche „die Geschichte vollständig suspendiert und dadurch die

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<sup>2</sup> Ebd., S. 361.

bestehende Lage der Dinge für die Ewigkeit festschreibt“.<sup>3</sup> Sie sprechen von einer „geglätteten Welt“ sowie davon, dass das Empire den Raum und die Zeit in deren Totalität vollständig umfasse und keine territorialen Grenzziehungen kenne.<sup>4</sup> In ihren Worten: „Das Empire stellt [...] seine Herrschaft nicht als vergängliches Moment im Verlauf der Geschichte dar, sondern als Regime ohne zeitliche Begrenzung und in diesem Sinn außerhalb oder am Ende der Geschichte.“ Und: „Aus der Perspektive des Empire ist alles so, wie es immer sein wird und wie es immer schon sein sollte.“<sup>5</sup>

Wie sollen wir uns die Architektur des Empire vorstellen? Hardt und Negri äußern sich dazu nicht. Aber ihre Beschreibung der geglätteten, zeitlosen Welt, sowie die Begriffe der „immateriellen Arbeit“, also die Idee, dass die Industriearbeit und die Herstellung von Produkten allmählich abgelöst werde durch intellektuelle Arbeit, welche Beziehungen und Affekte in Gang setzt, sowie die von Foucault übernommene Idee der „Biomacht“, welche das Leben als solches produzieren und kontrollieren will, legen nahe, dass die räumlichen Strukturen der Bauten im Empire sich von denjenigen der Moderne unterscheiden.<sup>6</sup> Sind es die Schaltzentralen jener bürokratischen Institutionen, welche die Hindernisse zwischen den Nationalstaaten aus dem Weg räumen und dem Empire politisch, rechtlich und ökonomisch die Bahn ebnen, also beispielsweise die Vereinten Nationen, der Internationale Gerichtshof in Den Haag, die Bank für Zahlungsausgleich? Sind es die Agenturen wie die Internationale Organisation für Normung, ISO, welche die Normen schaffen und kontrollieren, die einen möglichst reibungslosen Austausch von Waren und Dienstleistungen ermöglichen? Oder sind es jene Orte, wo die physischen Grenzen des Empire sichtbar werden, die Biomacht sich zeigt, also beispielsweise das Gefangenenlager von Guantanamo, die Gated Communities in Dubai, der Zaun zwischen Mexiko und den USA, die Lesegeräte für biometrische Pässe, dem Sicherheitsdispositiv des World Economic Forum von Davos und den G8 Gipfeln?

Handelt es sich um Kreuzfahrtschiffe welche – buchstäblich „offshore“ - Produzenten und Konsumenten der Tourismusindustrie gleichzeitig von der Steuer und den Arbeitsgesetzen der Nationalstaaten befreien? Handelt es sich um die ganzjährig geöffneten Skizentren voller künstlichem Schnee, wie sie in Tokio oder

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3 Ebd., S. 13.

4 Ebd., S. 11.

5 Ebd., S. 13.

6 Vgl. Maurizio Lazzarato: „Immaterielle Arbeit, Gesellschaftliche Tätigkeit unter den Bedingungen des Postfordismus“. In: Toni Negri, Maurizio Lazzarato, Paolo Virno, *Umherschweifende Produzenten, Immaterielle Arbeit und Subversion*, Berlin 1998, S. 39–52.

Dubai zu finden sind? Sind es die zu Fernsehstudios umfunktionierten Container mit ihren Überwachungskameras, in denen seit 1999 *Big Brother*, das erfolgreichste Fernspiel der Globalisierung, läuft? Manifestiert sich die Architektur des Empire in jenen kaum sichtbaren Abläufen, in den Datenströmen der Börsen, in den Containerschiffen, auf denen fast der gesamte Warenverkehr der Welt stattfindet, ohne dass wir sie sehen, oder den hässlichen Google Headquarters im kalifornischen Mountain View? Oder lässt sich die Architektur des Empire in den Bereichen lokalisieren, wo Produktion und Konsumtion miteinander verschmelzen, das globale ins individuelle Leben eindringt und umgekehrt das Wohnzimmer für alle Welt verfügbar wird? Handelt es sich bei diesem Bereich zum Beispiel um das seit den frühen 1970er-Jahren wachsende Filialnetz von Ikea, also um die blauen Kisten, wo Lagerraum, Distribution und Konsumtion verwoben sind, mit anderen Worten um Orte, wo jeder sein Leben sofort mithilfe von skandinavischen Accessoires neu entwerfen kann? Die imperiale Wucht dieses Konzepts spürte ich mit meinen Studierenden im Frühling 2007 in Bukarest. Wir befanden uns just an jenem Wochenende in der Stadt, als dort die erste Filiale von Ikea eröffnet wurde. Überall waren riesige Werbeflächen platziert. Die ruinösen modernistischen Fassaden der Hauptstadt verschwanden hinter dem allgegenwärtigen Versprechen eines neuen Lebensstils und ewiger Jugend.

### **Stararchitektur und Empire**

Mit Kategorien wie „Architektur“ und „Städtebau“, „privat“ oder „öffentlich“ lassen sich diese Phänomene nicht fassen. In ihnen laufen ökonomische, juristische und politische Funktionen zusammen, wie Keller Easterling in ihrem Buch *Enduring Innocence* von 2005 gezeigt hat.<sup>7</sup> Ich stütze mich auf Easterling und möchte einen Weg finden, diese Phänomene mit der Stararchitektur, die im Rampenlicht steht, zu verbinden. Unter Architektur des Empire verstehe ich deshalb auch Peter Eisenmans Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio, 1993. Das Kongresszentrum, Eisenmans erster Großauftrag, machte ihn zum globalen Stararchitekten. Es ist auch sein erstes Projekt, dessen Form aus der Reaktion auf die Umgebung generiert wurde und welches den ungeheuren Kräften des Empire – den Fluss von Waren und Personen und Informationen – ein Gesicht verlieh. Die Hauptansicht, die „fünfte Fassade“, ist die Dachlandschaft, welche die Satellitensicht vorwegnimmt, lange bevor Google Earth das Monopol für die

7 Keller Easterling: *Enduring Innocence, Global Architecture and Its Political Masquerades*, Cambridge 2005.

Vermessung der Welt an sich riss.<sup>8</sup> Ein zweites Beispiel für eine Architektur des Empire ist Ben von Berkel und Caroline Bos' Möbius House, 1998. Es handelt sich um den Versuch, ein Wohn- und Arbeitshaus für ein Ehepaar zu schaffen, welches erlauben soll, Leben und Arbeiten so ineinander zu verschränken, dass jeder für sich bleibt und doch mit dem anderen verwoben ist. Es ist ein Monument für die immaterielle Arbeit, aber auch für die narzisstische Vereinzeln. Und auch die dem Haus zugrunde liegende Struktur des Loop, der ja keinen Anfang und kein Ende kennt, lässt sich auf Hardt und Negris Idee der ewigen Gegenwart beziehen. Ein drittes Beispiel ist Rem Koolhaas' Projekt der Universal Headquarters von 1995, mit dem er versuchte, die Fusion von Universal und Seagram zu visualisieren, ganz bewusst als Fortsetzung zu Mies van der Rohe, der fünfzig Jahre zuvor das Seagram Building in New York errichtet hatte. Die Erkenntnis, dass die Architektur zu langsam sei, um der Veränderung des Konzerns zu folgen, resultierte im Scheitern des Projekts, aber auch in der Gründung von AMO.

Diesen Projekten ist gemein, dass sie das Phänomen Empire naturalisieren, also die Rohheit der ökonomischen Kräfte domestizieren und ästhetisieren, indem sie ihnen eine „natürliche“ Form verleihen. Man könnte nun einwenden, dass bereits Alvar Aalto dies tat, wenn er den Plenarsaal der Vereinten Nationen Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts als eine Art kosmische Baumhütte inszenierte oder Mies van der Rohe so vorging, wenn er, im Falle von Seagram, dem Monopolkapitalismus das Gesicht der Klassik verlieh und quasi eine monumentale Bronzeplastik realisierte. Allerdings war die Welt damals in zwei antagonistische Blöcke geteilt. Die *pax americana* hat die Welt verändert. Namentlich Koolhaas, der einflussreichste unter den Stararchitekten, ebnet den Weg für das Empire (ohne dass er dies explizit beabsichtigte), indem er dessen Konturen sichtbar macht und indem er Probleme, um in der Terminologie von Hardt und Negri zu bleiben, als Entbehrung benennt, beispielsweise als „junk space“ oder „generic city“. Seine Intention, die Stellung der Architektur in der Welt zu verbessern, fördert auch die Spekulationsbauten, die er verwirft. Er ist stets als einer der ersten zur Stelle, wenn es darum geht, neuralgische Punkte des expandierenden Kapitalismus zu entdecken, in *Delirious New York* vor dem Boom der 1980er, in China, in Lagos, am Golf. Er markiert das Terrain und verwandelt es in ein Bild, welches konsumierbar ist. Er nimmt in immer neuen Formen das Spektakel des Kapitalismus wahr und naturalisiert es, so wie die Künstler um 1800 die Alpen, die Meere, als

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8 Vgl. Philip Ursprung: „Verwerfungslinien der globalisierten Welt: Peter Eisenmans Greater Columbus Convention Center (1993)“. In: Wolfram Pichler und Ralph Ubl, Hg., *Topologie: Falten, Knoten, Netze, Stülpungen in Kunst und Theorie*, Wien 2009, S. 405–426.

**Koolhaas, der einflussreichste unter den Stararchitekten, ebnet den Weg für das Empire, indem er dessen Konturen sichtbar macht. Er stellt die Gewalttätigkeit des Kapitalismus, das Nebeneinander von Zerstörung und Aufbau als Katastrophe dar, aber letztlich als Naturereignis, das eine erhabene Schönheit entfaltet.**

etwas Erhabenes darstellten und diese zugleich für die Ausbeutung erschlossen. Er stellt die Gewalttätigkeit des Kapitalismus, das Nebeneinander von Zerstörung und Aufbau als Katastrophe dar, aber letztlich als Naturereignis, das eine erhabene Schönheit entfaltet. Er bringt das kapitalistisch Erhabene hervor, das eine Voraussetzung ist für die Expansion des Empire.

### **Die visuelle Kultur der Multitude**

Diese Naturalisierung, also die Idee, dass der „junk space“ seinerseits rezykliert und aufgewertet werden könne, dass das Rohe raffiniert werden könne, dass Aufbau und Abbau naturgemäß zusammenhängen, dass sie „zyklisch“ sind und Entwicklungslinien folgen, welche in Diagrammen und Kurven dargestellt und berechnet werden können, macht auch das Dilemma der Stararchitektur aus und erschwert die kritische Analyse des Phänomens. Hier könnte, so meine ich, die Architekturtheorie von den Büchern von Hardt und Negri profitieren. Es gibt ihrer Ansicht nach zwar keine Distanz – und damit implizit keine Möglichkeit der Kritik. Aber als Marxisten bleiben sie optimistisch und halten ein Gegenmittel bereit, welches das Empire *von innen* heraus ins Wanken bringen kann.

Sie bezeichnen es mit dem Begriff der Multitude, gleichzeitig Titel des Buchs, das sie 2004 auf *Empire* folgen ließen. Der Begriff geht auf das frühe 17. Jahrhundert zurück, also in die Zeit der Gründung von modernen, zentralisierten Staaten, und bezeichnet eine Alternative zum Konzept des Volkes, welches sich in einem Staat repräsentieren lässt. Die „Multitudo“, die plurale Vielfalt, die vom gemeinsamen Handeln und der Sorge um gemeinsame Angelegenheiten motiviert ist, aber nicht in einer Einheit aufgeht, existiert quasi latent, im Schatten der Idee des im Staat repräsentierten Volkes und der Idee der sozialen Klassen oder der gewerkschaftlichen Repräsentation. Die Multitude bildet sich anlässlich von spontanen Konflikten, etwa im antifaschistischen Widerstand, den Protestbewegungen der 1960er-Jahren, den Bürgerbewegungen gegen die sozialistischen Regimes von 1989, beispielsweise den Montagsdemos in Leipzig und zuletzt im Protest gegen das Treffen der World Trade Organisation in Seattle – die „Battle in Seattle“ – im

Jahre 1999. In ihren Worten: „Seattle war der erste globale Protest“.<sup>9</sup> „Singularitäten, die gemeinsam handeln“, ist die Ausgangsidee von Hardt und Negri.<sup>10</sup> Jenseits der Grenzen von ökonomischen Klassen kann die Multitude alle umfassen, welche nicht von ihrem Kapital leben können, also nicht nur der seit den 1970er Jahren unter Druck geratene Mittelstand, sondern auch die Armen beziehungsweise Arbeitslosen, welche beim Konzept Multitude, im Gegensatz zu den Modellen der Klassengesellschaft, nicht *außerhalb* stehen, sondern wesentlicher Bestandteil der Gesellschaft sind. So wie das Empire ist auch die Multitude ein Konzept, eine Utopie. Hardt und Negri interessieren sich denn auch weniger für die Frage, „Was ist die Multitude“, sondern „Was kann die Multitude werden?“<sup>11</sup>

Für die Dialektik von Hardt und Negri bietet das Empire auch die Bedingungen, unter denen die Multitude funktionieren kann. Transnationale, dezentrale Netzwerke, immaterielle Arbeit und Flexibilität sind strukturelle Eigenschaften, die beide verbinden. Wie könnte nun eine Architektur der Multitude aussehen, beziehungsweise wo können wir Tendenzen, Trends lokalisieren, die dazu führen können? Ein Beispiel bieten die kollaborativen Praktiken im New York der frühen 1970er-Jahre, die genau in jenem Moment der beginnenden Rezession auftauchen, den die meisten Theoretiker mit dem Beginn der Globalisierung gleichsetzen. Dazu gehören die urbanen Tanzperformances von Trisha Brown, etwa *Roof Piece* (1971), wo etwa ein Dutzend Tänzerinnen und Tänzer einander Bewegungen von Dach zu Dach weitergaben, an *Primary Accumulation* (1972), wo Gruppen von Akteuren an öffentlichen Orten auf dem Rücken lagen und *Leaning Duets* (1970), bei welchen zwei Akteure einander im Gleichgewicht hielten. Was diese Tanzperformances mit dem Konzept der Multitude verbindet, ist, dass sie nicht von einer Person allein realisiert werden können, dass sie so aussehen, als würden sie spontan zustande kommen, dass sie einer prekären Form von Arbeit entsprechen, wo die Grenze zwischen Arbeit und Leben, Beruf und Freizeit, ja Produzent und Konsument nicht klar getrennt sind, dass sie ein karnevaleskes Element aufweisen, eine Atmosphäre des Festlichen, Außergewöhnlichen, dass sie zeitlich begrenzt sind und dass sie kein statisches Produkt, sondern vielmehr Affekte und Beziehungen als Resultat hervorbringen.

Zur selben Zeit trat auch der als Architekt ausgebildete Gordon Matta-Clark mit kollektiven Performances in die Öffentlichkeit. In der Performance *Pig Roast*

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9 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri: *Multitude, Krieg und Demokratie im Empire*. Aus dem Englischen von Thomas Atzert und Andreas Wirthensohn, Frankfurt/M. 2004, S. 316.

10 Ebd., S. 123.

11 Ebd., S. 124.

(1971) unter der Brooklyn Bridge verband er Obdachlose mit Vernissagebesuchern und anderen Künstlern, indem er ein Schwein am Spieß briet, Barbecue-Sandwiches offerierte und aus herumliegendem Müll Unterstände baute. Prototypisch für eine Multitude ist die von ihm zusammen mit Künstlerinnen wie Laurie Anderson und anderen lancierte Gruppe Anarchitecture, welche 1973 bis 1974 Alternativen zur etablierten Architektur suchte und sich für neuen Formen der kollektiven Autorschaft interessierte. Gerade die Tatsache, dass die Ausstellung von Anarchitecture anscheinend ein Flop war, der zur Auflösung der Gruppe führte<sup>12</sup>, zeugt davon, dass sich dieser Gruppe nicht eignete, um in eine bestimmte Form gezwängt zu werden. Seine Performance *Fresh Air Cart* (1972), wo auf der Wall Street den überarbeiteten Brokern frische Luft angeboten wurde, gleicht den Taktiken der damals entstehenden Umweltschutzbewegungen, bleibt aber auf der Ebene des Spiels, der Fiktion – man achte beispielsweise darauf, dass der Wagen in beide Richtungen fahren kann – und entzieht sich damit der politischen Instrumentalisierung. Gerade weil sie die Möglichkeit thematisiert, Architektur jenseits von autoritären Strukturen, jenseits auch einer Repräsentationslogik, welche sie zwangläufig in den Dienst von Machtverhältnissen stellt, ins Leben zu rufen, trifft die von Matta-Clark angeregte Praxis sich mit Hardt und Negris Konzept der Multitude.

Die Performances von Matta-Clark und Trisha Brown werden gemeinhin nicht zur politischen Kunst gerechnet, also zu künstlerischen Praktiken, welche ganz explizit in politische Wirksamkeit übergehen wollen. Dennoch produzieren sie in einem Moment, wo dieser Begriff noch gar nicht diskutiert wird, Formen von Multitude. Dies mag ein Grund dafür sein, dass sie uns gerade jetzt wieder so aktuell und brisant erscheinen. Dies gilt auch für das Colectivo de Acciones de Arte (CADA), bestehend aus dem Soziologen Fernando Balcells, der Schriftstellerin Diamela Elit, dem Dichter Raul Zuria und den Künstlern Lotty Rosenfeld und Juan Castillo. Die Gruppe war nach dem Militärputsch 1973 unter der Diktatur von General Pinochet zwischen 1979 und 1985 aktiv. Zu ihren Aktionen im Außenraum gehörte *Ay Sudamerica (Oh, Südamerika!)* (1981). Aus sechs Sportflugzeugen warfen sie über den Armenvierteln von Santiago de Chile 400.000 Flugblätter ab, um, wie sie meinten, das Trauma der Zerstörung des Präsidentenpalasts und damit das Ende der Demokratie 1973 zu heilen. Auf den Flugblättern stand, dass jeder, der für die Erweiterung arbeite, und sei es die geistige Erweiterung, ein Künstler sei.

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<sup>12</sup> Vgl. die Ausstellung *Gordon Matta-Clark and Anarchitecture, A Detective Story*, kuratiert von Gwendolyn Owens, Philip Ursprung, Mark Wigley, Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University New York, 2006 (keine Publikation).



Auch im aktuellen Mainstream kann die Struktur der Multitude lokalisiert werden, zum Beispiel in Vanessa Beecrofts Performances mit Gruppen von weiblichen Akteurinnen, die in der Regel ein bis zwei Stunden dauern. Es gehört zu den spezifischen Eigenschaften dieser Kunst, dass sich die Akteurinnen zwar anfänglich den konsumierenden und voyeuristischen Blicken des Publikums darbieten, aber im Lauf der Zeit das geschlossene Bild kollabieren lassen, müde werden, sich hinsetzen. Sie lenken damit den Blick auf die ambivalente Situation menschlicher Arbeit, die sowohl immateriell als auch physisch – aber in jedem Fall prekär ist. So fand *VB 48 Palazzo Ducale, Genova*, am 3. Juli 2001 im Sala del Maggior Consiglio des Palastes statt. Beecroft setzte dabei neben einer Akteurin mit weißer zum ersten Mal Akteurinnen mit schwarzer Hautfarbe ein. 30 Models tauchten während der dreistündigen Performance langsam aus dem Dunkel auf, um sich zum Schluss im hellen Scheinwerferlicht zu zeigen. Das formale Spiel mit den hell-dunkel Kontrasten der imposanten Barockarchitektur lässt sich allegorisch in Beziehung zu Genua, die Stadt, in der Beecroft geboren wurde und aufwuchs, als früheres Zentrum einer imperialen Seemacht und damit als einen der Geburtsorte des Kolonialismus setzen. Und sie bezieht sich explizit auf die Globalisierung, wenn man bedenkt, dass die Performance zwei Wochen vor Beginn des G 8 Gipfels im Juli 2001 stattfand und die Bevölkerung zeitweise aus der eigenen Stadt ausgesperrt blieb. Das Kollabieren der Ordnung enthält, zumindest in meiner Interpretation, das Potenzial der pluralen Vielheit.

### **Architektur der Multitude**

Wie könnte eine Architektur der Multitude aussehen? Ein Beispiel ist das 2001 eröffnete Cafe Una der französischen Architekten Lacaton Vassal im Wiener Museumsquartier. Mit dem Entscheid, die bestehende Architektur mittels eines vorgehängten Himmels aus orientalischem wirkenden Fliesen – gestaltet von der türkischen Künstlerin Asiye Kolbai-Kafalier – in ein türkisches Kaffeehaus zu verwandeln, artikulierten die Architekten die zentrale Rolle solcher Begegnungsorte. Wenn auch das Projekt selber strukturell nicht der Spontaneität einer Multitude entspricht, so entwirft es doch eine Bühne, auf der Handlungen der Multitude stattfinden können. Die Diskrepanz – man denke an die damals bereits brisante Diskussion darüber, ob die Türkei zur Europäischen Union gehören sollte – wird nicht überspielt oder verbrämt, keiner Einheit unterworfen, sondern spielerisch aufgeführt.

Ein zweites Beispiel ist der aus Portugal stammende Pariser Architekt Didier Faustino und sein Bureau des Mésarchitectures. Sein erstes Projekt nach Abschluss des Studiums war es, in seinem Heimatdorf zusammen mit den Kindern

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eine Baumhütte zu errichten, wiederum ein Spiel, dass für unseren Kontext aber von Belang ist, weil es diejenigen, die von der politischen Repräsentation ausgeschlossen sind, die Kinder, zu Bauherren macht. Weil die Multitude auch arbeiten muss, entwarf er die Networker Units. Und weil sie schlafen muss, entwarf er 2003 ein One Square Meter House für die Utopiestadt Hygienopolis. Und sein bisher größter Auftrag anlässlich der Schweizer Landesausstellung 2002 bildete eine Alternative zu den Wahrzeichen der Expo.02, darunter das Blur Building von Diller & Scofidio. Ein umgebautes Transportschiff funktionierte abwechselnd als Kleinbühne und als Partyschiff und fuhr, wie ein Piratenschiff schwer zu orten, durch die Gewässer der Expo. Niemand wusste, was der Arteplage Mobile repräsentierte. Er war eine Bühne für Multituden, harmlos und potenziell gefährlich zugleich.

Das letzte Beispiel ist die Bibliothek Eberswalde von Herzog & de Meuron, entworfen 1995, also noch vor ihrem Sprung zur Stararchitektur, fertiggestellt 1999. Thomas Ruff entwarf das Bildprogramm für die vollständig mit Motiven bedeckte Fassade. Auch wenn die Rezeption seitens der lokalen Bevölkerung eher ablehnend war, entstand hier, auf dem Terrain der ehemaligen DDR, ein Bild für das Drama der deutsch-deutschen Teilung und Wiedervereinigung, welches die Diskrepanz zwischen sozialistischer und kapitalistischer Räumlichkeit artikuliert und damit einen Keil in die homogenisierende Tendenz des Empire treibt. Die Architekten übernahmen die im Sozialismus aufgehobene Trennung zwischen Bau und Bildschmuck, ohne die Motive einem politischen Programm zu unterwerfen. Umgekehrt unterbrachen sie die kapitalistische Raumkontinuität und errichteten eine Substanz, welche Bilder gleichzeitig absorbiert und produziert, ohne mit dem Innenraum der Bibliothek wirklich verbunden zu sein. Es bleibt ein unaufgelöster Rest bestehen, der die Ausschließlichkeit beider Darstellungsökonomien, sowohl derjenigen des Sozialismus als auch derjenigen des Kapitalismus, deutlich macht. Die Bibliothek führt diese Widersprüchlichkeit gleichsam auf. Der Bau konnte nur in dieser Zeit, also kurz nach Ende des Kalten Kriegs und nur an diesem Ort, also am Übergang zwischen den beiden einst getrennten Staaten, stattfinden, genau

in jenem Moment, als sich das Empire auszudehnen begann, aber kurz stockte, einen Strudel bildete angesichts der einander widersprechenden räumlichen und zeitlichen Regimes. Der Bau markiert eine Unterbrechung innerhalb der „geglätteten Welt“ und hält den Strudel im Gang. Auf Wunsch der Behörden fügte Ruff zwischen das Motiv der Bernauer Straße, die Bürger beim Bau der Mauer 1961 über eine Hauswand flüchtend zeigen, das Motiv der Feier vor dem Reichstag im November 1989 ein. Auch deshalb kann der Bau auch als Hommage an die bedeutendste Multitude der jüngeren Vergangenheit interpretiert werden, die Bürgerbewegung der DDR, welche die friedliche Revolution von 1989 durchführte.

Wenn wir die Überlegungen von Hardt und Negri auf unser Feld übertragen, kann die Architektur der Multitude, welche eine Alternative zur Architektur des Empire darstellt, durchaus innerhalb des Empire selbst entstehen. Ich habe als Beispiele deshalb bewusst Akteure gewählt, die von der Globalisierung getragen sind. Architekten können nicht ohne Bauherren operieren, sie können nicht auf Distanz gehen. Aber sie sind nicht gezwungen, sich mit den Bauherren zu identifizieren. Sie können Alternativen entwerfen zur Tendenz der Architektur, entweder das Spiel der herrschenden Kräfte zu naturalisieren und oder die Welt als geglättet zu akzeptieren. Das Interesse am gemeinsamen, und sei es kurzfristigen Handeln, an Geschichte sowie an zeitlichen und räumlichen Grenzen bildet eine Grundlage für jene Architektur, in der sich die Multitude, wenn sie denn eines Tages erscheinen sollte, einrichten könnte.



# Leslie Kavanaugh

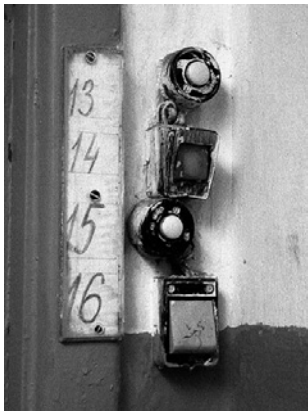
TU Delft

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*sterdam Press, 2007), Crossovers (with A.Graafland), Meditations on Space (2010), Aggregates (2010), and Chronotopologies: Hybrid Spatialities and Multiple Temporalities (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, forthcoming). Presently she is the founder and director of studiokav.com in Amsterdam, a multi-disciplinary and collaborative atelier. In addition, Kavanaugh is an affiliated Senior Scholar at the Philosophy Institute, Leiden University, the Netherlands.*

# TOWARD A NEO-MARXIST THEORY OF SPATIO-TEMPORALITY

This essay, this attempt at “thinking through”, is inspired by and initiated by a group of my students who were asked to participate in the Rotterdam Architecture Biennale of 2009. The topic of this Biennale is the “Open City” and one sub-group studying the Russian micro-rayon, is curated by Bart Goldhoorn and Alexander Sverdlov, with the title of the “Collective”. So, initially, we must ask, what is the “collective”, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the USSR, the neo-liberalization of the capitalist economy, and the almost complete reversal of post-War socialist-welfare states in Europe. In Holland, specifically for example, social housing has been privatized, although the one last bastion of socialist provisions of rent control have been tried but as of now failed to be destroyed. The so-called “Woningwet” of 1902, the Housing Law of 1902 in Holland enabled with the support of the government, the institution of housing corporations growing out of various trade organizations (one could not yet call them trade unions), to provide social services for their common community. For example, the diamond cutters organization collected donations from their members to set up a hospital for the treatment of workers who suffered directly from the nature of their labor of “slijperslong”, a kind of brown lung syndrome specifically caused by polishing diamonds. This project is now famous in international architectural circles as the Duiker Sanatorium in Hilversum. At present, the building has been completely renovated to its original state, including furniture and paint colors, by governmental funds for renovation of cultural monuments, and is used as an obesity clinic, and as an operation theater for plastic surgery. Signs of the times. In Holland, at present, the “collective” has been appropriated by the speculative real estate market.



Similarly, yet for completely different reasons, in the vast housing estates of Russia the privatization of mass social housing projects has led to a bizarre deconstruction of notions of the collective. Originally planned as self-sustaining communities where the state was responsible for planning, production of components, “template” designs of individual apartments, and maintenance; at present inhabitants are given “vouchers” in order to purchase an apartment. You may, indeed, “own” your own apartment, but have no control over the wider social process of decision making. Your apartment can be torn down, for example, without proper hearings or social procedures. Furthermore, the extent of one’s intervention is in the investment in renovating the interior of one’s own apartment, often with heavy steel doors and locks in order to prevent thieves from robbing you of your “capital accumulation”. There is, however, a border at the front door. There exists no mechanism for “collective” decision making as to the expenditure of maintenance costs, or even common concerns within the apartments on a stairwell, or an area of development and its urban landscaping and connections to the Metro, for example.

Consequently, somewhere between these two extremes of the dissolution of the “collective” within global Empire, in one way we are still careening, as Marx would say, between one financial crisis to another. However, we stand at the historical moment in world history, unprecedented, where more people live in urban environments, than in rural environments. We as a species are now truly a “civic society”, a collective that attempts to define what it means to be a social being. Questions of the “collective” in a global interdependent economy are more urgent than ever. Yet, what can we say about the “collective”, when every notion of the collective, both in the Democratic Socialist countries of Western Europe, and the communist project in Russian and Eastern-bloc countries has been completely dismantled, or emptied out?

How, too, then is architecture to intercede in a geo-political situation marked by “Empire”, or neo-colonialism, or most recently, the moral and fiscal failure of neo-liberal capitalism?

**We as a species are now truly a “civic society”, a collective that attempts to do what it means to be a social being. Yet, what can we say about the “collective”, when every notion of the collective has been completely dismantled, or emptied out?**

In order to sketch out the problematic, I turn to the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* published in 2000.<sup>1</sup> Following on the heels of the fall of the Berlin wall, and the re-establishment of autonomous nation-states in Eastern Europe, this work firstly defines “Empire”, as a contemporary condition as opposed to “Imperialism”, and most importantly, as a way forward out of the, until recently, hegemonic triumph of neo-liberal hyper-Capitalism. Negri and Hardt define Empire as neither a Hobbesian nor a Lockean variant of the sovereignty of a nation-state; rather, a paradigm shift that forces together necessarily the economical and political powers of a supra-national order. A global order or interdependence has emerged from the relative autonomy of sovereign nation-states. Truly, as Marx predicted, the economical order rules over the political or social. The economic becomes not only the relation between persons, between laborers, but also between nations. Capital, for Marx, is not a ‘thing’, but a relation. Consequently, a new logic and structure of rule, of right, of political economy has coalesced. This new form, Empire, in Negri and Hardt’s terminology, is composed of a series of national and supra-national organizations united under the single logic of neo-liberal capitalism.

To briefly summarize, Empire in contradistinction to Imperialism is characterized by the following: Empire establishes not one center of power, including the US, but a multiplicity of centers in a global network; Empire does not respect fixed boundaries, but rather thrives upon the breaking through of boundaries to the rule of capital; Empire necessarily incorporates and parasites off of the entire globe. Accordingly, Empire modulates networks of command by managing hybrid identities, mounting flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges. Empire, nevertheless, is still a transition within the capitalist mode of production, but one that is moving from the industrial to the communicative means of surplus value. Empire still relies upon, unfortunately, the exploitation of the worker in order to create surplus value. Following Foucault, Negri and Hardt describe the “creation of ter-

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1 Hardt, Michael and Negri: Antonio: *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000).

ritory” involved in the hegemony of capitalist political economy as a “bio-political production”, a production of social life itself. Consequently, Empire opens out into all aspects of civil society, seeking to directly rule over human behavior, and creating the very world it inhabits. Going beyond the description that Marx gave to productive labor, where a worker must be paid only a “living wage” which is determined by not only his survival subsistence, but also his “reproductive labor”, ensuring the next generation of workers to be exploited. Empire, in extension, commodifies human reproduction itself.

Truly, the task of Empire is to reorganize and to redirect the process of capital flows. Most importantly for Negri and Hardt, any resistance to capitalism is never from without, since an outside is impossible; rather, a transformation from within Empire. Globalization is not unified, but rather all-encompassing, a totalitarianism of sorts. Consequently, any resistance must also not depend upon the organization of the class struggle across cultural, racial, or gender lines. Resistance can be mounted in small-scale initiatives, ultimately, and incrementally undermining the power of Empire to coalesce, to coerce, to suppress.

Yet, this strategy is not a return to a barter economy as David Harvey suggests, or an Arcadian “outside”, mendaciously protected from the evils and the reaches of capitalism.<sup>2</sup> As Negri and Hardt point out: “the creative forces of the multitude that sustain Empire are also capable of autonomously constructing a counter-Empire, an alternative political organization of global flows and exchanges.”<sup>3</sup> These creative forces do not merely attack from the margins, or resist from without the machines of power, but rather create new legitimations of power that are hybrid, yet immanent and inclusive. The very development of capital into every corner of the earth in fact also makes its eco-political structure venerable to individual resistances because entry into the system through revolt automatically spreads throughout Empire. In addition, these forces for resistance

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2 Harvey, David: *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) especially pp. 257ff. See also Callinicos, Alex: *The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx* (London and Sydney: Bookmarks Publishers, 1996). “Marx always conceived of the working class as the class whose own self-emancipation would also be the liberation of the rest of humanity. The socialist revolution to whose cause he devoted his life can only be, at one and the same time, the emancipation of the working class and the liberation of all the oppressed and exploited sections of society. Those who accept the truth of Marx’s views cannot rest content with a mere intellectual commitment... We cannot simply observe the world but must throw ourselves, as Marx did, into the practical task of building a revolutionary party amid the life and struggles of the working class. ‘The philosophers have interpreted the world,’ wrote Marx, ‘the point, however, is to change it.’ If Marxism is correct, then we must act on it.” p. 196–7.

3 See note 1, p. xv.u. See also p. 371ff.



are not defined narrowly by “class”, whether of labor, or neo-colonial, or gender. The desire for liberation is truly universal. In a way, this “within” is also a continuation of the project of Enlightenment, the encouragement of individuals to take responsibility for reason, for self development, for knowledge away from the institutions of government and the church. Today, Empire can be seen as a civic construction project, with individuals who are capable of taking responsibility not only for themselves, but the production of places of resistance, of communities that perhaps differ but support the self-determination of the whole each in its own singular way. As Negri and Hardt explicate:

*... our reasoning here is based on two methodological approaches that are intended to be non-dialectical and absolutely immanent: the first is critical and deconstructive, aiming to subvert the hegemonic languages and social structures and thereby reveal an alternative ontological basis that resides in the creative and productive practices of the multitude; the second is constructive and ethico-political, seeking to lead the processes of the production of subjectivity toward the constitution of an effective social, political alternative, a new constituent power.<sup>4</sup>*

“Collective action”, then becomes something more widely defined than the strikes of a particular class or guild of laborers, however united. Collective action is the power of the masses, truly, in a political economy somewhere in the interrupted notions of the development of socialism through the phase of a social democracy, and a more extreme democracy that is not merely reduced to “capitalism”, but well and truly representative of the “collective”, of the masses in all their hybridity and heterogeneity. Therefore, the class struggle becomes “classless” and more “democratic”; the revolt becomes a way of wielding the power of the multitude, the ethico-political; and the resistance becomes immanent and inclusive.

“Workers of the world unite!” Here “workers” are not just the proletarian, not just a class of skilled or semi-skilled laborers. In Marx’s terms, the worker is he who has nothing to sell but his own labor power. In this way, all workers are coerced into complicity with their own repression, subjugation, and exploitation. Yet in the construction of the ethico-political that is Empire, the singular forces create an immanent collective. We wish also to escape the classifications that separated us: theory vs. praxis, intellectual vs. laborer, knowledge vs. action. The “place” of power is indeed “u-topic”, for the position or situation of resistance disappears into the immanent field of power relations just as quickly as it arises—truly guerilla tactics.

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4 Ibid., p. 47.

Most of the theorizing about territories, boundaries, and the status of the Nation State in Europe after the war was highly influenced by Marxist philosophers, historians, and urban theorists. Yet with the effective collapse of communism, how do we think our way forward out of the impasse?

The Structure of Empire can be seen as a spatio-temporal conception beyond borders, and as a consequence, new structures can be explored. In *Empire* by Negri/Hardt, a new sort of socio-political structure arises. For them, the old framework of social and political relations no longer applies. However, this new network neither arose spontaneously, nor transcended the old by singular powers. Rather a paradigm shift has taken place, constructing Empire. A hyper-capitalistic conception of global order arises bringing together various strands of power, both economic, social, and political. Nevertheless, just because this system lays itself out horizontally rather than vertically does not mean that the capacity to domination and repression is any less potential. Global Empire employs strategies of intervention that do not necessarily include waging war in a traditional sense. Indeed, war is no longer localized, rather also a layer of immanence that slips through any kind of determination of sanction and repression. For the most part, strategies of Empire rely on techniques of command over global space. As Negri and Hardt state:

*Empire is emerging today as the center that supports the globalization of productive networks and casts its widely inclusive net to try to envelop all power relations within its world order [...] Empire is born and shows itself as crisis.*<sup>5</sup>

But, is Empire really new? In *Grundrisse*, “The Rise and Fall of Capitalism”, Karl Marx had already diagnosed the evolution of capitalism: “There is nothing which can escape, by its own elevated nature or self-justifying characteristics, from this cycle of social production and exchange... But because capital sets up any such boundary as a limitation, and is thus ideally over and beyond it.”<sup>6</sup> Negri and Hardt propose the thesis that “Empire” is an emerging form of sovereignty, a new logical order and structure of power. Yet within this network of power is also the means to continue oppression of all kinds, perhaps other advantages emerge. The network of political power incorporates and subsumes. Globalization is not fixed or unified or univocal; rather it is ubiquitous. In this way, Negri and Hardt can be said to be—not the fruition of global hyper-capitalism—but the denouement of Marxist capitalist production.

5 Ibid., p. 20.

6 Marx, Karl: “The Communist Manifesto.” In: *Sämtliche Werke*, p. 398.

The chief problem, however, with the argument posed by Negri and Hardt in *Empire*, is the same one that has historically plagued any revolutionary movement. The revolutionary inevitably becomes the tyrant. Even though they acknowledge that, “even the dominant countries are now dependent on the global system; the interactions of the world market have resulted in a generalized disarticulation of all economies.”<sup>7</sup> Yet instead of embracing this ubiquitous character of the world market, for there is truly no escape, Negri and Hardt argue for yet another over-arching transcendental rule of law, a “global constitution”. Even though I agree that a mere shift between isolationist hierarchical authoritarian structures of organized capital is not eradicated by a horizontal network structure for capital can flow where its exploitation allows the most surplus value.

Negri and Hardt’s version of capitalist sovereignty is a scenario where *capital therefore demands not a transcendent power but a mechanism of control that resides on the plane of immanence. Through the social development of capital, the mechanisms of modern sovereignty—the processes of coding, overcoding, and recoding that imposed a transcendent order over a bounded and segmented social terrain—are progressively replaced by an axiomatic: that is, a set of equations and relationships that determines and combines variables and coefficients immediately and equally across various terrains without reference to prior and fixed definitions or terms.*<sup>8</sup>

Yet they admit that “only the multitude through its practical experimentation will offer the models and determine when and how the possible becomes real.”<sup>9</sup>

In summary, any new theory of spatio-temporality in the beginning of the twenty-first century must take into account the following: We stand at the historical turning point in that a majority of world citizens are now living in urban environments, so we need to ask again: “what does ‘the collective’ mean?”

The nature of work, and therefore the nature of the proletariat revolution, is radically different than in Marx’s time. “Worker” can also mean knowledge worker. The “worker” is also ethnico-linguistically diverse, and this diversity needs to be actualized rather than being used to thwart revolutionary struggle. Therefore, any revolution must not just be a proletarian revolution, but a revolution in the very social relations of human beings living in communities. Workers, whether

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7 See note 1, p. 284.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 326–7.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 411.

**We architects need to dare to care again, and not get non-productively encumbered with fruitless pseudo-theoretical debates. In this regard, I will happily be accused of being “utopian”.**

bankers or non-skilled laborers, must become a force for change, and not just a producer of the very conditions of their collective exploitation. Workers “have no country”.<sup>10</sup>

We wish to eradicate binary oppositions of intellectual vs. laborer, theory vs. praxis, knowledge vs. action. These oppositions, as well as other ontological categories such as authoritarian transcendental power structures, are no longer acceptable or even tenable. We must “let things be” and consider processes in all their complexity and heterogeneity.

With the acknowledgement that both communist regimes and neo-liberal capitalism have their mechanisms for repression, exploitation, and obstruction, a middle-way, a more representative, and immanent democratic “socialism” of the masses is preferable. This position would be at once more “democratic” than the capitalist mechanisms that are often conflated to its equivalent, and more “social” than the fully developed stage of communism theorized by Marx/Lenin as a classless society.

The Marxist/Leninist notion of “uneven development” needs to be thought through precisely from a global perspective of dynamic capital flows. No corner of the earth today escapes, and capitalism in fact exploits this very unevenness. “Capital is an organism that cannot sustain itself without constantly looking beyond its boundaries, feeding off its external environment. Its outside is essential.”<sup>11</sup> Capital is a voracious beast, necessarily consuming all in its wake, until no corner of the globe goes “undeveloped”.

Architecture, in my opinion, needs a change of scale. This would mean a return to an ethico-social engagement for our profession, as well as the “sweep your own stoop” approach of the small scale, (even urban guerilla tactics) in order to intercede in our local communities; that is to say, micro-movements for resistance, transforming the world in between the cracks.

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<sup>10</sup> See note 6, p. 260.

<sup>11</sup> See note 1, p. 224.

And lastly, we architects need to dare to care again, and not get non-productively encumbered with fruitless pseudo-theoretical debates. In this regard, I will happily be accused of being “utopian”.

To end with, I quote the best description of what architects do, and what architecture can be, from David Harvey’s *Spaces of Hope*,<sup>12</sup> what he calls the “insurgent architect”.

*Through changing our world, we change ourselves [...] Decisions carry their own determinations, their own closures, their own authoritarian freight. Praxis is about confronting the dialectic in its ‘either/or’ rather than its transcendent ‘both/and’ form [...] In reflecting on what we insurgent architects do, a space must be left for the private and the personal—a space in which doubt, anger, anxiety, and despair as well as certitude, altruism, hope and elation may flourish [...] No one can hope to change the world without changing themselves.*<sup>13</sup>

Or, as Negri and Hardt argue: “What we need is to create a new social body... Our lines of flight, our exodus must be constituent and create a real alternative... we need also to construct a new mode of life and above all, a new community.”<sup>14</sup> Is this not *the true constructive project* of the architect? Is this not a *utopia* worthy of its name?

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12 Harvey, David: *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

13 *Ibid.*, p. 234–5.

14 See note 1, p. 204. See also Karatani, Kojin: *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003). Karatani especially in the final chapter entitled: “Toward Transcritical Counteractions: A Possible Communism”, explicates an initiative of what is called, “associationism” in Japan, the NAM, the New Associationist Movement founded in 2000. “... a countermovement against the capitalist nation-state”, Karatani proposes, “would gradually construct the “association” as the principle of exchange as an alternative to those of the capitalist nation-state, and be an association of those associations.” (p. 303). “The starting point of the counteraction”, he goes on to say, “is each individual. But this is not an abstract individual, but an individual who is placed in the nexus of social relations. Every individual lives in multidimensions.” (p. 306). Thus, Karatani expands upon the profound insight of Marx that capital is a social relation, in the suggestion that a counteraction or resistance might take two forms: creating new associations or notions of the collective, and “voting with the euro”, or resistance to participating in any consumption that is exploitative.



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# „MULTITUDE“ VERSUS „IDENTITÄT“

## *Architektur in Zeiten des globalen Städtewettbewerbes*

Blickt man ins Programm und in die Abstracts dieses Kolloquiums, scheint der Multitude-Begriff das am häufigsten aufgegriffene Stichwort aus den Schriften von Antonio Negri und Michael Hardt zu sein, die unser Gesamtthema vorgeben. Offensichtlich erweist sich das Konzept der „Menge“ oder der „Vielheit“ – wie man „Multitude“ wohl in mancher Hinsicht treffender übersetzt – als besonders anregend zur Diskussion der Frage nach der Architektur in der neuen Weltordnung.<sup>1</sup> „Multitude“ bezeichnet ein Netzwerk, ein Beziehungsgeflecht von Singularitäten, das nicht homogen oder mit sich identisch ist und in dem Hardt und Negri das widerständige und transformierende Potenzial gegen die Macht des Empire sehen.

Die Attraktion dieses Konzepts für unser Kolloquium mag daher nicht zuletzt darin liegen, dass damit eine zumindest indirekte Auseinandersetzung mit Rem Koolhaas verbunden ist – „our ascetic saint“, wie ihn Philip Ursprung in seinem Abstract bezeichnet hat.<sup>2</sup> Koolhaas hatte 1993, in einem dann zwei Jahre später in „Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large“ publizierten Aufsatz prognostiziert, dass

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1 „Vielheit“ für „multitude“ im Interview mit Michael Hardt in: *taz*, 18.03.2002, S. 15. Michael Hardt / Antonio Negri: *Multitude. Krieg und Demokratie im Empire*, Frankfurt / New York 2004; vgl. auch die Beiträge in Teil I. *Multitude*, von: Marianne Pieper et al. (Hg.): *Empire und die biopolitische Wende. Die internationale Diskussion im Anschluss an Hardt und Negri*, Frankfurt / New York 2007.

2 Vgl. den Beitrag von Philip Ursprung in diesem Band.

die Städte unter den Bedingungen der Globalisierung ihre spezifischen Formen verlieren und in einen Zustand der Eigenschaftslosigkeit versinken würden.<sup>3</sup> Der Globalisierungsprozess überführe die Städte also in die unspezifische Form jener „Generic City“, die der Autor im selben Opus beschreibt.<sup>4</sup> Ausgehend von ironischen Bemerkungen zum Werk von zeitgenössischen Kollegen konstatiert Koolhaas im Globalisierungs-Aufsatz eine radikale Veränderung der Architektur, die sich von örtlichen Kontexten und persönlichem Wissen lösen werde. Die damit verbundene Apokalypse („Armageddon“) des Architektenberufes böte zugleich die Möglichkeit zur Geburt einer neuen globalen Architektur, die Möglichkeit eines Infrastrukturprojekts – und hier kehrt der alte demiurgische Traum der Architekten wieder – „to change the world“, quasi die Schlussnummer zur promethischen Soap opera (Koolhaas).

Bereits wenige Jahre vor Koolhaas' Publikation hatte der Anthropologe Marc Augé in seiner Untersuchung über Nicht-Orte die Zunahme des „planetarischen Einerleis“ insbesondere in den Städten konstatiert.<sup>5</sup> Die „Übermoderne“, wie er die durch ein Übermaß an Zeit, Raum und Individualität charakterisierte Gegenwart bezeichnet, würde zunehmend Räume hervorbringen – und wir uns in diesen zunehmend aufhalten –, die selbst keine anthropologischen Orte seien: Transiträume, Räume des provisorischen Aufenthalts, sorgsam bereinigt von jeglicher Spur von Geschichte oder von konkreten ortsbezogenen Kontexten, in Struktur, Ästhetik, Grenze und Kontrolle immer und überall ähnlich. Während anthropologische Orte organisch-soziale Beziehungen hervorbringen, „schaffen die Nicht-Orte eine solitäre Vertraglichkeit.“<sup>6</sup>

Inzwischen scheint es, wie Ralph Ubl bemerkt, „eine elementare Gedankenfigur moderner Subjektphilosophie, dass ästhetisch gestimmte Subjek-

3 Rem Koolhaas / Bruce Mau: „Globalization“. In: *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large. Office for Metropolitan Architecture*, ed. Jennifer Sigler, Rotterdam 1995, S. 363–368 (datiert 1993).

4 Rem Koolhaas: „The Generic City“. In: ebd., S. 1246–1264; dt. in der Übersetzung von Fritz Schneider: „Die Stadt ohne Eigenschaften“, in: *Arch+ 132*, 1996, S. 18–27.

5 Marc Augé: *Non-Lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, Paris 1992, dt.: *Orte und Nicht-Orte. Vorüberlegungen zu einer Ethnologie der Einsamkeit*, Frankfurt/M. 1994.

6 Den Begriff der Nicht-Orte finden wir auch wieder bei Hardt und Negri, allerdings ohne erkennbaren Bezug zu Augé, sondern im Zusammenhang mit der Diskussion von Guy Debords Untersuchung der „Gesellschaft des Spektakels“ (Guy Debord: *La société du spectacle*, Paris 1967, dt.: *Die Gesellschaft des Spektakels*, Hamburg 1978). In der imperialen Gesellschaft, so Hardt und Negri, sei der Ort des Spektakels virtuell, ein Nicht-Ort der Politik. Die Macht sei nicht mehr zu verorten, daher sei „das Empire (...) ein *ou-topia*, oder genauer: ein *Nicht-Ort*“ (Michael Hardt / Antonio Negri: *Empire. Die neue Weltordnung*, Frankfurt / New York 2003, 202).



tivität einer Negation entspringt, die man (...) als ‚Aufhebung des (anthropologischen) Ortes‘ beschreiben könnte.“<sup>7</sup> Die skizzierten Beobachtungen sind vielfach und pluridisziplinär wiederholt worden. Mit vertieftem Bezug zu Architektur und Stadtplanung hat etwa der Stadtsoziologe Manuel Castells im ersten Band seiner Trilogie zum Informationszeitalter konstatiert, dass sich die sinnhafte Beziehung zwischen Architektur und Gesellschaft, die über alle Differenzen hinweg für alle bisherigen Gesellschaften gegolten habe, nun verwische: „Weil die räumliche Manifestation der herrschenden Interessen weltweit und quer durch alle Kulturen stattfindet, führt die Entwurzelung von Erfahrung, Geschichte und spezifischer Kultur als Bedeutungshintergrund zur allgemeinen Verbreitung einer a-historischen, a-kulturellen Architektur.“<sup>8</sup> Und wie Koolhaas konstatiert, „globalization lend virtualy to real buildings, keeps them indigestible, forever fresh“<sup>9</sup>, so glaubt auch Castells, für die heutige Gesellschaft – die er durch die Logik des Raumes der Ströme geprägt sieht – sei jene Architektur am adäquatesten und am meisten mit Bedeutung aufgeladen, die gar nicht versuche, kulturelle Codes zu transponieren, sondern „deren Formen so neutral, so sauber, so transparent sind, dass sie überhaupt nicht vorgeben, irgendetwas zu sagen.“<sup>10</sup> Es sind dies Augés Nicht-Orte und so illustriert auch Castell das Gesagte anhand von Airportarchitektur, und zwar von Ricardo Bofills Eingangshalle zum Flughafen Barcelona. Die Passagiere müssten sich inmitten der kalten Schönheit mit der schrecklichen Wahrheit auseinandersetzen, dass sie mitten im Raum der Ströme allein seien. Anders als im (historischen) „Raum der Orte“ – für den Castells das Pariser Belleville-Viertel als Beispiel nennt, in dem er in den 1970er-Jahren die Kämpfe gegen die Stadterneuerung forschend begleitet hatte – gibt es im Raum der Ströme kein aktives Interagieren mit der alltäglichen physischen Umwelt.<sup>11</sup>

Jüngst hat Gerhard Matzig den Befund der globalen Ortlosigkeit am Beispiel der sog. Stararchitekten konkretisiert. Eines von Koolhaas’ liebsten Stichworten aufgreifend, konstatiert Matzig, die Stars würden zunehmend als Marken agieren und damit die Städte austauschbar machen. Er stellt sich vor, wie komisch es sein müsse, „wenn sich auf dem deutschen Städtetag die Bürgermeister tref-

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7 Ralph Ubl: „Raumskeptiker – Lefebvre und Augé“. In: *Aufräumen: Raum-Klassiker neu sortiert. Texte zur Kunst* Nr. 47, 2002, auch online unter: [www.textezurkunst.de/47/aufräumen-raum-klassiker-neu-sortiert/](http://www.textezurkunst.de/47/aufräumen-raum-klassiker-neu-sortiert/) (letzter Zugriff: 17.6.2009)

8 Manuel Castells: *Der Aufstieg der Netzwerkgesellschaft. Das Informationszeitalter* Teil 1, Opladen 2001, S. 474.

9 Koolhaas / Mau 1995, wie Anm. 3, S. 367.

10 Wie Anm. 8, S. 476.

11 Ebd., S. 481.

fen, um sich gegenseitig zu übertrumpfen: Christian Ude kann etwa zwei Herzog-und-de-Meurons, zwei Coop-Himmelb(l)aus und demnächst vielleicht einen gebauten und einen beratenden Foster ins Feld führen, während Düsseldorf (...) um Libeskind buhlt, Wolfsburg aber schon lange eine Hadid besitzt.“<sup>12</sup> Architektur sei eine internationale Kunst, fährt Matzig fort und fragt rhetorisch, warum sich die Globalisierung also ausgerechnet auf diesem Terrain zugunsten eines Regionaldenkens zurücknehmen solle, das ja überdies immer furchtbar provinziell wirke. Darauf gibt er gleich selber die Antwort: „Vielleicht deshalb, weil uns schon der ‚International Style‘ austauschbare Stadtansichten in aller Welt beschert hat, weil Bauen immer nur im lokalen Kontext mit viel Ortskenntnis zu wahrer Größe findet – und vielleicht auch deshalb, weil man den Jetset der Architektur erfahrungsgemäß eher zu Presseterminen als zu Planungsgesprächen motivieren kann.“<sup>13</sup>

Matzig nennt zur Illustration seiner Ausführungen Beispiele von Zaha Hadid und Norman Foster, mit Koolhaas könnte man auch auf Richard Meier verweisen. Oder auf den von Matzig ebenfalls angesprochenen Daniel Libeskind mit seinen derangierten Türmen und den die urbane Orthogonalität brechenden Pfeilen und Keilen. Was beim Jüdischen Museum in Berlin unmittelbar evident und noch Bedeutung vermittelnd war, wirkt beispielsweise am Militärgeschichtlichen Museum in Dresden nur noch als Attitüde oder eben als Marke. Dieser sollte gleichenorts mit dem sog. Kinderwelt-Haus an der Neustädter Hauptstraße die Geschlossenheit eines der stadträumlich gelungensten und bis heute funktionierenden Boulevards der DDR-Planungen geopfert werden. Das Vorhaben scheiterte mitten im begonnen Umbau daran, dass die städtische Wohnbaugenossenschaft als Bauherr privatisiert wurde und die global agierende Immobiliengesellschaft als neuer Besitzer kein Interesse an diesem Low-Profit-Projekt hatte.

Mit Dresden ist eine Stadt genannt, die in den Debatten um Stadt und Architektur in der Regel nicht mit Dekonstruktionen und mit globaler Uniformität zusammengebracht wird, nicht mit „austauschbaren Stadtansichten“, sondern mit einer als „Canaletto-Blick“ gerühmten Silhouette, die geradezu exemplarisch für die scheinbare Gegenbewegung steht: für das auch baulich artikulierte Streben nach „Identität“. Hartnäckig und leidenschaftlich bestehen in Dresden Meinungsführer und wesentliche Teile der Bevölkerung darauf, trotz gründerzeitlicher Umgestaltung und massiven Kriegszerstörungen mit anschließenden

12 Gerhard Matzig: „Die Väter der Kulisse. Star-Architekten machen die Städte austauschbar“. In: *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Nr. 26, 2. Februar 2009, S. 11.

13 Ebd.

Abb. 1: Zeitgenössische Architektur in historischem Gewand: der Dresdner Neumarkt.



großflächigen Beräumungen eine Barockstadt zu sein. Nach dem medial erfolgreich weltweit kommunizierten Wiederaufbau der Frauenkirche erfolgt in deren Schatten die Neubebauung des Neumarkts entlang der alten Fluchten mit barock kostümierten Häusern (Abb. 1). Diese folgen freilich nur in den Fassaden der alten Parzellierung, dahinter und darunter sind sie größtenteils zu den heute üblichen parzellenübergreifenden Großeinheiten zusammengefasst, für deren Tiefgaragen zugleich die letzten materiellen Reste der barocken Bebauung auf Kellerniveau beseitigt wurden.<sup>14</sup> Das ließ sich offenbar nicht verhindern – im Gegensatz zu einem Neubau in moderner Formsprache als (respektvoll untergeordnetes) Gegenüber zur Frauenkirche: Rasch waren nach Bekanntgabe der Resultate eines vom potenziellen Investor ausgelobten Wettbewerbs für eine neue Gewandhausbebauung die Massen mobilisiert, die die eingeschüchterten Politiker zu einem zehnjährigen Moratorium zwangen. Der neu errichtete Neumarkt wird damit in barocker Anmutung erbaut – und so eine Homogenität erlangen, wie sie der Ort zuvor in der Geschichte gewiss nie hatte.

Ähnlich suchen auch andere Großstädte mit dem baulichen Zugriff auf bestimmte Phasen ihrer Vergangenheit ihr Profil – oder eben ihre „Identität“ – sichtbar zu stärken. Neuerdings findet man dafür häufiger den eigentlich in der Behindertenpädagogik entstandenen Begriff der „Rehistorisierung“. Berlins Mitte soll mit dem rekonstruierenden Neubau der Kommandatur, der Rekonstruktion

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14 Die Fachdiskussionen sind nun gut dokumentiert im Band: *Historisch contra modern? Erfindung oder Rekonstruktion der historischen Stadt am Beispiel des Dresdner Neumarkts*, hg. von der Sächsischen Akademie der Künste und dem Stadtplanungsamt der Landeshauptstadt Dresden, Dresden 2008; vgl. jüngst auch: Arnold Bartetzky: „Frauenkirche und Neumarkt in Dresden“. In: *New Urbanity. Die europäische Stadt im 21. Jahrhundert*. Katalog Deutsches Architekturmuseum Frankfurt, Salzburg 2008, S. 146–151, und Hans-Rudolf Meier: „Paradigma oder Büchse der Pandora? Die Frauenkirche – oder wie Dresden zum Zentrum der gegenwärtigen Rekonstruktionswelle wurde“. In: Harald Bodenschatz / Hans Schultheiß (Hg.): *Zur Zukunft der alten Stadt. In memoriam August Gebebler. Die Alte Stadt* 36, 2009/1, S. 59–76.

der Bauakademie, insbesondere aber mit dem Neubau der Schlossfassaden wieder deutlicher als die von der preußischen Monarchie geprägte Hauptstadt in Erscheinung treten. Zur kommunalen kommt in Berlin die nationale Symbolik als Hauptstadt hinzu. Überaus deutlich wird das beim sog. Humboldt-Forum im neualten Schloss, wo, wie Aleida Assmann unlängst bemerkte, „die neugebackene Nation“ unverkennbar „in einen symbolischen Wettbewerb mit Frankreich und Italien“ tritt.<sup>15</sup> Zugleich sollen mit dem Schlossneubau die Zentrumsplanungen der Hauptstadt der DDR überschrieben werden. Im größeren Maßstab strebt das Planwerk Innenstadt die „Reurbanisierung (...) der historischen Mitte“ durch die Neuentdeckung „verschütteter Lebensadern der Berliner Innenstadt“ an, was nicht nur im Osten der Stadt zu Konflikten mit Stadtkonzepten der Moderne führte.<sup>16</sup>

Jüngstes Beispiel vermeintlicher „Rehistorisierung“ ist Frankfurt am Main, wo zwischen Römer und Dom nach dem Abbruch des Technischen Rathauses aus den 1970er-Jahren ein Stück kleinteiliger Altstadt als Kombination von Rekonstruktionen und streng reglementierten Neubauten – Fassadenfarbe und -material, Traufhöhen, Dachneigungen und Fenstergrößen sollen den Vorgaben einer strengen Satzung folgen – neu erstehen wird. Über eine mögliche Ausdehnung der solcherart zu erneuernden „historischen Altstadt“ auf benachbarte Zonen und damit um weitere Korrekturen von der Moderne zugunsten einer neu gebauten Vergangenheit wird noch gestritten.<sup>17</sup>

Gemeinsam ist Dresden, Berlin, Frankfurt und manch anderen Orten mit ähnlichen Zielen jeweils eine aktive, professionell agierende Bürgerinitiative, die in der Regel von der lokalen Presse tatkräftig unterstützt wird. Dabei werden Topoi wie die behauptete Geschichtsvergessenheit der Moderne bedient, die nun zu korrigieren seien. Explizit wird stets auch der Zusammenhang mit der Globalisierung hergestellt, der mit einem Gegengewicht, mit Geborgenheitsstrukturen

15 Aleida Assmann: *Geschichte im Gedächtnis. Von der individuellen Erfahrung zur öffentlichen Inszenierung*, München 2007, S. 121ff., hier: S. 126.

16 [www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/planwerke/de/planwerk\\_innenstadt/einleitung/](http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/planwerke/de/planwerk_innenstadt/einleitung/) Beispielhaft zu den Konflikten am Kulturforum: Gabi Dolf-Bonekämper: „Kulturforum 2. Konkurrierende Leitbilder der Stadtplanung. Oder: Was passiert, wenn auf Bau und Gegenbau ein Gegen-Gegenbau folgen soll?“ In: Hans-Rudolf Meier (Hg.): *Denkmale in der Stadt – die Stadt als Denkmal. Probleme und Chancen für den Stadtumbau*, Dresden 2006 (Schriftenreihe Stadtentwicklung und Denkmalpflege Bd. 1), S. 155–162.

17 Zu Frankfurt jetzt auch: Marianne Rodenstein: „Vergessen und Erinnern der im Zweiten Weltkrieg zerstörten Frankfurter Altstadt. Ein Beitrag zur politischen Produktion eines Stadtbildes“. In: Bodenschatz / Schultheiß 2009 (wie Anm. 14), S. 45–58, mit einem m. E. aber zu einfachen Erklärungsmodell eines Dualismus zwischen erinnernden Bürgern und vergessenden Planern.

Abb. 2: Fingierte Vielfalt:  
Die rekonstruierte Hülle  
des Thurn und Taxis  
Palais in Frankfurt als  
distinguierter Eingang  
zu den Türmen des sog.  
PalaisQuartiers.



(Wilfried Lipp) zu begegnen sei. So heißt es etwa in der *Frankfurter Rundschau* zum Entscheid, rekonstruierend und nicht neu entwerfend zu bauen, es seien „Traditionen, die der Bürger in Zeiten der Globalisierung gut gebrauchen kann,“ zu inszenieren.<sup>18</sup>

Gerade in Frankfurt wird aber unmittelbar und anschaulich evident, dass es sich bei den Bemühungen um eine neue historische Altstadt nicht um eine Gegenbewegung zur Globalisierung handelt, sondern sich diese baulich artikulierten Identitätskonstruktionen zur Stadt der Globalisierung vielmehr komplementär verhalten. Gleichzeitig wie die kleinteilige Fachwerk-Altstadt neu erstehen soll, wird – wie es heißt: um in der Globalisierung bestehen zu können – der weitere Ausbau „Mainhattans“ vorangetrieben und werden neue „Hochpunkte“ als „Landmarken“ im Westen und Osten der Stadt geplant. Die parallele Forcierung und Kommunizierung zweier auf den ersten Blick widersprüchlicher Leitbilder ist ein für Frankfurt spezifisches und dort schon seit gut 25 Jahren praktiziertes Phänomen (Abb. 2); das damit verbundene Faktum freilich ist keineswegs singulär. Selbst die leitbildmäßig ja eindeutig positionierte „Barockstadt“ Dresden beteiligt sich, wie wir am Beispiel Libeskind gezeigt haben, am globalen Wettstreit um die Marken-Architekten (an dem sie mit dem internationalen Kuppel-Spezialisten Foster am Hauptbahnhof einen weiteren Treffer zu verzeichnen hat). Es ist daher folgerichtig, wenn es aus dem Verein Historischer Neumarkt, der am namensgebenden Platz vehement für vollständige Rekonstruktionen eintritt, heißt, man habe nichts gegen moderne Architektur, nur dürfe diese nicht im Zentrum zum Zuge kommen.<sup>19</sup>

18 *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 25.8.2007, F3; zitiert nach Martina Löw: *Soziologie der Städte*, Frankfurt/M. 2008, S. 152.

19 Nebenbei sei in diesem Zusammenhang auf eine bemerkenswerte Verständigungsschwierigkeit hingewiesen, die während den von der Architekturklasse der Sächsischen Akademie der Künste organisierten Fachdiskussionen um den Neumarkt evident geworden ist: Für die Generation der heute mindestens 70-jährigen Architekten sind „modern“ und „zeitgenössisch“ Synonyme, während v. a. manche der sehr viel jüngeren Diskutanten in der Neumarktbebauung ganz

Bedenkt man, dass man in Dresden sogar bereit war, für das verkehrsbeschleunigende Infrastrukturprojekt Waldschlösschenbrücke die Streichung von der Liste der UNESCO-Weltkulturerbestätten in Kauf zu nehmen, so verstärkt sich der Eindruck, dass ein Moderne-Konzept aus dem mittleren Drittel des vergangenen Jahrhunderts heute im Zeitalter der Globalisierung eine Neuauflage erfährt: das Konzept der sog. „Traditionsinsel“, in der das städtebauliche Erbe in einem Viertel konzentriert wird, um das herum sich dafür die zeitgenössische – „autogerechte“ – Stadt ungehindert entfalten kann. Das deckt sich mit Augés Beobachtung, dass inmitten der Nicht-Orte die alten Orte registriert, klassifiziert und zu „Orten der Erinnerung“ erhoben würden, denen ein spezieller, fest umrissener Platz zugewiesen werde, oder mit Koolhaas' Begründung, warum es immer „einen Stadtteil namens Lippenbekenntnis“ gäbe, „in dem ein Minimum der Vergangenheit konserviert“ würde.<sup>20</sup>

Der globale Städtewettbewerb begünstigt folglich die Zonierung der Städte – und beschleunigt damit einen bereits mit der Moderne einsetzenden Prozess: Parallel zur Modernisierung der Stadt wird ein der Erbpflege und der Identitätskonstruktion dienender Stadtkern herauspräpariert, den Gerhard Vinken in seiner Untersuchung zur Entstehung der Altstadt als Teil der Modernisierung der Stadt treffend als „Sonderzone Heimat“ bezeichnet hat.<sup>21</sup> Mit dieser Sortierung geht eine Homogenisierung gerade auch der Identitätskerne einher, die eben weniger Geschichte denn eine bestimmte, als identitätsstiftend deklarierte Schicht der Vergangenheit zu repräsentieren haben. Vinken hat das anhand des Prozesses der ersten Modernisierungswelle am Beispiel von Basel gezeigt, weitere, in der Fachdiskussion bekannte Beispiele sind die „Stadtgesundungsmaßnahmen“ der 1930er-Jahre beispielsweise in Danzig oder der korrigierende Wiederaufbau nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg etwa am Prinzipalmarkt in Münster in Westfalen.<sup>22</sup>

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selbstverständlich eine Spielart zeitgenössischer Architektur erkennen.

20 Wie Anm. 5, S. 93; Koolhaas 1996, wie Anm. 4, S. 24.

21 Gerhard Vinken: *Zone Heimat. Altstadt im modernen Städtebau*, Berlin / München 2010; ders.: „Gegenbild – Traditionsinsel – Sonderzone. Altstadt im modernen Städtebau“. In: Ingrid Scheurmann / Hans-Rudolf Meier (Hg.): *Echt - alt - schön - wahr. Zeitschichten in der Denkmalpflege*, München / Berlin 2006; ders.: „Die neuen Ränder der alten Stadt. Modernisierung und „Altstadt-Konstruktion“ im gründerzeitlichen Basel“. In: Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Matthias Noell (Hg.), *Stadtformen. Die Architektur der Stadt zwischen Imagination und Konstruktion*, Zürich 2005, S. 114–125.

22 Birte Pusback: *Stadt als Heimat. Die Danziger Denkmalpflege zwischen 1933 und 1939*, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2006; Roswitha Rosinski: *Der Umgang mit der Geschichte beim Wiederaufbau des Prinzipalmarktes in Münster/Westf. nach dem 2. Weltkrieg*, Bonn 1987.

Offensichtlich ist die der Profilierung dienende Homogenisierung der Altstadt ein Phänomen jeder Modernisierungswelle.

Zu solchem Bemühen der Identitätsstärkung hat Koolhaas in *Generic City* spöttisch bemerkt: „Paris kann nur noch ‚pariserischer‘ werden – es ist bereits auf dem Weg zu einem Hyper-Paris, einer auf Hochglanz polierten Karikatur.“<sup>23</sup> Inzwischen sind manche Orte auf diesem Weg schon weit vorangekommen.

Bereits Koolhaas stellte damit dar, dass der Prozess der Identitätskonstruktion ebenso zur Stadt ohne Eigenschaften führt wie der globale Wettbewerb der neue hipen „Welt-„Architektur. Der Rekurs auf das Stadtbild und die historisch begründete Identität sollten der tendenziell überall gleichen modernen Architektur entgegengestellt werden, bewirken aber im Bemühen um „Stärkung der Identität“ zur Hervorhebung der Differenz zu anderen Städten ihrerseits einen Verlust an Vielfalt durch die Binnen-Homogenisierung. „Die Städte werden unterscheidbar auf eine gleichzeitig nach innen nivellierende Weise.“<sup>24</sup>

Diese bereinigten Altstädte, die zu einem erheblichen Teil aus Rekonstruktionen und historisch anmutenden Neubauten bestehen, in denen aber auch der Altbestand in immer neuem „alten Glanz“ erstrahlen soll, folgen damit einer Tendenz der Architektur des Empire, die in der auffälligen Häufung von Reinlichkeitsbegriffen in den Reden über den Raum und die Architektur der neuen Weltordnung fassbar wird: Die „buildings (...) forever fresh“ (Koolhaas) und die „Formen so neutral, so sauber, so transparent“ (Castells) wurden bereits zitiert, weitere Beispiele wie die ungekehrte Glätte des Raums imperialer Souveränität bei Hardt und Negri ließen sich anführen.<sup>25</sup> Gleich den Nicht-Orten der globalen Transiträume werden auch die Altstädte von den Spuren konkreter Geschichte gereinigt, werden leicht nutz- und konsumierbar gemacht. In *Generic City* heißt es dazu, das Zentrum müsse „ununterbrochen instandgehalten, d. h. ‚modernisiert‘ werden“, was eine systematische Restaurierung historischer Mediokrität zur Folge habe, mit der Folge, dass „alles Authentische (...) gnadenlos evakuiert“ werde.<sup>26</sup>

Nun ist sich inzwischen nicht nur die Fachwelt, sondern auch die interessierte Öffentlichkeit der Problematik einer monofunktionalen Altstadt und der Homogenisierungstendenzen durchaus bewusst. Man versucht deshalb, Pluralität mit einzuplanen (Abb. 2). So zeichnen sich in den jüngsten Frankfurter Diskussionen

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23 Koolhaas 1996, wie Anm. 4, S. 18.

24 Wie Anm. 18, S. 154.

25 Wie Anm. 6, S. 202.

26 Koolhaas 1996, wie Anm. 4, S. 18.

ziemlich konkrete Vorstellung einer Modellnutzermischung ab, die nicht nur typisch für Frankfurt sein, sondern möglichst auch gleich noch die Verankerung der Neubauten in der Stadtgeschichte gewährleisten soll.<sup>27</sup> In Dresden, wo man in der konkreten Umsetzung schon deutlich weiter ist und bereits erste Erfahrungen vorweisen kann, versuchte man am Neumarkt mit der Verpflichtung zu Wohnungen und der Planung einer Seniorenresidenz zumindest eine minimale Nutzungsvielfalt vorzuschreiben, die jedoch zunehmend zugunsten einer Monokultur des Tourismus geschwächt wird. Mit der formalen Homogenisierung geht eine soziale Ausdifferenzierung und Separierung einher. Zu Recht wird daher auch an der jüngsten „New Urbanity“-Ausstellung des Deutschen Architekturmuseums in Frankfurt nach den sozialen Differenzierungs- und Verdrängungsprozessen gefragt, die mit dem neuen Interesse an den Zentren der europäischen Stadt im 21. Jahrhundert verbunden sind.<sup>28</sup>

Im selben Zusammenhang wird aber auch gezeigt, wie das Konzept der (europäischen) Stadt noch immer als vielfältig genutztes Modell dient.<sup>29</sup> Dies nicht zuletzt in zeitgenössischen Versuchen, Stadtkonzepte in eigentlich homogenisierten Bereichen zu simulieren: In Shopping Malls, wo erfolgreich Lehren aus städtebaulichen Konzepten, nur eben nach innen gewendet, umgesetzt werden.<sup>30</sup> Oder in Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani's Novartis Campus in Basel, den Martino Stierli als Bekenntnis zur und Instrumentalisierung der Europäischen Stadt interpretiert: „... ein Potpourri zeitgenössischer Architektur. Für die Vertreter der Stadtbehörde wird dadurch die ‚Pluralität‘ gewährleistet, die man sich vom zeitgenössischen Städtebau erwünscht und erhofft. Lampugnani selbst hebt die ‚Kultur der Differenz‘ hervor, die durch die Stadt gefördert, ja geschaffen werde. (...) Offen bleibt die Frage, ob mit dieser Strategie nicht die Quadratur des Kreises versucht wird und ob es gelingen kann, das Modell der europäischen Stadt mit den individuellen Selbstdarstellungen der Architekturstars in Einklang zu bringen.“<sup>31</sup>

27 Dazu Löw, wie Anm. 18, S. 152.

28 *New Urbanity. Die europäische Stadt im 21. Jahrhundert*, Salzburg / München / Wien 2008, S. 8f.

29 Zur Problematik des Begriffs der Europäischen Stadt vgl. Dirk Schubert: „Mythos ‚europäische Stadt‘. Zur erforderlichen Kontextualisierung eines umstrittenen Begriffs“. In: *Die alte Stadt* 4/2001, S. 270–290; Stephan Lanz: „Mythos europäische Stadt – Fallstricke aktueller Rettungsversuche“. In: Wolf-Dietrich Buckow / Erol Yildiz (Hg.): *Der Umgang mit der Stadtgesellschaft. Ist die multikulturelle Stadt gescheitert oder wird sie zum Erfolgsmodell?*, Opladen 2002, S. 63–80.

30 Ulrich Maximilian Schumann: „Schnittstellen, Reliefs. Die Vorgeschichte der Zukunft im Städtebau“. In: *New Urbanity* 2008 (wie Anm. 28), S. 10–17, bes. S. 16.

31 Martino Stierli: „Die Instrumentalisierung des Modells Stadt“. In: wie Anm. 28, S. 116–119,



*Abb. 3: Der Altbestand  
als Widerstand gegen die  
Ubiquität der neuen Kon-  
funktionsarchitektur: Die  
mexikanische Botschaft in  
Washington DC.*



Wie immer man diese Frage beantworten mag, dass sie gestellt werden kann, ist Beleg für ein vielfältiges Bemühen, Polaritäten aufzubrechen und mit den Widersprüchen, wie sie Koolhaas plakativ beschrieben hat, produktiv umzugehen. Dazu gehört auch das Bemühen, analytisch tiefer einzudringen, als es dies die zitierten Beschreibungen der 1990er-Jahre taten. So ist etwa das von der Soziologin Martina Löw jüngst vorgeschlagene Konzept, die Eigenlogik der Städte zu untersuchen, selber Resultat solcher Differenzierungsbemühungen, die zugleich ihr Thema sind. Gemäß diesem Konzept wirkt das immer gleich Gebaute nicht immer gleich, da es innerhalb unterschiedlicher Eigenlogiken unterschiedliche Wirkung und Bedeutung hat.<sup>32</sup> Es ist also das Bemühen, die Vielheit der Städte gerade in ihrer Reaktion auf die Globalisierung zu verstehen. Denn offensichtlich sind wir zumindest – aber nicht nur – in Europa, den beschriebenen Prozessen und Tendenzen zum Trotz, noch immer nicht bei der „Stadt ohne Eigenschaften“. Verantwortlich dafür ist der Bestand des Gebauten, der als Element des Widerständigen sowohl der ubiquitären neuen Weltarchitektur im Wege steht als auch die homogenisierenden Identitätskonstruktionen nach innen behindert.<sup>33</sup> (Abb. 3) Der Denkmalpfleger Wilfried Lipp hat schon vor ein paar Jahren als eine neue Perspektive auf die konservatorische Arbeit unter dem Vorzeichen der Globalisierung auf den Differenzschutz hingewiesen und das Bemühen und Bewahren kultureller und insbesondere architektonischer Diversität als Ressource für die Zukunft mit dem Erhalt der Biodiversität verglichen. „Schutz der Vielfalt – im Besonderen der gefährdeten tradierten und kollektiven Ressourcen – bedeutet in diesem Sinne ein Differenzierungsguthaben, Beschränkung bzw. Normierung von Schutz dagegen befördert die Entwicklung von Monokulturen und den Abbau der kulturellen Pluralität.“<sup>34</sup>

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bes. S. 118.

<sup>32</sup> Wie Anm. 18.

<sup>33</sup> In Anlehnung an das Zitat von Gilles Deleuze und Félix Guattari, mit dem Hardt / Negri 2003 (wie Anm. 6), S. 400, das Kapitel „Die Menge gegen das Empire“ einleiten, ließe sich die Vergangenheit als Widerstand gegenüber der Gegenwart verstehen.

<sup>34</sup> Wilfried Lipp: „Der Mensch braucht Schutz. Geborgenheit und Differenz in der Globalisierung.“

Das bedeutet freilich, den Bestand in seiner ganzen Vielfalt als Zeugnis unterschiedlicher Vergangenheiten zu erkennen und zu bewahren. Dem versuchen jüngste Diskussionen um ein gemeinsames europäisches Erbe gerecht zu werden, die eine Trennung von Identität und Erbe postulieren, um so ein gemeinsames Erbeverständnis und gemeinsame Verantwortung für den Bestand jenseits gruppenspezifischer Identitätskonstruktionen zu ermöglichen. Die Faro-Deklaration des Europarats, die vom Wert des kulturellen und damit auch baulichen Erbes für eine europäische Gesellschaft handelt, spricht daher von „Heritage communities“, d. h. Gruppen von Menschen, die sich einem gemeinsamen Erbe zugehörig fühlen ohne identitäre Verbindlichkeiten: Man kann mehreren Gruppen zugleich angehören, ohne seine Herkunft oder die Zugehörigkeit zu einer anderen Gruppe zu verleugnen.<sup>35</sup>

Nicht nur im Gewicht von Vielheit und Menge als widerständiges Potenzial können solche Bestrebungen im Kontext der Multitude-Debatten, wie sie von Hardt und Negri angestoßen wurden, gesehen werden, sondern auch im Bemühen um Auflösung des Gegensatzes von Identität und Differenz. Dazu Michael Hardt: „Diese Alternative zwischen Identität und Differenz ist unserer Meinung nach eine Sackgasse. Wir wollen dieser Alternative mit dem Begriff der ‚Vielheit‘ ausweichen: das ist die Vielfalt, die zu gemeinsamem Handeln findet.“<sup>36</sup> Was Hardt hier, bezogen auf die Bewegungen nach Seattle, sagt, kann auch auf die Bemühungen, den Bestands- oder Denkmalschutz im Zeichen eines globalisierungsbedingten Differenzschutzes neu oder mit zu begründen, übertragen werden. Vielheit, Multitude, erscheint damit nicht zuletzt als ein Konzept gegen den von Koolhaas prognostizierten Verbrauch der Vergangenheit. Verschiedene Vergangenheiten immer neuer Gruppen hinterlassen signifikante bauliche Zeugnisse jenseits des „Stadtteils namens Lippenbekenntnis“.

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Konservatorische Perspektive einmal anders“. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 54, 2000, 2/3, S. 183–188, hier: S. 188; zur Denkmalpflege als Kulturökologie auch Thomas Will: „Erinnerung und Vorsorge. Denkmalpflege als Ökologie des Kulturraums“. In: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der TU Dresden* 53, 2004, S. 64–68.

<sup>35</sup> Council of Europe: *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, Faro, 27 October 2005 ([www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/Conventions/Heritage/faro\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/Conventions/Heritage/faro_en.asp)). „Heritage communities“ wird deutsch mit dem etwas sperrigen Wort „Kulturerbengemeinschaft(en)“ übersetzt.

<sup>36</sup> Wie Anm. 1, S. 15.





## **Kari Jormakka**

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# THE EMPIRE AND ITS AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

If Vladimir Tatlin back in 1919 was the harbinger of the World Revolution with his Monument to the Third International, David Fisher heralded the Age of the Empire in 2008 with his Dynamic Tower in Dubai. Both projected towers were of roughly the same height, over 400 meters, and featured revolving elements, but whereas Tatlin imagined a public building for the future world government, the Comintern, and had the volumes slowly rotate at different speeds as in a cosmic calendar, Fisher envisages the millionaire residents of his tower constantly reorienting each floor according to their personal wishes.<sup>1</sup>

Fisher's concept grabbed the attention of the planet with the punch of a Lady Gaga video, and earned the designer the sixteenth place in Time Magazine's list of Best Inventions of 2008, as well as the coveted title of the Architect of the Year 2008.<sup>2</sup> The latter distinction was awarded to Fisher by DBA, an international real estate and construction organization, out of a record number of 2325 nominees;

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1 In Tatlin's tower, the largest volume, a suspended cube, housed an auditorium and completed one rotation in a year; above it was a lop-sided pyramid housing administration and completing one rotation in a month; still higher, a cylinder with an information and broadcasting center, completing one rotation in a day. On the top, there was a hemisphere for radio and projector equipment.

2 It was featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Le Figaro*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Robb Report*, *National Geographic* as well as *TIME Magazine*, and the video spread in the internet like a wildfire.

the other finalists were Foster & Partners, Jean Nouvel, Santiago Calatrava, Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, and Zaha Hadid. To really appreciate the honor, though, one should know that DBA or The Developer & Builders Alliance was founded in 2002 as Florida Builders Association, and the Architect of the Year prize had only been given once before, to a local Miami architect Kobi Karp, as one of many Community Advancement Awards.<sup>3</sup> While no resident of Florida, Dr. Fisher turns out to be DBA's corporate associate.

Soon after the unveiling of the plans for the dynamic tower, critics started to voice doubts about Fisher's credentials. Having studied architecture in Florence, Fisher claimed to hold an honorary doctorate from "the Prodeo Institute at Columbia University in New York." When Columbia University announced it had no such institute and had never awarded Fisher any degree, his publicists responded that he actually had been given the degree by the Catholic University of Rome at a 1994 ceremony just around the corner from Columbia, at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine—a surprising choice, to be sure, since it is not a Catholic but an Episcopalian church. Later the reference to a doctorate was removed from the CV, and Fisher's publicists issued an email cryptically stating that "Dr. Fisher did receive an honorary doctorate in Economics from Pre Deo University, but it has been removed from his bio because he wants to be entirely accurate and cannot be with this information."<sup>4</sup> At present, Fisher claims he got his doctorate from the University of Florence.<sup>5</sup> Academic degrees aside, Fisher has not built or designed any high-rise buildings, nor has he practiced architecture in the past two decades, although he does head the Leonardo da Vinci Smart Bathroom company.<sup>6</sup>

However, Fisher's team includes the structural engineer Leslie Robertson, famous for his dynamic construction of the World Trade Center towers in New York.<sup>7</sup> "You can build anything," Robertson explains and assures that the spin-

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3 In fact, Karp and Fisher may forever remain the only Architects of the Year as the DBA has not awarded the title since 2008.

4 There is indeed a Pro Deo State University in New York that often confers honorary degrees to businessmen and stages the events in impressive locations, such as the Hungarian Police Academy in Budapest. Lewis, Hilary: "Architect Behind Dubai's Rotating Skyscraper A Fraud?" *Business Insider*, June 26, 2008. <http://www.businessinsider.com/2008/6/architect-behind-dubai-s-rotating-skyscraper-a-fraud->

5 [http://www.dynamicarchitecture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=21&Itemid=39&lang=eng](http://www.dynamicarchitecture.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=21&Itemid=39&lang=eng)

6 Fortunately, as Fisher says, "This skyscraper is easy to design ... The Rotating Tower will be a challenge to traditional Architecture, until now based on gravity." [http://www.dynamicarchitecture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=21&Itemid=39&lang=eng](http://www.dynamicarchitecture.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=21&Itemid=39&lang=eng)

7 Days before the attack on the World Trade Center, Robertson was asked at a conference

ning tower will be economical and safe.<sup>8</sup> Besides the load bearing structure of the Dubai tower, there have been questions about many details, from fire escapes to plumbing. Fortunately, Fisher who is an expert on bathrooms envisages that the plumbing will function in the same way as “the refueling of an aircraft in flight ... The toilets and water systems shut off periodically while the aircraft is in motion.” However, “I can’t disclose all the details,” he cautions.<sup>9</sup> Although he also refuses to disclose the client and the location of the building, he claims the construction is about to start.

### **Building for the Empire**

Of course, Tatlin did not work out the construction details either, nor did he find a site for his tower, and still there is a difference between the paper architecture of the early modernists and Fisher’s work, or other fantastic projects that circulate in the Internet. It is not, however, that newer projects would necessarily be more radical or revolutionary. Take for example Paul Scheerbart’s musings from the 1914 book *Glasarchitektur*. He imagined rotating houses, but also buildings that can be raised and lowered from cranes, floating and airborne structures, even a city on wheels. The sense of motion was further accentuated by the use of constantly changing lights, reflecting pools of water, mirrors placed near build-

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in Frankfurt what he had done to protect the Twin Towers from terrorist attacks. He replied, “I designed it for a 707 to smash into it,” without elaborating further. See Kamin, Blair: “Engineers seek answers after mighty towers fall.” *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 12, 2001. [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2001-09-12/news/0109120215\\_1\\_sears-tower-tallest-petronas-twin-towers](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2001-09-12/news/0109120215_1_sears-tower-tallest-petronas-twin-towers)

Robertson maintains that the possibility of airplane fuel causing a fire was not considered. However, John Skilling, the other main engineer of the original World Trade Center team contradicts this information in an interview in 1993. See Naider, Eric, “Twin Towers Engineered To Withstand Jet Collision.” *The Seattle Times*, 2/27/1993. <http://community.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/archive/?date=19930227&slug=1687698>

When in a recent interview Robertson was asked if there was anything in the design of the World Trade Center that he would change in light of the events on 9/11, the engineer answered: “The World Trade Centre was designed for impact of aircraft and the building withstood the impact of aircraft without falling. The towers would be standing there today were it not for the subsequent event of the fire. In any event a structural engineer has the responsibility to produce buildings that are safe. All of our buildings are designed to be very robust and strong. They are able to accept unforeseen circumstances and they are very ductile so you can bend them without breaking them.” “Designing a post-9/11 world.” *ArabianBusiness.com* July 7, 2007

[http://www.arabianbusiness.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=495729](http://www.arabianbusiness.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=495729)  
8 “World’s First ‘Building In Motion’ Set For Dubai.” *WCBSTV.com* June 25, 2008 <http://wcbstv.com/national/dubai.david.fisher.2.756027.html>

9 Frangos, Alex: “Dubai Puts a New Spin on Skyscrapers.” *The Wall Street Journal Online*. April 11, 2007 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB117625795099465923.html>

ings, and glass floors that revealed the movements of waves and fish in a lake beneath.<sup>10</sup> Scheerbart's loyal follower Bruno Taut took these visions to the next level, describing structures that form a kaleidoscopic architecture of impermanence, only to dissolve and to regroup into new configurations constantly. Going far beyond the gigantic scale of buildings that are currently projected for Dubai, Taut proposed cutting up whole mountain ranges in the Alps and dressing them up with colored glass. In contrast to the spectacles of recent years, his goal was the reform of society; Taut argued that while stone buildings make stone hearts, the crystal conceals nothing, and so glass architecture would liberate sexuality, erase private property, and unify people in a spiritual community, led by artists.

Compared to Taut's visions, Fisher's tower is not only mundane and unoriginal, but more importantly it illustrates a crucial move from utopian architecture to visionary real estate. Fisher is already taking in orders for the apartment units before the concept has been worked out at any level of detail; in effect, architectural expertise is reduced to the production of recognizable icons, colorful renderings and downloadable film clips that catch the eye of the investors. The emphasis on the project's uniqueness and spectacular extravagance, the lack of context, and the remarkable dissemination of the project on the Internet are additional aspects that Fisher's scheme has in common with much of recent "iconic" architecture. It may be, then, that the Dynamic Tower represents the architecture for the Empire.

### **Strong architecture for strong men**

It looks like it only took one iconic museum to turn a small industrial town in Northern Spain into a major tourist attraction. Subsequently, countless other cities have turned to star architects in order to reproduce the Bilbao effect. Places whose identity is not yet fixed or marketable are increasingly relying on architecture to give the special competitive edge. Toyo Ito once remarked that what the Chinese clients expect from architects are strong symbolic images even if it is far from clear what one is supposed to symbolize.<sup>11</sup>

This demand for strong architecture is by no means limited to China. To give another example, much was made in 2008 of Zaha Hadid's design for a cultural center in Baku. What was at issue was not the symbolism of the parametric

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10 Whyte, Iain Boyd (ed.): *The Crystal Chain Letters*. Cambridge, Mass.: the MIT Press, 1985, p. 117.

11 Ota, Kayoko: "Toyo Ito: Big Time Dilemmas." In: Rem Koolhaas and Brendan McGetrick (eds.): *Content*, Köln: Bendedikt Taschen Verlag, 2004, p. 448.



forms that Hadid develops with characteristic originality and rigor, but rather the political ramifications of the commission. The center, named after the deceased president Heydar Aliyev, will be built by his son and successor as president, Ilham Aliyev, as part of a larger building program related to Azeri bid for the Olympics 2016. The son has already erected a number of other monuments in the father's honor. After *Heydər Baba*, Grandfather Heydar, died in 2003, the MP and sculptor Omar Eldarov has unveiled a new statue of him almost every month. He also designed the sepulchral monument for Aliyev Sr. at Fakhri Khiyabani or the Avenue of the Honorable Cemetery in Baku.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1940s, Heydar Aliyev studied architecture and also joined the national security agency.<sup>13</sup> Excelling in particular in his second area of expertise, he became the head of Azerbaijani KGB in 1967 and a full member of the Politburo in 1982. From 1993 to 2003, he was the president of Azerbaijan until his son took over. Aliyev ruled his country with determination; now Amnesty International accuses him of human rights abuses. Despite such allegations, Zaha Hadid is reported to have laid flowers at his grave before attending the ground-breaking ceremony on September 17, 2007. Be that as it may, Ilham Aliyev states on his official homepage: "I am sure that the beautiful and magnificent building will be built. It will be worthy of Heydar Aliyev's name both because of its outside appearance and internal quality. It will be as much beautiful, mighty and inflexible as he was."<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps in response to this commission, Daniel Libeskind called for a discussion of ethical dilemmas in architecture and urged his colleagues not to work for totalitarian regimes.<sup>15</sup> The debate is a perennial one, and it would be unfair to single out Zaha since quite a few of our most famous stars—from Rem Koolhaas, Herzog & de Meuron, Norman Foster, Steven Holl and Thom Mayne to Meinhard von Gerkan and Albert Speer Jr., to add just a few names—have worked for countries, such as China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Abu Dhabi or Dubai, whose records on

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12 The monument features a free-standing statue of the ex-president before a wall with the map of Azerbaijan. Interestingly, the country as depicted encompasses an area that is about 20% larger than defined by present border lines. Olcayto, Rory: "Azerbaijan Project." *Building Design*, Jan 25, 2008. <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=426&storycode=3104589>

13 Aliyev studied architecture at the Azerbaijan Industrial Institute (now the Azerbaijan State Oil Academy).

14 <http://www.president.az/?locale=en>

15 Olcayto, Rory: "Ethics debate: Take an ethical stance, Libeskind tells his peers." *bdonline.co.uk* Feb. 15, 2008 <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/ethics-debate-take-an-ethical-stance-libeskind-tells-his-peers/biography.aspx?contact=16810>

human rights and democratic practices have been questioned by Western critics. In fact, architects often get their most spectacular commissions from leaders who need not consult democratically elected committees or heed to conservative planning regulations. “The more centralized the power, the less compromises need to be made in architecture,” explains Peter Eisenman.<sup>16</sup> As a result, our most progressive architecture is often sponsored by either private enterprises or countries with repressive regimes. This fact is enough to signal the end of any dreams of a critical practice, or to dispel the old modernist notion that high architecture would function as a leftist critique of political or economic power.

It is interesting, though, that architects seem to be less likely to be publicly criticized for accepting commissions from corporations involved in shady practices. Like Rem Koolhaas for his CCTV complex, Herzog & De Meuron were chided for the Bird’s Nest stadium whereas their many projects for the Hoffmann-La Roche pharmaceutical company have not been questioned at all on political grounds even if the same guilt-by-association technique would apply here as well. At the 2010 World Economic Forum in Davos, for example, Hoffmann-La Roche was awarded the “Public Eye People’s Award” and the “Public Eye Swiss Award” from Greenpeace and the Berne Declaration (EvB), a Swiss NGO, for the “nastiest” business practices. The Swiss corporation is said to conduct studies in China on transplanted organs that come from executed prisoners.<sup>17</sup> The tendency to keep a close eye on political regimes but give large companies (that are equally undemocratic in their decision making practices) more leeway may be a remainder from the days of the Cold War, but it is definitely a bias that favors globalization.

### **Ideology and opportunism**

If the advanced architecture of today has the best chances of realization when democratic political controls are not active, advanced architectural theory certainly helps in emphasizing apolitical themes, such as ornaments, atmospheres and moods, and grounding their arguments on a universalizing phenomenological or physiological foundation that suppresses social and political differences. Thus

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16 Pogrebin, Robin: “I’m the Designer. My Client’s the Autocrat.” *New York Times*, June 22, 2008. [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/arts/design/22pogr.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/arts/design/22pogr.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1)

17 <http://www.publiceye.ch/de> In addition, Roche is also producing the drug Cell Cept that prevents the rejection of transplanted organs for the Chinese market. The problem is that according to the Chinese vice health minister, 90 % of a total of 10,000 organ transplants come from executed prisoners, and cannot be considered voluntary donations. I am grateful for Josef Schwendiger for bringing up this example.

fig. 1: Gunnar Asplund et al., *Acceptera*. Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1931, front page.



it could be suggested that current architectural theories are nothing more than an opportunistic rationalization of economic necessities in the Empire. Such an accusation, however, would be unfair, for opportunism has always been characteristic of architects.

To take a few examples from the allegedly more political era of modernism, the Swedish functionalists named their 1930 manifesto, *acceptera*, commanding everyone to “accept the reality before you.”<sup>18</sup> They were merely rephrasing what Ludwig Mies van der Rohe had written already in 1923: “let us accept the changed economic and social conditions as a fact. All these things go their way guided by destiny and blind to values.”<sup>19</sup> In a similar spirit, the Swiss group ABC defined the machine as “nothing more than the inexorable dictator of the possibilities and tasks common to all our lives ... not a servant, but a dictator”, that which “dictates how we are to think and what we have to understand ...”<sup>20</sup> Le Corbusier agreed, stating that “industry overwhelms us like a flood which rolls on towards its destined ends” and Walter Gropius declared that what is needed is “a resolute affirmation” of the new conditions.<sup>21</sup>

18 Asplund, Gunnar et Gahn, Markelius, Paulsson, Sundahl, Åhren: *acceptera*. Arlöv: Berlings, 1980, p. 198.

19 Mies as quoted in Conrads, p. 114.

20 Mies as quoted in Conrads, Ulrich: *Programme und Manifeste zur Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Ullstein Bauwelt Fundamente 1. Berlin Wes: Verlag Ullstein GmbH, 1964, p. 108.

21 Le Corbusier: *Vers une architecture*. Paris: Les Editions G. Crès et Cie, 1924, p. x. Gropius as quoted in Conrads p. 90. In fact, the founder of the Bauhaus had often taken a hard look at the conditions of the day and invariably drawn the appropriate conclusions. Before the First World War, Gropius and Adolf Meyer had emerged as the most progressive architects in the Werkbund by virtue of such radical exercises in glass and steel as the Faguswerk in Alfeld and the Model Factory in Cologne. Surprisingly enough, in 1920 Gropius declared that it was not glass, steel or concrete that would be the building material of tomorrow but rather the future belonged to timber. It has been suggested that the motivation for this announcement was the fact that a Berlin saw owner, Karl Sommerfeld, had commissioned the Bauhaus to make a house out of teak planks he had bought for a good price from an old ship. Realizing that the craftsmen of Thuringia

Given that even the heroic functionalists are so eager to “go uncompromisingly with the flow,” Rem Koolhaas was probably not wrong to claim that “there is in the deepest motivations of architecture something that cannot be critical.”<sup>22</sup> This may be because when an architect builds a monumental building, he will be not considered the owner of his work as the artist is of his painting nor does he possess it, as Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc observed.<sup>23</sup> The new element in recent projective practice, as opposed to modernism and postmodernism, is that the economic determination of architecture is not taken as a limitation or an embarrassment, but rather something to be celebrated: what used to be seen as an unavoidable compromise has now been declared the new program. In the description of his 2006 design for the Waterfront City in Dubai, for example, Rem explains that his strategy was “to find optimism in the inevitable.”<sup>24</sup> The idea is close to the Nietzschean *amor fati* and its ethical corollary of seeing “as beautiful what is necessary in things.”<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Koolhaas updates Nietzsche’s promise to “be only a Yes-sayer” ever so slightly by changing the spelling to read: ¥€\$.<sup>26</sup> Yet it is a *non sequitur* to insist that something should be given a positive value

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opposed to the school, Gropius also recanted his statement that craftsmen would be the future leaders of society, and restarted attempts to win over the support of industry for while “industry does not need us—we need industry.” Francisco, Marcel: *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar: the Ideals and Artistic Theories of its Founding Years*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971, pp. 40ff.

22 Koolhaas and Mau: *S, M, L, XL*, p. 849; the second quotation of Koolhaas comes originally from Beth Kapusta’s article in *The Canadian Architect*, Vol. 39, August 1994, p. 10; here it is quoted from Baird, George: “‘Criticality’ and Its Discontents.” *Harvard Design Magazine*, Fall 2004/ Winter 2005, Number 21, p. 2.

23 Viollet as quoted by Lipstadt, Hélène: “World Upside Down.” *Wien. UmBau* 22, p. 55.

24 Ouroussoff, Nicolai: “City on the Gulf: Koolhaas Lays Out a Grand Urban Experiment in Dubai.” *New York Times*, March 3, 2008. [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/03/arts/design/03kool.html?\\_r=3&pagewanted=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/03/arts/design/03kool.html?_r=3&pagewanted=1&oref=slogin)

25 Nietzsche, Friedrich: *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, §276. Incidentally, the same passage influenced Georges Bataille in 1924 to launch an *Oui* movement, “implying a perpetual acquiescence to everything ... which would have the advantage over the *Non* movement that had been Dada of escaping what was childish about a systematically provocative negation.” See Surya, Michel: *Georges Bataille. An Intellectual Biography*. Tr. Krzysztof Fijalkowski and Michael Richardson. New York: Verso, 2002, p. 72. Of course, John Ruskin is an earlier advocate of acceptance, advising painters to “reject nothing, select nothing, and score nothing.” See Ruskin, John: *Modern Painters*, Vol. 1. Section 21.

26 Nietzsche, see Note 25, §276. Koolhaas, Rem: “Earning Trust.” Lecture at a conference on *Superhumanism* in London in 2001. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.dandad.org/content/super/pdf/koolhaas.pdf>> p. 1.

only because it is unavoidable; it is like saying that since we are all mortal, our goal and highest value in life should be death.

### **Sic et non**

In general, Koolhaas confesses to an instrumental ethics: he does not want to define values or set norms but to realize goals defined by others. What he calls “ultimate architecture”, Bigness, is a good example. According to Koolhaas, Bigness “becomes instrument of other forces, it depends. ... Even as Bigness enters the stratosphere of architectural ambition—the pure chill of megalomania—it can be achieved only at the price of giving up control, of transfiguration. ... Beyond signature, Bigness means surrender to technologies; to engineers, contractors, manufacturers; to politics; to others.”<sup>27</sup> He also refuses any moral criticism and claims that through their size alone, big buildings “enter an amoral domain, beyond good or bad.”<sup>28</sup>

An earlier but equally influential proponent of instrumentalist ethics was Jacques-Nicolas-Louis Durand. Partly prompted by the dire economic situation of the revolutionary years in France, Durand concluded: “all the talent of the architect reduces itself to resolving these two problems: 1<sup>st</sup>, with a given sum of money to make a building the most fitting it can possibly be, as in private buildings; and 2<sup>nd</sup>, the fitness of the building being given, to make the building with the least possible expense, as in public projects.”<sup>29</sup> Durand refuses to take issue with the program, the site, or the client and merely looks for the most economical solution to a predefined assignment.

In response to such utilitarianism, John Ruskin complains about “the prevalent feeling of modern times, which desires to produce the largest results at the least cost.”<sup>30</sup> This tendency tends to privilege the technical over the imaginative element in “the distinctively political art of Architecture.”<sup>31</sup> For Ruskin, the actual *purpose* of the building should no longer be “one of utility merely; as the purpose of a cathe-

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27 Koolhaas and Mau, see note 22, p. 514.

28 Ibid., p. 502.

29 Collins, Peter: *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture*. Montreal: McGill University Press, 1965, pp. 25–26; De Zurko, Edward Robert: *Origins of Functionalist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1957, pp. 168–171.

30 Ruskin, John: *The Seven Lamps of Architecture. Lectures on Architecture and Painting. The Study of Architecture. Sesame and Lilies. Unto This Last. The Queen of the Air. The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*. Boston: Dana Estes & Company, n.d., p. 17.

31 Ibid., p. 10.

dral is not so much to shelter the congregation as to awe them.”<sup>32</sup> In *Seven Lamps*, he argues that architecture proper begins where necessity ends: it is precisely *uselessness* that distinguishes architecture from mere building. Architecture “concerns itself only with those characters of an edifice which are above and beyond its common use.”<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the goal of architecture is to create and sustain a community.

A more extreme rejection of economic instrumentalism was offered by Giancarlo de Carlo in the revolutionary year of 1968, as he exclaimed: we have a right to ask ‘why’ housing should be as cheap as possible and not, for example, rather expensive; ‘why’ instead of making every effort to reduce it to minimum levels of surface, of thickness, of materials, we should not try to make it spacious, protected, isolated, comfortable, well equipped, rich in opportunities for privacy, communication, exchange, personal creativity. No one ... can be satisfied by an answer which appeals to the scarcity of resources when we all know how much is spent on wars, on the construction of missiles and anti-ballistic systems, on moon projects, on research for the defoliation of forests inhabited by partisans and for the paralyzation of the demonstrators emerging from the ghettos, on hidden persuasion, on the invention of artificial needs etc.”<sup>34</sup> Like many other architects of the time, de Carlo saw himself committed to a notion of inalienable human rights.

An more explicitly argued case of non-instrumental ethics is the Hippocratic oath in medicine, a moral code independent of the client’s demands.<sup>35</sup> Its independence is premised on the identification with the profession: first and foremost, the original oath requires that the doctor treat his teachers with as much respect as his parents. Conversely, the oath also prohibits any attempts to infringe on the territory of other professions: thus, a doctor is never to cross disciplinary lines by attempting to perform a surgery. In the world of architecture, however, nothing comparable to the Hippocratic Oath has been generally accepted.<sup>36</sup> While the Hip-

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32 See note 30, p. 278. He opines that men should sacrifice their wealth to the decoration of God’s house instead of their own; yet “it is not the church we want, but the sacrifice ... not the gift but the giving.” *Ibid.*, p. 25.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

34 Quoted by Frampton, Kenneth: *Modern Architecture. A Critical History*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1982, p. 278.

35 The oath forbids the doctor to harm a patient in any way, and specifies that the doctor may not prescribe a lethal drug, even if asked to do so. Moreover, a doctor is not allowed to induce abortion with a pessary or breach doctor-patient confidentiality.

36 There have been many attempts to formulate a moral code for architects along similar lines. To take a random example, let us consider the Dutch *Vademecum of the Architectural Profession* of 1984, where it is written that “(1) An architect shall faithfully carry out the duties which he undertakes and shall have proper regard for the material and human interests both of those

pocratic principle assumes a basic biological value that is widely accepted by the general public, namely that it is better to be alive than dead, architecture deals with social values that are more often contested.<sup>37</sup>

If no absolute moral truths can be formulated as regards architecture, the most logical strategy might be to keep all options open. Defining architecture as “the imposition on the world of structures it never asked for and that existed previously only as clouds of conjectures in the minds of their creators,” Koolhaas concluded that “architecture is monstrous in the way in which each choice leads to the reduction of possibility” for “where there is nothing, everything is possible. Where there is architecture, nothing (else) is possible.”<sup>38</sup> In order to preserve freedom and not enforce unjustified moral precepts on the users, the logical thing to do is to reduce architecture to degree zero. At the level of a building, this approach leads to the Typical Plan; at the level of the city, it brings about the Generic City. “Typical Plan is a segment of an unacknowledged utopia, the promise of a post-architectural future,” Rem explained, for its only function is “to let its occupants exist.”<sup>39</sup> It is thus the ideal accommodation for business, “the most formless of programs”, for “business makes no demands.”<sup>40</sup> Another regime of freedom is the Generic City because it represents “the apotheosis of the multiple-choice concept: all boxes crossed.”<sup>41</sup>

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who commission and those who may be expected to use or enjoy the product of his work; (2) An architect shall avoid actions and situations inconsistent with his professional obligations ... or likely to raise doubt about his integrity; (3) An architect shall rely only on ability and achievement for his advancement, without soliciting, undercutting or supplanting,” etc. *A Vademecum of the Architectural Profession*. Delft: Delft University Press, 1984. As quoted in Johnson, Paul-Alan, *The Theory of Architecture. Concepts, Themes & Practices*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold., 1994, p. 217.

37 Of course, not everyone thinks that life as such is valuable; the Master of Those Who Know, Aristotle famously argued that it is better to be dead than alive and best is not to be born at all. *N. E.* 1215b15-22.

38 *Delirious New York*, 246. Koolhaas and Mau, see note 22, p. 344, 199. At first glance, it may seem trivially true that every decision cancels possibilities: if I can choose between acts A, B, and C, and go with the last one, I have effectively cancelled A and B. Moreover, if I have fewer possible choices, it seems that I have lost some of my freedom. This reasoning, however, is premised on the assumption that the choice of alternatives will change neither independent of my choices, nor as a result of them. Obviously, this condition does not normally hold. For example, today we have some alternative ways to respond to global warming; if we choose to do nothing, the same alternatives are not going to be available in twenty years any more. On the other hand, the right choices might open up many new alternative options in the future.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 336.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 337.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 1253.

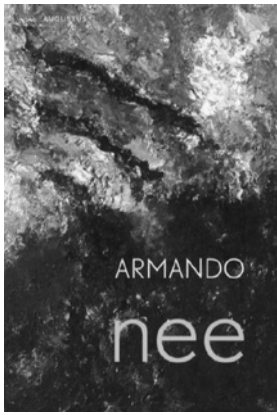


fig. 2: Armando, Nee.  
Amsterdam: Augustus,  
2008, cover.

On the other hand, Koolhaas knows very well that avoiding decisions and actions is not the typical role of an architect for every seriously proposed design is a normative recommendation. Moreover, he argues, “if there is a repertoire of possible action between making changes in the world and leaving it as it is, the architect is always on the side of change. If the repertoire is between executing ideas and observing them, the architect is always on the side of execution.”<sup>42</sup> That means that architects are often frustrated with the inefficiency of democracy and instead attracted to “deciders.” Rem comments: “One of the things that is most counterproductive in Europe, and even in America, for executing the task of planning is the terrifying phenomenon of the change in political systems every four years. ... if the Socialists lose a few seats and the Greens gain a few, not a single tree can be felled. ... The kind of jagged line of development can be related in America to the power of certain developers, and in Europe to the relative power of the different political parties.”<sup>43</sup> Often making similar points, Le Corbusier demanded “a strong assault on compromise and democratic stagnation” and declared: “France needs a Father.”<sup>44</sup> In 1940, he even wrote to his mother: “If he is sincere in his promises, Hitler could crown his life by an overwhelming creation: the reshaping of Europe. ... Personally I believe the outcome could be favorable.

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42 *Supercritical. Architecture Words I*. Ed. Brett Steele. London: AA, 2010, p. 13.

43 Kwinter, Sanford (ed.): *Rem Koolhaas: Conversation with Students*. New York: Princeton Architecture Press, 1996, p. 48.

44 Le Corbusier: *Urbanisme*. Paris: Les Éditions Crés et Cie, 1925, 137, 285. He ends the book *Urbanisme* with a picture of Louis XV and the caption: “Homage to a great town-planner. This despot conceived great projects and realized them.” Later, he elaborated on the same theme: “Authority must now step in, patriarchal authority, the authority of a father concerned for his children. ... Let all skeptics and snickerers keep away! We have had enough of their so civilized materialism and its pretty results: unemployment, ruin, famine, despair and revolution!” Le Corbusier: *La Ville Radieuse*, Paris: Les Éditions Vincent, Fréal et Cie, Paris, 1964, p. 152. With Biblical overtones, he further demanded that “the eyes that see, the people that know, they must be let to construct the world anew.” Le Corbusier, *Quand les Cathédrales étaient blanches*. Paris: Plon, 1937, p. 13.



... It would mean the end of speeches from the tribunal, of endless meetings of committees, of parliamentary eloquence and sterility.”<sup>45</sup> At this time, Le Corbusier had long since embraced a decisionist position similar to Carl Schmitt’s who argued that in the absence of moral or religious authority in a secularized modernity, an arbitrary decision by an authority can serve as a source of value, if taken as an indisputable fact.<sup>46</sup> This makes it possible for an architect to push for action but only by denouncing previous moralities altogether, or in the words of Koolhaas, “We have to dare to be utterly uncritical.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Business art**

Rem’s amorality goes back to his time at *Haagse Post* when his mentor Armando formulated the principles of the movement *Nul*, or ‘zero’: “no moralizing, no interpretation of reality, but a reinforcement. Starting point: the uncompromised acceptance of reality. Method: isolation, appropriation. Result: authenticity. Not of the creator but of information. The artist is no longer an artist but the cold, rational eye.”<sup>48</sup> However, similar ideas Koolhaas could have also picked up from Nietzsche’s *Gay Science* or from his two artistic idols, Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol.

Warhol not only accepted the popular culture of his day, depicting commercial products in his artworks, but also challenged the value system of the avant-garde in many other ways. For example, Warhol explains that “Business Art is the step

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45 Letter to his mother, Oct. 31, 1940. As quoted in Weber, Nicholas Fox: *Le Corbusier: A Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008, p. 425. In the original: “Si le marché est sincère, Hitler peut couronner sa vie par une oeuvre grandiose: l’aménagement de l’Europe. ... Personnellement je crois le jeu bien fait. ... C’est la fin des discours de tribune ou de meetings, de l’éloquence et de la stérilité parlementaire.” Le Corbusier: *Choix de lettres*. Sélection, introduction et notes par Jean Jenger. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2002, p. 272–273.

46 In May, 1933—as books were burning in Berlin—Le Corbusier dedicated his *Ville Radieuse* simply to ‘Authority’ and demanded that “the plan must rule; it is the plan which is right, it proclaims indubitable realities.” Le Corbusier: *La Ville Radieuse*, p. 248. On October 3, 1933, Schmitt equated Hitler for the first time with the law, talking about “Adolf Hitler, dessen Wille heute der *nomos* des deutschen Volkes ist.” A month later, Martin Heidegger used a similar expression in his talk to the students of Freiburg University: “Der Führer selbst und allein ist die heutige und künftige deutsche Wirklichkeit und ihr Gesetz.” Finally, Schmitt defined: “*Heute ist das Gesetz Wille und Plan des Führers*,” Schmitt, Carl: “Kodifikation oder Novelle? Über die Aufgabe und Methode der heutigen Gesetzgebung.” in: *Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung*, 40. Jg., Heft 15/16, Sp. 919–925, here p. 924. See also Mehring, Reinhard: *Carl Schmitt. Zur Einführung*. Hamburg: Junius, 1992, pp. 57, 107, 108.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 971.

48 See Lootsma, p. 13.

that comes after Art. I started as a commercial artist, and I want to finish as a business artist. After I did the thing called ‘art’ or whatever it’s called, I went into business art. I wanted to be an Art Businessman or a Business Artist. Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art.”<sup>49</sup> Reacting to the anti-capitalist hippy culture of the 1960s, Warhol concludes: “Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.”<sup>50</sup> Although Warhol and his Factory were phenomenally successful as producers of business art, he has been surpassed in recent years by Damien Hirst who is even more open about his motives, musing: “Right now the world is different from every other time there’s ever been. And what if, just maybe, this is the first time money’s ever become important for artists? ... Maybe we’re just at that point. Where money’s an element in the composition. ... This is what I do. You’re a conduit from art to money. ... And if money becomes king, then it just does.”<sup>51</sup> In his open embrace of wealth, Hirst comes close to Salvador Dali who was kicked out of the Surrealist group because of his shameless flirting with rich commissions, for example from Disney and Hollywood; André Breton twisted his name into the anagram, “*avida dollars*,” hungry for dollars.

Koolhaas’ position does not seem to be very different from those of the artists. He also refuses to any radical difference between art and commerce: “We know that Las Vegas is junk, but at the same time I think that exactly the same process and ultimately also perhaps the same logic attaches itself to or underlies our masterpieces.”<sup>52</sup> Koolhaas’ first attempt to mix art with business was a store for Prada, replacing the unsuccessful SoHo extension of the Guggenheim museum.<sup>53</sup> Personally, however, Koolhaas feels he has not received the recognition he deserves. In a recent interview he complains: “... although we provide icons of today’s market economy, we are the only artistic discipline that doesn’t really

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49 Warhol, Andy: *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and back again)*. San Diego/New York/London: Harcourt, 1975, p. 92. He further explained that “Business Art is a much better thing to be making than Art Art, because Art Art doesn’t support the space it takes up, whereas Business Art does. (If Business Art doesn’t support its own space it goes out-of-business.)” Ibid., p. 144.

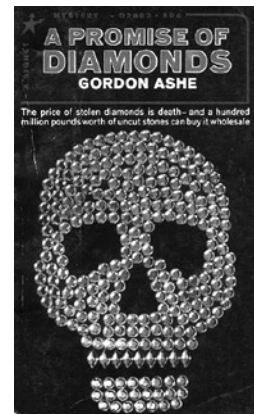
50 Ibid., pp. 92–93.

51 Burns, Gordon: “The Naked Hirst (Part 2),” *Guardian* 6 October 2001, p. 138. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,3605,564027,00.html>>

52 Koolhaas, see note 26, p. 2.

53 He described the store as “a space that can be commercial, but that in four minutes can contract to completely compact condition in which the rest of the store can be returned to public space, and where Prada can sponsor, in the absurdly commercial conditions of SoHo, little events.” Ibid., p. 4.

fig. 3: Gordon Ashe, *The Promise of Diamonds*, New York: Signet, 1965, cover.



benefit from it. Movie stars make astronomical amounts of money, and we have art stars and sports superstars, but by comparison architects remain on a stubbornly horizontal line of income, with only a few like Foster or Gehry attaining a modest stratosphere of fame or money. Compared to other incomes, their levels of fame or money are of course laughable, so we have to change architecture.”<sup>54</sup>

### **Instrumentality**

In 1900 Cass Gilbert defined the skyscraper as “a machine that makes the land pay”; in 1913 he was able to test his theories as he finished the tallest tower in the world, the Woolworth Building in New York.<sup>55</sup> Koolhaas is equally explicit about the role of architecture as a moneymaker in *Delirious New York* where he explains that the skyscraper is a way of multiplying buildable land and thus making a profit.<sup>56</sup> In 2001, Koolhaas still held onto this idea, suggesting that ‘architecture’ is “a nostalgic name for an activity which produces a magical effect on income by multiplying the ground... although we mention architecture, we are living in a kind of situation of working real estate ... where shopping and therefore consumption is the cement that holds everything in our world together, forming a seamless carpet from entertainment to religion to shopping centres, to airports.”<sup>57</sup>

More generally, he demands that architecture must “dissociate itself from the exhausted artistic/ideological movements of modernism and formalism to regain its instrumentality as vehicle of modernization.”<sup>58</sup> The instrumentality is premised on the notion of the technological determination of architecture: the

<sup>54</sup> See note 42, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> As quoted in Willis, Carol: *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995, p. 19.

<sup>56</sup> Koolhaas, Rem: *Delirious New York, A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, The Monacelli Press. 1994. Of course, Le Corbusier’s argument for the pilotis and the roof garden was essentially the same.

<sup>57</sup> Koolhaas, see note 26, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Koolhaas and Mau, see note 22, p. 510.



And if you need a genius, I offer my services. . . Here I am!

fig. 4: Le Corbusier, Radiant City. NY: Orion Press, 1964, p. 208.

skyscraper is said to be the logical and inevitable product of the elevator while the escalator and air conditioning together cause the shopping to emerge. In effect, we are dealing here with the old Saint-Simonian chimera of replacing the government of men by the administration of things, recently often rephrased in the Deleuzean language of diagrams and abstract machines.<sup>59</sup>

Now, if architecture is merely the instrument of modernization, as mediated by technology, then architects cannot be held morally responsible for their designs, with the possible exception of those architects who vainly attempt to resist this automatic determination. Koolhaas explains that once the delusions of omnipotence are left behind, the architect is free to enter uncharted waters and take amoral risks: “Since we are not responsible, we have to become irresponsible.”<sup>60</sup>

The move from an understanding of architecture as a social technology, as in the Charter of Athens, to real estate is part of what Koolhaas describes as the architects’ realignment with post-heroic neutrality.<sup>61</sup> Le Corbusier already asked us to choose between architecture and revolution, and promised that revolution can be avoided.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, Koolhaas promises that the ultimate architecture of Bigness will in fact reinvent the collective, presumably through air conditioning which is said to impose “a regime of sharing (air) that defines invisible communities, homogeneous segments of an airborne collective aligned in more powerful wholes like the iron molecules that form a magnetic field.”<sup>63</sup> At the urban level, however, no comparable community is created. Instead, Bigness “generates a new kind of city. The exterior of the city is no longer a collective theater where ‘it’ hap-

59 Taylor, Keith, *Henri Saint-Simon: Selected Writings on Science, Industry and Social Organisation*. New York, Hoes and Meier Publishers, 1975, *passim*.

60 Koolhaas and Mau, see note 22, p. 971.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 514.

62 See note 21, p. 243.

63 Koolhaas and Mau, see note 22, p. 340.

pens; there's no collective 'it' left."<sup>64</sup> Bigness is urban in a precise technical sense, namely "in the quantity and complexity of the facilities it offers."<sup>65</sup>

In a deliberate negation of postmodern theory, Rem and many other contemporary architects tend to bracket out the socio-political dimensions of urbanism. For example, Massimiliano Fuksas explains his concept for the Twin Towers in Vienna as follows: "Transition, connection and transparency. For the city is energy and tension."<sup>66</sup> It is not the place here to question how "transition, connection and transparency" could be deduced from "energy and tension"; the important aspect is the neo-modernist vision of the city not as a social system but as a concentration of physical energy. Koolhaas speaks of people in a similar way: "It is perhaps a very old-fashioned aspect of our work that we're actually interested in people, not in humanitarian, humanist or architecturally 'nice' ways, but simply in how people exist in the flows and behaviours of global culture today."<sup>67</sup> Here, people are treated instrumentally as one of the means to the effective organization of economy, not as ends in themselves in a Kantian sense or as members of social systems.

### **Expertise**

While the neo-modernist claim that architectural decisions follow necessarily from objective conditions exculpates the architects of moral responsibility, it is premised on the existence of a specific architectural expertise in making such deductions. The question we have to ask, then, is the same that Louis Sullivan already formulated: "What is it that justifies the name architect, what is his special, exclusive function?"<sup>68</sup> Ever since Vitruvius, architects have claimed the ability to tap into expert knowledge from diverse fields and forge it into a culturally cogent synthesis. Still, it remains unclear to many what exactly it is that architects do better than other experts.

Some of the leading offices of today—Foreign Office Architects, Zaha Hadid Architects, or UN Studio—talk about specific architectural knowledge. Alejandro Zaera-Polo explains that FOA's design process is a way of creating knowledge, and insists that theoretical speculation and practical knowledge should not be "understood either in opposition or in a complementary, dialectical relationship, but rather as a complex continuum in which both forms of knowledge oper-

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64 Ibid., p. 514.

65 Ibid., p. 515.

66 [http://bene.com/office-furniture/at\\_twintower.html](http://bene.com/office-furniture/at_twintower.html)

67 See note 42, p. 16.

68 Sullivan, Louis: *Kindergarten Chats and Other Writings*, p. 139.

ate as devices capable of effectively transforming reality.”<sup>69</sup> Patrik Schumacher goes as far as to describe parametricism in terms similar to Imre Lakatos’ idea of research programs in science. Both conceptions of architectural knowledge are problematical in that they take the broader relevance of certain disciplinary issues to be self-evident and assume such meta-values as coherence without argument.

By contrast, the proposal by Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos of UN Studio makes the case for the continuing social relevance of architecture very clearly. Looking for models in Calvin Klein’s fashion empire and the production plants for Audi and Volkswagen, they articulate the basic conditions for a future architectural practice.<sup>70</sup> In order not to be reduced to mere facilitators, architects need to “formulate their policy by activating the imagination and using new, enabling techniques. No capital is needed—only the will and the capacity for fabrication. Imagination is itself empowering. As in politics and economy, power in the building industry is operational and consensual.”<sup>71</sup> Once this way of thinking is introduced, they expect the social role of the architect to change fundamentally. “New concepts of control transform the untenable position of master builder into a public scientist. As an expert on everyday public information, the architect collects information that is potentially structuring, co-ordinates it, transforms it and offers ideas and images for the organization of public life in an endless, seamless system.”<sup>72</sup> For van Berkel and Bos, the architect is a specialist who commands a very particular expertise: “In the same way that a cosmologist uses his knowledge of the universe to visualise situations so far removed that they are beyond the reach of the telescope, as in the theories of the big bang and the black holes, the architect can access remote and complex situations by combining specific knowledge and visualising techniques.”<sup>73</sup>

But what is this specific knowledge about? It could, for example, be formal, as in the case of a consistent parametric generation of shapes, or functional, as in the case of a manipulation of atmospheres in order to sustain a particular pattern of behavior. One problem is that once any such a field of knowledge is fully

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69 Zaera-Polo, Alejandro: “A Scientific Autobiography 1982–2004: Madrid, Harvard, OMA, the AA, Yokohama, the Globe.” In *The New Architectural Pragmatism: A Harvard Design Magazine Reader*. Ed. William Saunders. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007, pp. 1, 12.

70 Van Berkel, Ben, and Bos, Caroline: *Move. Vol. 1. Imagination*. Amsterdam: UN Studio & Goose Press, 1999, p. 27.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 23–24.

articulated, it may lose its relevance because of the emphasis given to creativity in the discourse on architecture. If something an architect has developed truly works well, it will probably be applied by many reasonable architects and eventually prescribed as a norm, in which case it really has nothing to do with creative architecture. As a result, architecture is often understood as that part of building production that eludes rational study and that can better be explained as resulting from shifts in taste than from the advancement of knowledge.<sup>74</sup> Another problem is that design is an irreducibly normative practice: architects determine how others should live. Given that two millennia of moral philosophy have failed to provide a single credible argument in favor of ethical realism, it is hard to see how anyone could claim moral expertise.

If no specific knowledge can be identified, architects might be best off claiming to be exceptional generalists. Certainly, Koolhaas believes that architects are well-equipped to become experts on virtually everything: “what we’ve tried to become, in our office, is not architectural intellectuals but rather public intellectuals, in other words intellectuals who are able to contribute in domains beyond architecture. ... We do this by analysing the political and other components of each project to see if there is a cumulative effect to what we’re trying to do, building up an intelligence that is not just a knowledge about architecture but, increasingly, a knowledge about the world—or about discrepancies in the world.”<sup>75</sup> It is probably as a public intellectual that Koolhaas was invited to join the EU “Reflection Group”, chaired by the former prime minister of Spain, Felipe Gonzalez; other members include the former CEO of Nokia, Jorma Ollila; the former president of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga; and the former president of Poland, Lech Walesa. The task of the group of nine experts is to envisage the future of Europe for the time period of 2020–2030.

But what does it mean to be a public intellectual? Russell Jacoby, who coined the term in 1987, names Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, C. Wright Mills, William H.

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74 In this sense, architecture might be comparable to philosophy. In ancient Greece, philosophy was the universal science, so that Aristotle for example discussed everything from physics, biology and anthropology to history, art, politics, etc. His philosophical speculations, however, often led to empirical errors. Thus in *Historia animalium* (501b20-23) he claims that “males have more teeth than females in the case of men, sheep, goats, and swine; in the case of other animals observations have not yet been made.” Later, as more rigorous observations were carried out, the empirical science of biology soon refuted Aristotle’s intimations. Today, to exaggerate but slightly, only those issues remain within the realm of philosophy where no scientific progress is possible. In the same way, architects have given away many of their traditional theoretical or scientific areas, including construction, ecological concerns, etc. to specialized sciences.

75 See note 42, p. 13.

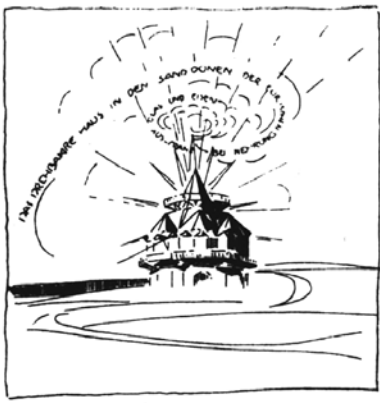


fig. 5: Bruno Taut, *Frühlicht, No.2, 1920, p. 31.*

Whyte, Paul and Percival Goodman as public intellectuals who actively took part in public and political discussions and did so in a vernacular idiom, rather than assuming the specialist language and authority of an academic or other expert. Their ultimate goal was to engage the public in a true political debate about matters that make a difference.

Koolhaas is certainly a qualified candidate for a public intellectual, having collected every architectural accolade in the world, keeping a certain independence from the academia, and writing in a provocative and accessible style. However, there is a problem associated with the instrumental ethics he propounds. Jacoby makes a fundamental distinction between a ‘public intellectual’ and a ‘publicist’ which “now signifies someone who handles and manipulates the media, an advance of front man (or women). A public intellectual or old-style publicist is something else, perhaps the opposite, an incorrigibly independent soul answering to no one.”<sup>76</sup> It is hard to imagine a public intellectual without strong values, and so far Koolhaas has failed to articulate his, except to recommend “a deliberate surrender—tactical maneuver to reverse a defensive position,” more precisely, a “surrender to technologies; to engineers, contractors, manufacturers; to politics; to others.”<sup>77</sup>

For the architects of FOA, for example, such a strategy of capitulation is not particularly appealing. In order not to be reduced to a service provider and to take control instead, Alejandro Zaera-Polo wants to use iconography as an excuse for formal experimentation and a ruse to sell the project to a client. During a presentation of the Yokohama Port Terminal project, he realized that the audience was not grasping the specifically architectural knowledge relating to the circulation diagrams, the geometric transformations and the construction technologies

76 Jacoby, Russell: *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*. New York: Basic Books, 2000 (first edition 1987), p. 235.

77 Koolhaas, Rem: “Surrender; Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sènart France competition 1987”, 1995, p. 974; *Bigness*, p. 513.



involved. In the spur of the moment, he suggested that the designers had actually been inspired by Hokusai's popular woodcut *Wave* – and the audience bought it. Likewise, FOA's bundled skyscraper for the Ground Zero site was originally described as a result of structural optimizations and prefaced harshly: "Let's not even consider remembering. What for?" In the patriotic atmosphere of post-9/11 America, however, the concept needed to be repackaged as a visual metaphor for the slogan, "United We Stand." Zaera-Polo concludes that "by opening form into the reprocessing of identity and iconography we can perhaps sustain a re-empowerment of the architect as a relevant expert with a public dimension, rather than a hermetic—even if seductive—practitioner."<sup>78</sup>

More generally, van Berkel and Bos explain that the contemporary architect needs to master a specific meta-technique: "Mediation breeds spin—the practice that enables the effective communication of complex policies to a mass audience. In an age in which politics are dissociated from fixed values, spin-doctors are becoming the real politicians. Who will be the real architects?"<sup>79</sup> Dr. David Fisher with his spinning tower may be the ultimate champion of this technique. Asked to describe himself as the dynamic architect of the future, he proffers the following: "I am a person who grew up with a strong sense of responsibility towards humanity, in the global sense, with the desire to change the world, improving it and making it better and better for the quality of human life. I am a person that has an absolute conviction that everything is possible, we are part of a system that has no limits and no limitations." And he adds: "It needs to be remembered, however, that there is a huge premium on the price of property for iconic Dynamic towers!!!"<sup>80</sup>

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78 Zaera-Polo, Alejandro: "The Hokusai Wave." *Quaderns*, April 2005, pp. 78, 79, 83, 86. He sees the issue of interpretation clearly as a matter of power and control, arguing: "one of our crucial duties is to keep broadcasting a new interpretation of reality with consistent frequency. In doing so, we guarantee a certain initiative in our relation with whoever is invested with the authority to commission and administer projects, and we are empowered to pursue certain goals beyond the mere provision of architectural services. By constructing arguments that exceed a specific project and conveying them to a broader public, we produce a more ambiguous regime of power in our client relationships." *Ibid.* p. 78.

79 See note 70, p. 17.

80 [http://www.dynamicarchitecture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=21&Itemid=39&lang=eng](http://www.dynamicarchitecture.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=21&Itemid=39&lang=eng). See also [http://www.dynamicarchitecture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=30&lang=eng](http://www.dynamicarchitecture.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=30&lang=eng)



## **Keller Easterling** Yale School of Architecture

*Keller Easterling is an architect, urbanist, and writer. Her latest book, **Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and Its Political Masquerades** (MIT, 2005), researches familiar spatial products that have landed in difficult or hyperbolic political situations around the world. Her previous book, **Organization Space: Landscapes, Highways and Houses in America**, applies network theory to a discussion of American infrastructure and development formats. A forthcoming book, **Extrastatecraft**, researches global infrastructure as a medium of polity. Ms. Easterling is also the author of **Call It Home**, a laser disc history of suburbia, and **American Town Plans**. She has recently completed two*

*research installations on the Web: “Wildcards: A Game of Orgman” and “Highline: Plotting NYC.” Her work has been widely published in journals such as **Grey Room**, **Volume**, **Cabinet**, **Assemblage**, **Log**, **Praxis**, **Harvard Design Magazine**, **Perspecta**, **Metaculus**, and **ANY**. Her work is also included as chapters in numerous publications. She has lectured widely in the United States as well as internationally. Ms. Easterling’s work has been exhibited at the **Queens Museum**, the **Architectural League**, the **Municipal Arts Society**, and the **Weener Center**. Easterling is a professor at Yale’s School of Architecture.*

# EXTRA-STATECRAFT

Some of the most radical changes to the globalizing world are written, not in the language of international law and diplomacy but rather in the language of architecture and urbanism. Architecture and urbanism are often the literal instrument or vessel of a parallel form of polity—one generated faster than official political channels can legislate it. Architects frequently claim to be absent from the table and therefore innocent of the official policies for crafting space. Yet as it is more and more clear that space is made not by official agencies but by a growing number of nongovernmental agencies, lawless zones and discrepant characters, perhaps architects, as facilitators of power have long been seated at the table. Architecture is indeed a vessel of this extrastatecraft.

The domain of extrastatecraft is global infrastructure—not only those physical networks like highways, railroads or communication networks, but also those shared protocols of technology, urbanism and markets that format global exchanges and distributed networks of spatial products. The physical networks, both visible and invisible, made of concrete or microwaves, the silent consultancies, the repeatable environments, the peculiar belief systems of management styles, the subroutines of logistics, or the establishment of regulating standards in the global: all of these are global infrastructures.

As historian and theorist Armand Mattelart has noted, many of the infrastructure histories constitute “a return to national histories while the international is still left by the wayside” as “a field that is young and uncharted.”<sup>1</sup> The study of global infrastructure operates somewhere between socio-technical studies, history of science and design. Moreover, global infrastructure is both topic and

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1 Armand Mattelart: *Mapping World Communication: War, Progress, Culture* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 243.



heuristic—a field as well as a means of rehearsing a different habit of mind about disposition and active forms. Just as a pilot develops a faculty for seeing wind, looking at the organizational disposition of spatial products, infrastructures or socio-technical networks involves developing a similar faculty for making palpable and available a spatial substrate that constitutes a realm of governance, authority or control in the world. We want to consider both objective forms and active forms, forms as outline, geometry as well as forms that operate in social, performative or relational registers. We want to understand the disposition immanent in organization.

Within this expanded artistic repertoire is an expanded repertoire for activism. The activist repertoire customarily relies on, among other things, resistance and refusal. Approaching the most powerful forces in the world with dissent frequently requires conviction and unity among those who have less power. It requires assembling together, refusing to be subject to abusive policies or protecting others who are the target of abuse. The imperative for agreement on common rights and principles perhaps lends an aura of certainty to activism. Indeed, for many, the vigilant maintenance of decency and justice means strongly held beliefs, established principles and forthright expression. Resistance, even in its most complex, artful and viral forms must often assume a critical, oppositional stance—an organizational disposition that faces off against authoritarian power. Though they may have the power to strike at the heart of their opponent, explicit small-scale antagonisms on the periphery prevent collusion with the center. David must kill Goliath. These are those enduring techniques of activism that have, at certain junctures in history, required enormous courage to enact.

Yet, meanwhile power frequently escapes. Using proxies and obfuscation for protection, powerful players are rarely forthright about their intentions, in part because they survive on fluid intentions. The architecture of global relations is not, of course, arranged as a series of symmetrical face-offs or head-to-head battlegrounds. There is ample evidence of overlapping networks of influence and allegiance. Moreover, it may be a mistake to disregard caprice—the subterfuge,

hoax, and hyperbole that actually rules the world. The complex logics of duplicity may be more instructive than the straightforward structure of righteousness. Indeed, the notion that there is a proper forthright realm of political negotiation usually acts as the perfect camouflage for parallel political activity. Finding the loophole to absolute logics or zero sum games, while power wanders away from the bulls eye or wriggles out to take shelter in another ruse. It may even come costumed as resistance. Goliath finds a way to pose as David, or multiple forces, assembling and shape-shifting, replacing the fantasy Goliath of monolithic capital or corporate culture with even more insidious moving targets.

Dissent is then left shaking its fist at an effigy while power mimics or confounds with some other disguise. Activism that shows up at the barricade, the border crossing and the battleground with familiar political scripts sometimes finds that the real fight or the stealthier forms of violence are happening somewhere else. The opponent of dissent becomes an even more mystical or vaporous force (e.g. Capital, Empire or Neoliberalism). Even those theories that admit to complicities and mixtures somehow still drift toward epic heraldry and the theme music of enemies and innocents—monism and binary (e.g. Empire/Counter Empire). In this way the grand strategies of the left and the right, as they are combative, even share a structural resemblance.

Righteous ultimatums that offer only collusion or refusal might present a greater obstacle than any of the quasi-mythical forces that activists oppose. Yet the admission of new techniques does not always align with the dogma or aura of certainty that attends some activist strains. Paradoxically, an attempt to aid and broaden activism can even be interpreted as a betrayal of activist principles. Stepping away from a combative stance is mistaken for neutrality. Manipulation of the market is mistaken for collusion. Positive attention to agents of systemic change rather than negative opposition to a series of enemies is mistaken for an uncritical stance. Relinquishing the tense grip of resistance is mistaken for capitulation rather than a more precise parry or a more apt strategy. Answering duplicity with duplicity is mistaken for equivocation or lack of conviction rather than a technique to avoid disclosing a deliberate strategy. There are moments to give it a name—to stand up and resist. Yet, preserving only some approaches to political leverage as authentic may foreclose on the very insurgency that activism wishes to instigate.

Activism in architecture and urbanism, even in the absence of a developed political repertoire, also drifts toward tragic stock narratives. Architects typically do what they always do: offer objective form in a nominative register that may be inflected toward or “themed” political. Designers *design* their reform, situating it



at border crossings, battlegrounds and barricades. They may do so with varying degrees of utopian monism, visionary futurology or completely plausible savvy. It seems not to matter how apt, feasible or even sly the design may be in projecting implementation. It is often relegated to a margin because it resolves all the world's dimensions into a single compatible utopia or because it makes too much sense. Alternately, architecture claims to be excluded or "not invited to the table" when policy is being made or refuses to perform for fear of being co-opted by the market—as if the market were interested or as if to manipulate the market was in any way similar to colluding with it. Encores of tragic arias about the impossibility of a political architecture support an enduring innocence that is able with steady assurance to declare pure strains of political organization or able, for instance, to separate public from private, state from market. As Jacques Rancière has said, "To ask, How can one escape the market? is one of those questions whose principal virtue is one's pleasure in declaring it insoluble."<sup>2</sup>

The righteous and innocent should be allowed to remain pure and right. The dramas and tragedies of the Masonic order of architects give pleasure to many and need draw no further critique. While fully equipped with prodigious political craft, that craft should only be deployed in the arena of careerism and should not be burdened with another political responsibility. Rather it should be allowed to remain undisturbed in the autonomous cul-de-sac that it has long requested. Dissent that would consider itself sullied by alternative tactics should also be allowed simply to be right in its own way and to organize outrage against the most venal and grisly offenses against justice.

Yet while perhaps an unwelcome cohort for those who would see activism sullied, some alternative activist techniques nevertheless stand to partner with classic forms of resistance. If many of the most powerful regimes find it favorable to operate with proxies and doubles, so might two disparate species of activism generate

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2 Jacques Rancière: "The Art of the Possible: Fulvia Carnevale and John Kelsey in Conversation with Jacques Rancière", *Artforum International*, 45:7 (March 2007).



productive outcomes, if not in tandem in some other form of indirect cooperation.

For extrastatecraft, an understanding of the logics of duplicity is more useful than the binary oppositions of righteousness. *Multiple* realms of influence are kept in play to lubricate the obfuscation so important to the maintenance of power. Happily two can play at this game. The research collected here considers a dissensus that is less self-congratulatory and less automatically oppositional but potentially more effective (and sneakier). It sidesteps competitive binaries that often fuel the very violence we wish to dissipate. New objects of practice and entrepreneurialism, redefined in a relational register, reflect the network's ability to amplify structural shifts or smaller moves. If icons of piety, collusion or competition often escalate tensions, might alternative design ingenuities distract from them? In this realm of dissensus we can talk about an extended repertoire of trouble making and leverage that includes gifts compliance, misdirection, meaninglessness, humor, distraction, unreasonable innovation or spatial contagions, among many other techniques perhaps not typically associated with activism.

Extrastatecraft draws from research published in a book called *Enduring Innocence* that looked at "spatial products" as an infrastructure or a repetitive technology in the world. While regarded as the Teflon formats of neoliberalism, they frequently operate as political pawns in unexpected ways. The book also searched for additional tools with which to manipulate contemporary logics of duplicity as a disposition literally embedded in arrangement and chemistry of repeatable spatial organizations around the world. In the book there is a story about tourism in North Korea, high tech agriculture in southern Spain, automated ports, IT campuses in south Asia and the Middle East, Golf courses in China and the misadventures of commercial and religious franchises.

Spatial products are repeatable formulas for space, shaped by the parametric manipulation of, for instance, tonnage, lay-over times, housing frontage, bandwidth, tee time, stock keeping units or cheap labor. Enclosure is often a by-product of these organizations. The IT campuses that are outcroppings of satellite/fiber networks in Malaysia or Dubai or Texas or Taiwan has the same



physical arrangement and they operate by the same rules. These formats are indexical expressions of legal and logistical parameters that create worlds of self-reflexive logic, a kind of special stupidity that moves around the world finding favorable conditions.

These logistical environments are not only vessels of functional organizational parameters. They are also, ironically, the medium of obfuscation and puffy fairy tales of belief that accompany most relentless forms of power. Here are functional expressions that possess the capacity for crafty behavior and disposition. They are made by abstraction no less hyperbolic, volatile and extravagant. Indeed with nothing but a bottom line against which to reconcile history and belief, any combination of masquerades is possible. Freighted with desires, sporting their global currency, and their duty free legalities, they can slither through any jurisdictional shallows. They can become objects of desire and contention in negotiations between warring countries, messy democracies and violent distended conflict. Their hilarious and dangerous masquerades of retail, business or trade often mix quite easily with the cunning of political platforms. We expect the world to be rational. Yet as these recipes become more rationalized, they become better vessels for fiction. They are highly rationalized irrationalities.

It is useful to sample the nonsensical patois of the orgman, a character who would be something like, to borrow an example from Pierre Bourdieu, the man who sells to the father of the bride a yoke of oxen after the harvest. It is equally useful to sample the beautiful Babbitesque nonsense of the management guru and his think tanks, consultancies and motivational flip charts—for an understanding of the most deliberately rationalized systems that nevertheless resemble a kind of daft voodoo.

*Global society is a rationalized world, but not exactly what one could call a rational one.*<sup>3</sup>

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3 Meyer, Drori and Hwang: *Globalization and Organization: World Society and Organizational Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 269.



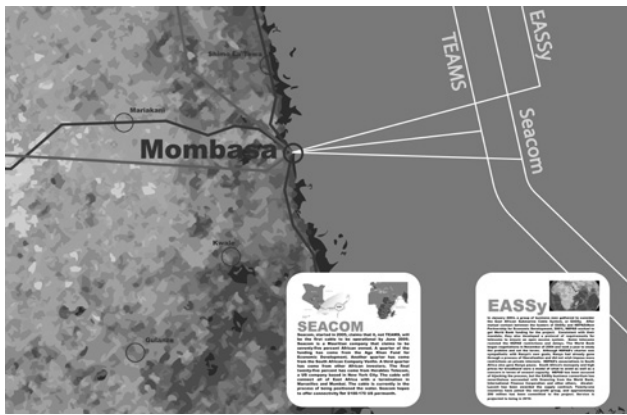
Spatial products are good examples of active forms. Just as an airplane pilot must develop a faculty for seeing wind, the designer of active forms develops a faculty for seeing the way these byproducts inflate and deflate according to even the slightest adjustment of logic. While architects are very well rehearsed in describing enclosure and the aesthetics of the object, we are under-rehearsed in understanding organization in an active register; the deltas of spatial consequence in organization and the relational, dispositional registers of aesthetic practices. We might lack a better understanding of how our spaces manipulate other cultural economic mechanisms. Often operating in a nominative rather than a relational aesthetic register, working with object form rather than both objective and active forms, we are often left designing the shape of the chess piece rather than the way the chess piece plays the world. Active forms design the means by which space disrupts or diverts, the politics of its aesthetic reception or the spread of its effects over a population. We frequently only design the object when we might design both the object and the delta.

Designing active forms develops a spatial fluency for describing the political *disposition* that is stored in the logic and arrangement of global infrastructure networks. The chemistry of this infrastructure is expressed in geometries, logics, economic mandates and networks of association. How do we further analyze this chemistry for patency, redundancy, hierarchy, recursivity or resilience as a vehicle of or recipe for aggression, submission, exclusion, collusion or duplicity? Extrastatecraft considers global infrastructures as a medium of these dispositional powers.

We might look at three different arenas of global infrastructure as a way of sampling some evidence: the free zone, submarine fiberoptic cable networks, and networks of quality management. Each of these arenas drop into a nexus of multiple networks and economies.

### **The Free Zone**

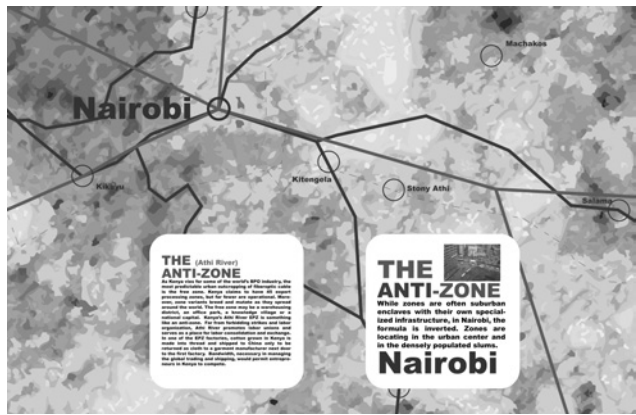
Free zone urbanism is currently the world's most powerful urban paradigm and a vivid vessel of extrastatecraft. Zones are heir to ancient pirate enclaves or the freeports of Hanseats (or Easterlings). In 1934, emulating freeport laws in Hamburg and elsewhere of the late 19th century, the United States established Foreign Trade Zone status for port and warehousing areas related to trade. As the zone merged with manufacturing, Export Processing Zones appeared in the late 1950s and 60s. Emerging in the 1970s, China's Special Economic Zones allowed for an even broader range of market activity and foreign direct investment. But even the zone as it is typically regarded around the world is breeding more promiscuously



with other “parks” or enclave formats, perhaps in part because of China’s influence. There are at least 66 terms to describe the zone. The zone now merges with tourist compounds, knowledge villages, IT campuses, and cultural institutions that complement the corporate headquarters or offshore facility. More and more programs and spatial products thrive in legal lacunae and political quarantine, enjoying the insulation and lubrication of tax exemptions, foreign ownership of property, streamlined customs and deregulation of labor or environmental regulations

Indeed, the zone as corporate enclave is a primary aggregate unit of many new forms of the contemporary global city, offering a “clean slate,” “one-stop” entry into the economy of a foreign country. Most banish the negotiations that are usually associated with the contingencies of urbanism—negotiations such as those concerning labor, human rights or environment. Many of the new legal hybrids of zone oscillate between visibility and invisibility, identity and anonymity. The data gathered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) demonstrates that special zones of various types have grown exponentially, from a few hundred in the 1980s to between three thousand and 4000 today operating in 130 countries in 2006.

With its pervasive growth and breeding, the zone often aspires to world city status. Moreover, while the zone is a space generally exempt from law and taxes as well as environmental or labor regulations, it is even, paradoxically, a new double of the national capital. These urban vessels somehow naturalize the essential duplicity involved with juggling multiple sovereignties and interests. Now major cities and national capitals are engineering their own world city *Doppelgänger*s—their own non-national territory within which to legitimize non-state transactions. The corporate city and national capital can shadow each other, alternately exhibiting a regional cultural ethos and a global ambition. City-states like Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai that assume the ethos of free zone for their entire territory have become world city models for newly minted cities like with not only

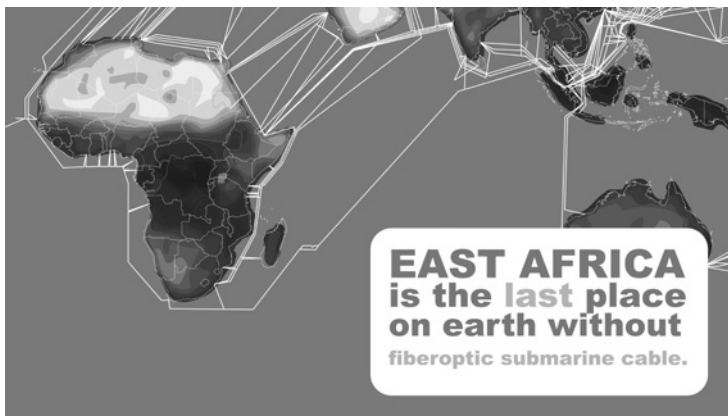


commercial areas but a full complement of programs. New Songdo City for instance, aspiring to the cosmopolitan urbanity of New York, Venice and Sydney, is a zone double of Seoul filled with residential, cultural and educational programs in addition to commercial programs. There is a Park Avenue, Canal Street, Central Park and World Trade Tower. Just as New Songdo City is a free zone double of Seoul, Astana, replacing Almaty, has become the unabashed free zone capital of Kazakhstan. The state has hired the world’s architects and engineers to give the city an anticipated technical and experiential infrastructure as well as a fantasy utopia.

Agamben’s notions of exception will only go so far to explain these sneakier, commercial zones, forms that, with perfect duplicity, swap and pair exemptions, playing the legalities of one country off of another. The zone aspires to lawlessness, but in the legal tradition of exception, they possess a mongrel form that adopts looser and more cunning behaviors than those associated with an emergency of state. Commercial interests do not identify a single situation within which exception is appropriate. They move between zones concocting cocktails of legal advantage and amnesty.

### **Fiberoptic Submarine Cable**

In the last hundred years, the ocean floor has received more and more strands of submarine cable of all types; and yet East Africa—one of the most populous areas of the world—remains in a broadband shadow as one of last places on earth to receive an international fiber-optic submarine cable link. During the summer of 2009, the first of these links finally arrived. Still, broadband in Kenya, for instance, costs twenty to forty times what it does in the United States. Before the most recent cable landings, connectivity for a small BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) office with twentyfive calling stations cost \$17,000 per month, while similar offices in countries such as India, Malaysia, Mauritius, the UAE, and China could provide the same capacity for \$600–1000. East Africa has been considered the world’s “missing link” in telecommunications, and as the cable



links arrive, the world will be watching to see how the new infrastructures avoid the problems that other African countries have encountered with monopolies and continued exorbitant prices.

The main mobile telephone companies in Kenya whose advertisements line the highway (e.g. Safaricom, Celtel, Zain, Orange Mobile, Telkom Kenya and Econet) project images of villagers talking on cell phones. These companies compete with parastate telcoms that have gradually been privatized since the 1990s at the urging of the IMF and World Bank. Along the same road, a billboard publishes the forty percent unemployment rate. This well-educated English-speaking population needs broadband to create viable business connections and to vie for a piece of the global outsourcing market. When the Africa One cable, designed to circle the entire continent of Africa failed, existing cable systems were extended to landings on the west coast of Africa. They stopped in South Africa, and, because of monopolies and corruption, failed to ease prices for broadband in the west. In January of 2003, a group at the East African Business summit gathered to consider an independent cable project called East African Submarine Cable System or EASSY. This time, the World Bank and Nepad, (New Partnership for Economic Development) based in South Africa were going to insist that it be an open system to avoid the problems associated with monopolies. Yet administrative delays in executing the EASSY cable were creating the same effect as the monopolies that NEPAD (new partnership for economic development) and others were trying to guard against. Dr. Bitange Ndemo, The Permanent Secretary in The Ministry for Information and Communications in Kenya, positioned his country to remain a supporter of EASSY while pursuing other options. An alternative cable plan, TEAMS, funded by the Kenyan government together with private telcoms in Kenya and the UAE, was planned to link Mombasa to international cables from the UAE. Another independent, privately funded cable plan, SEACOM, was developed to take a similar course to that of the delayed EASSY cable. The situation has been characterized as a cable war, but war is probably the least appropriate characterization of the multiple players, bargains, and points of leverage in the

complex game of bandwidth access in East Africa. The bandwidth will likely serve new employment centers that assume the form of free zones with premium infrastructure. In Kenya however, the zone is frequently not a place that forbids labor unions, but rather a center of labor union organization.

Even in a digital age, the heavy industries that provide physical infrastructure, working together with extrastate organizations like IMF, World Bank and countless NGOs create a sphere of governance and influence operating in infrastructural space.

## **ISO**

Extrastatecraft also investigates meta-organizations, the organizations of organizations that contribute to this sphere of governance.

While on hold, a voice says “Your call will be monitored for quality assurance purposes.” Credit cards and bank cards, all .76mm thin, slide through slots and readers anywhere around the world. The threads on screws manufactured for a global market conform to a given pitch. The pictograms on the dashboard are roughly the same world-wide. Batteries are sized to fit any device and their duration is consistent. Rates of broadband information transfer are synchronized. File formats contain data links that communication with different software platforms. Management regimes share a vocabulary of jargon like “best practice” or “action plan” dictating conformance to explicit business practice.

These standards are the work of one especially vivid agent in the promulgation of standards and shared managerial forms—the International Organization for Standardization, or ISO. The ISO is a leader among a number of other standard developing and managerial organizations operating in regional, national and international contexts.

A number of such organizations, existing before the ISO, were players in its evolution and continue as partners today. For instance, the International Telecommunications Union, established in 1865, was one of the first truly international agencies. It is now a United Nation Agency, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It originally coordinated telegraph communication and then organized the use of the radio spectrum and has continued to encourage improvements and standards in telecom, ICT industries and communication systems of all sorts including that related to marine and air safety. The Electrotechnical Congress (IEC) was established in 1906 to generate standards in electronic devices. It was the first international standard organization. In 1865, The foundational conference of the International Telegraph Union is one early marker in the growth of international organizations—growth that in recent decades has been ballooning.



*On May 17, 1865 the Convention of the International Telegraph Union was signed. This was the first international agreement concerning most of Europe since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.<sup>4</sup>*

Headquartered in Geneva, the Vatican of international organizations, ISO presides over technical standards like those for roller bearings, refrigerants, lubricants, tourism or footwear, but it also generates the incantations of something called *quality*. *Quality management* anticipates the satisfaction of customers through attitude-shifting and team aspirations, and ISO hopes that in addition to technical standards, that management standards hold the greatest hope of universality. “Quality” used in the world of business and industrial management does mean what it means in common parlance. Rather than referring to a characteristic or a valued attribute it refers to procedures related to controlling and improving both material production and management practices. Quality has its own history, its own organizations, institutions publication and its own culture ethos that is now also incorporated within the ISO framework. Quality standards do not dictate specific standards for a product but rather offer management guidelines for *process* of attaining goals related to a product, goals design to ensure that products meet expectations. The value of those products is not assessed. Quality management standards outline a process for achieving internal goals related to the product. So the product and expectations related to it are intended to be the result of a “learning” organization,” but the primary result may be a rather isomorphic set of the business procedures.

Quality standards join what John Meyer has called an “organization as religion phenomenon.”<sup>5</sup> The European Union has encouraged adoption of ISO 9000 guidelines and in 1992 required ISO compliance and certification as a condition

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4 Anton A. Huurdeman: *The World-side History of Telecommunications* (John Wiley & Sons, 2003), p. 219.

5 Meyer, Drori and Hwang: *Globalization and Organization: World Society and Organizational Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 273

within its trade policies. ISO has also developed management standards related to environment, the ISO 14000 series. Significantly, ISO 14000 standards do not control emissions but establish a lot of internal steps, inclinations, and altered habits about the environment. Quality standards anoint the user with a seal of approval that presides over a number of soft immaterial changes in attitude and style. ISO has also extended quality management standards to education, health care and, in a conflation of customers and citizen, to government.

*Standards and standardization make it possible to achieve co-ordination without a legal center of authority. Such tendencies could be seen in the EU, with its increasing use of product standards and 'soft law' as a means to further integration.*<sup>6</sup>

### **Extrastatecraft**

Study of extrastatecraft is attracted to spatial entrepreneurialism, unreasonable innovation, and obdurate problems that continually resist intelligence. Architects might swim in these dirty waters with all the other skills, butlers and go-betweens, looking for new points of leverage within the fictions and persuasions that we already have running through our fingers. Some backstage knowledge of the bagatelle in exchange, the players in the game and the cards being dealt returns more information about the tools and techniques of extrastatecraft. Expelling utopian prescriptions in favor of agility, ricochet and cultural contagion, extrastatecraft tutors a different species of spatiopolitical activism in the back channels of global infrastructure.

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6 Peter Mendel: "The Making and Expansion of International Management Standards: The Global Diffusion of ISO 9000 Quality Management Certificates." In: Meyer, Drori and Hwang: *Globalization and Organization: World Society and Organizational Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 137–166.



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# COLLECTIVE MEMORY UNDER SIEGE

## *The case of 'heritage terrorism'*

In the Age of Empire and the global reach of capitalism, there appears no object that cannot be preserved, celebrated as a place of memory, perturbed by the logic of consumption—old buildings, theaters, historic town centers, market places, museums, etc. have become saturated by a ‘tourism of collective memory’. In the global state of war, moreover, severe divisions along regional, national and local lines arise and these have deployed a politics of identity that intersects with ‘collective memory’, however the latter is defined. It is this conflation of collective memory, war and identity politics which I will address below.

Since architectural collective memory is literally carved or erected in stone, and is thus tangible, monolithic, recognizable and permanent, it has been called the archetypal collective memory.<sup>1</sup> If collective memory is under siege in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as will be argued here, what then does architectural collective memory actually signify? What fundamental assumptions about history, memory, identity, the nation underlie architectural practice when it ventures into the process of memorialization or stages theatrical performances of material evidence and artifacts of recall?

“Since memory is actually a very important factor in struggle,” Michel Foucault remarks, “if one controls people’s memory, one controls their dynamism.

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1 Jeffrey K. Olick: *The Politics of Regret On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York, London: Routledge, 2007), p. 89.

And one also controls their experience, their knowledge of previous struggles.”<sup>2</sup> If trauma of war is a special form of memory, registering affects but not meaning, how then do architects negotiate the distinction between intangible memories and more formal acts of collective memorialization?<sup>3</sup>

Collective memory under siege requires sensitive interpretation of past events and imputed representations, as well as careful negotiations over the future of a nation or people. Never set in stone, it belongs to a field of argumentation located at the heart of modern ethics.

### **Part I: The rise of the ‘Memory Machine’**

‘Memory’ as an intellectual debate was absent from the 1968 *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* published under the direction of David L. Sills; it did not appear in the collective work *Faire de l’histoire* edited in 1974 by Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora; nor was it in 1976 among the Keywords assembled by the cultural historian Raymond Williams.<sup>4</sup> Since then, however, the word ‘memory’ has become an obsession, diffused across cultural, social and political studies, the humanities and history, architecture and archaeology. But what does the word actually refer to? What kind of memory is at stake? If only individuals remember, then what is collective memory? Perhaps collective memory is a sensitivity instead of an operational concept, but then what does it sensitize us to and what does this imply for the building of memorials and the design of commemorative spaces?

In 1984, Nora described *lieux de mémoire* [realms of memory], to be “an unconscious organization of collective memory” reflecting national, ethnic or group commonalities.<sup>5</sup> His seven-volume attempt to catalogue every memory site in France reflects a certain nostalgia for a mythical ‘Frenchness’ lost in the process of modernization or eradicated in the uniformity of globalization.

This affirmative albeit backward looking approach to memory has spawned a veritable ‘memory machine’ retrieving and inventing traditions in many dif-

2 Michel Foucault: “Film and Popular Memory.” In: *Foucault Live* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1989), p. 92.

3 E. Ann Kaplan: *Trauma Culture: The politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

4 Enzo Traverso: *Le passé, modes d’emploi histoire, mémoire, politique* (Paris : La Fabrique éditions, 2005), p. 10.

5 Pierre Nora: “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire.” In: *Representations* 26 (Spring, 1989), p. 23. See also Pierre Nora (ed.): *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, 7 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992).

ferent places around the world, remarking on how the past has been remembered or forgotten, how narratives have been constructed and landscapes of memory confabulated.<sup>6</sup> ‘Memory tourism’ has transformed historic sites into museums, turned the ‘past’ into a consumer object to be recuperated and utilized by commercial interests, and exploited as spectacles in theme parks and the cinema. Nora explains this obsession with memory by claiming that we speak so often of memory because there is so little of it.

As I argue in *The City of Collective Memory*, when a gap in time appears between the memory of an event and its actual experience, attempts are made to write these absent moments down, to preserve all the little known facts as much as possible, to erect monuments and establish commemorative celebrations.<sup>7</sup> A gap in time enables memory to act as resistance to the acceleration of time, or to be used as a tool in search of moral redemption for past grievances and regrets, or to provide a source of identity in an increasingly alienating and modernizing world. Such a gap in time appeared in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, after a century of wars, totalitarian regimes, genocides and crimes against humanity, when the last ‘witnesses’ of these atrocities and their memories were disappearing.<sup>8</sup> In particular, the Holocaust of WWII has been positioned as the generator of the ‘memory machine’.

#### *Berlin’s New Memory District*

Much has been written about Germany’s efforts both to reconcile controversial memories of its National Socialist past and its attempts to transform the center of Berlin into a new memory district with Daniel Libeskind’s design for the Jewish Museum, Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to Murdered Jews of Europe, and Peter Zumthor’s canceled Topography of Terror Documentation Center. In response, Karen Till asks the following question:

*If the Holocaust and its memory still stand as a test case for humanist and universalist claims of Western civilization, then one might argue that these place-making processes in Berlin are central symbolic and material sites of the crisis of modernity, uniquely embodying the contra-*

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6 Jan-Werner Müller: “Introduction.” In: Jan-Werner Müller (ed.): *Memory & Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 18.

7 M. Christine Boyer: *The City of Collective Memory its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1004).

8 James E. Young: *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

*dictions and tensions of social memory and national identity in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first.*"<sup>9</sup>

Such a statement is beset with conceptual and interpretive contradictions and double standards which this essay tries to explore. How have humanist and universalist claims been deployed to keep amnesia not memory alive? What role does Western civilization play in the crisis of modernity, and does memory of the Holocaust act as a symbolic center for proclaimed clashes of civilizations in the Middle East today? If Berlin represents an 'unstable optic identity' of the nation<sup>10</sup>, as Till believes, what is the relationship between the eye of the spectator and the logic of governmentality, between individual memory and collective memory, not just in Berlin but in any other memorial site?

#### *Individual/Collective Memory*

Since it is difficult to define collective memory, some suggest abandoning its universalizing meaning replacing it with myth, tradition or commemoration. Others want to restrict its application to public discourse about the past or to narratives that speak in the name of collectivities. A third possibility is to limit its reference to mnemonic processes and practices such as memorial sites and public monuments.<sup>11</sup>

Everyone seems to agree that individual memory, the kind that people carry around in their heads, differs from collective memory. The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, the founding father of contemporary memory studies, called the first 'autobiographical memory'. He believed, however, that the actual act of remembering, always takes place as group memory. He called this latter process of remembering together 'collective memory'; it operates as a framework limiting and binding intimate acts of individual recall. So, he mused, "the mind reconstructs its memories under the pressure of society."<sup>12</sup>

Jan-Werner Müller points to another problem: the very language with which we discuss collective memory treats it as a 'thing' to be 'shared', 'confiscated', 'repressed', or 'recovered'. Thinking that memory can be excavated or empirically known as a fact leads to instrumental control over its contents. Since it

9 Karen E. Till: *The New Berlin Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 8–9.

10 Ibid., p. 5.

11 See note 1, pp. 33–34.

12 Maurice Halbwachs, in Lewis A. Coser (ed.): *Maurice Halbwachs On Collective Memory* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 53.

is individuals, and not collectivities, that remember, unearthing personal memories generates too many therapeutic narrations or souvenirs. On the other hand, over-generalizing attempts to define collective memory as a social fact fail to grasp how ‘memory’ actually is deployed in politics, and how control over individuals’ perception is achieved.<sup>13</sup>

Extending this troubled belief in excavation, a popular metaphor likens memory to a palimpsest: not a velum scraped clean for new use but horizontal strata of ancient texts brought to the surface in the present, revealing their simultaneous co-existence. Transferred to the urban fabric, the users of ‘palimpsest’ assume that lost memories haunt a city’s collective memory, albeit in unsettled arrangements; they are ghosts of a restless past possessing some places.

Constructing places of memory is one way to work through such traumatic remains, to give shape to metaphysically absent but intensively felt fears and desires. It situates memories in place, stops their prowling around. People return to these haunted places, to make contact with their loss, places that contain unwanted presences and past injustices. In these situated places they work through contradictory emotions of shame, guilt, fear, sadness, longing, anxiety and they hope for a better future.<sup>14</sup> Just how an absent, immaterial haunting signifies individual or collective meaning remains a conundrum, however.

Charles Maier claims “the surfeit of memory is a sign not of historical confidence but a retreat from transformative politics.” The past is expected to redeem what the future may not be able to appease.<sup>15</sup> Hence memory may have corrosive effects on political policies.

## **Part II: National identity and ‘Urbicide’**

One of the problems haunting the term ‘collective memory’ is the issue of national identity. More than a hundred years ago, Ernest Renan pointed out that in the formation of national identity, remembrance and forgetting depend on each other, as shared memory and shared forgetting.<sup>16</sup> With the rise of the nation state, certain memories were mobilized while alternatives repressed and

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13 See note 6, p. 19.

14 See note 9, pp. 5–15.

15 Charles Maier: “A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial.” In: *History & Memory*, 5, 2 (1993), pp. 136–152. Quoted by Müller: *Memory & Power in Post-War Europe*, p. 16.

16 Ernest Renan: “What is a Nation?” (1920). Quoted by Müller, see note 6, pp. 12, 21, 33.

regional differences assimilated. Official narrations were and are idealized or invented and guarded with care: access to papers and national archives may be limited and allegiance to the hegemonic form of memory tightly controlled. There is no unitary collective mental set for the nation to possess, no ‘pristine memory’ to recall, only selected memory and numbing amnesia to manipulate as an instrument for better or worse by those in power, or those seeking power.<sup>17</sup>

Although counter-memory resists such restrictions and over-generalizations of national identity, offering competing pasts and narrating different events, it takes place within the framework of political power. Nor is counter-memory, the recovery of suppressed memory, always liberating. When collective memory is conjoined with inflamed national passions, the memory-power nexus, residing in national and political memory and in civil and individual memory, becomes a highly contested terrain.<sup>18</sup>

Bogdan Bogdanovic, the architect, designer of monuments to the peaceful coexistence of different cultures and memories in post-war Yugoslavia, a former mayor of Belgrade, used the term ‘urbicide’ to describe war against cities in the Balkans during the 1990s. The sieges and bombardments of Vukovar, the World Heritage city of Dubrovnik and the historic centers of Sarajevo and Mostar received intentional attacks on their urban fabric because these cities were symbols of multiplicity—shared spaces of ethnic, cultural, religious, and civic values—the antithesis of the Serbian idea.<sup>19</sup>

Bogdanovic might also have used the word ‘memoricide’ to describe the murder of the past through the mutilation and eradication of geographical and architectural markers on the land. Memory was literally blown up during the Balkan wars as homes, neighborhoods, monuments, mosques, churches and cultural artifacts were erased, mnemonic devices such as maps redrawn to display an ethnically reconfigured future, and schoolbooks rewritten to tell

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17 Ibid., pp. 22, 29–30, 32.

18 Ibid., pp. 1–35.

19 “Urbanity is one of the highest abstractions of the human spirit [Bogdanovic claims]. To me, to be an urban man means to be neither a Serb nor a Croat, and instead to behave as though these distinctions no longer matter, as if they stopped at the gates of the city.” Interview with Bogdan Bogdanovic, Serbian architect *Rencontre européenne* 7 (February, 2008); quotation: 1; “Urbicide’ was used by Marshall Berman to describe the willful use of the bulldozer by Robert Moses in the destruction of the South Bronx in the 1950s and 1960s,” Marshall Berman: *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Verso, 1983); “Urbicide” <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/urbicide>.

official tales.<sup>20</sup> Ilana Bet-El claims the words ‘I remember’ and the dark recollections that swirled around different speakers of remembrance in Yugoslavia turned into weapons of hatred, fear and then war, when collected together and carefully manipulated.<sup>21</sup>

‘Urbicide’ is a term that also applies to deliberate strategies of the Israeli army deploying bulldozers to systematically destroy water tanks, roads, electrical generating plants, hospitals, schools, homes, cultural symbols in Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem, Jenin and other Palestinian cities, plus the construction of a network of bypass roads to Israeli settlements on the West Bank. Deemed necessary for military self-defense, the elimination of such targets brings death and disease to innocent civilians. The war of the bulldozer is meant to drive Palestinian people away, to deny their collective, individual, cultural and historical rights to the land, to place them in permanent poverty, to seclude them behind a wall and thus eradicate them from sight—an ‘unstable optic’ of national identity at play.<sup>22</sup>

‘Urbicide’ can also be applied to the war in Iraq where insurgents quickly understood that the asymmetrical power of U.S. technological superiority might be thwarted, even neutralized, by taking refuge in complex and uncertain urban terrains. They quickly moved the battlefield into Iraq’s sixteen largest cities. The conclusion is simple, as one U.S. military commander has said: “We have seen the future war, and it is urban.” Technological superiority, fighting war at a distance, reflects the U.S. military strategy of zero soldier deaths, while it increases the death of civilians and destruction of their cities as so much collateral damage.<sup>23</sup>

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20 See note 6, pp. 9, 17.

21 Ilana R. Bet-El: “Unimagined communities: the power of memory and the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.” In: see note 6, pp. 206–222.

22 Christain Salmon: “The Bulldozer War,” (May 20, 2002) <[www.counterpunch.org/salm-on0520.htm](http://www.counterpunch.org/salm-on0520.htm)>; Stephen Graham: “Clean Territory: Urbicide in the West Bank” 7 August 2002, <[www.openDemocracy.net](http://www.openDemocracy.net)>; Rati Segal, Eyal Weizman, et al.: *Territories Islands, Camps and Other States of Utopia* (Berlin: KW – Institute of Contemporary Art, 2003); Sari Hanafi: “Targeting space through bio-politics: The Israeli colonial project” *Palestinian Report* 10, 32 (Feb 18, 2001) [www.palestinerepon.ps/article.php?architect=267](http://www.palestinerepon.ps/article.php?architect=267); Michael Sorkin (ed.): *Against the Wall* (New York, London: The New Press, 2005).

23 Peter W. Wielhouwer: “Preparing for Future Joint Urban Operations: The Role of Simulation and the Urban Resolve Experiment,” Command and Operations Group, USJFCOM/19 (2004). Quoted by M. Christine Boyer: “Urban Operations and Network Centric Warfare.” In: Michael Sorkin (ed.): *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 51–78.

*The Rhetoric of Memory and the Spectacle of War*

The expression ‘heritage terrorism’ is exemplary of the rhetoric of memory. It was coined by Neal Ascherson of *The Observer* (March 2001) during the international outrage over Mullah Mohammad Omar’s wanton destruction of the giant Buddha statues carved into the rock cliffs of Bamiyan in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. and it includes the Mullah’s threat to eliminate all ‘offending’ pre-Islamic artefacts left in museums throughout Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup> In defense of his decree, Mullah Omah proclaimed that the statues were not part of the beliefs of Afghanistan, for there were no Buddhists left in the country; since they were only part of its history, “all we are breaking are stones.”<sup>25</sup>

Iconoclastic acts of cultural catharsis are as old as human hatred, and Ascherson claims the Taliban’s acts of vandalism against idols were motivated by religious and nationalistic aims.<sup>26</sup> These blind zealots unleashed horrendous acts of ‘heritage terrorism’, he criticized, in order to prove that no other religion but Islam ever held sway in Afghanistan and delivered proof to future generations by eradicating all traces to the contrary. Lynn Meskill labels this ‘negative heritage’, “a conflictual site that becomes the repository of negative memory in the collective imaginary.”<sup>27</sup>

While the outrage over the Buddha monuments added a new phrase to military skirmishes, the meaning of ‘heritage terrorism’ may be far from clear. ‘Terrorism’ is, after all, a virtually empty signifier, one that can be filled with a variety of actions by non-state insurgents who ‘we’ dislike because ‘they’ violently oppose our way of life, our democracy, our civilization, our modernity, our freedom.<sup>28</sup> Applying the adjective ‘heritage’ only reinforces this antagonism—our culture against theirs; two nihilisms at war, the East and the West.

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24 Neal Ascherson: “‘Heritage terrorism’ is a way of sticking two fingers to the West,” *The Observer* (Sunday, March 4, 2001); “Buddha Statues Destroyed Completely,” *The News* (March 13, 2001): unpaginated.; Abid Ullah Jan: “Blowing statues vs. Satanic Savagery,” *The Independent Center for Strategic Studies and Analysis* (June 26, 2001); Finbarr Barry Flood: “Between Culture and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum,” in *The Art Bulletin* 84,4 (Dec. 2002), p. 651; Erik Nemeth: “Cultural Security: The Evolving Role of Art in International Security.” In: *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (2007), pp. 33–34; Patty Gerstenblith: “From Bamiyan to Baghdad: Warfare and the Preservation of Cultural Heritage at the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” in *Georgetown Journal of International Law* (Winter, 2006), pp. 1–58.

25 “All we are breaking are stones” in *AFP* (Feb 27, 2001); unpaginated.

26 See note 24.

27 Lynn Meskill: “Negative Heritage and past mastering in Archaeology.” In: *Anthropological Quarterly* 75 (2002), pp. 557–574, quote: p. 558.

28 Alain Badiou: *Polemics* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 19.



Ignored in this struggle are complicated connections and unresolved ethical arguments in the definition of permissible wars and impermissible terrorism.

Critical remembering is seldom produced by war; instead a spectacular politics is put into play. The San Francisco group Retort argue that “The spectacle is deeply (constantly) a form of violence—a repeated action against real human possibilities, real (meaning flexible, useable, transformable) representation, real attempts at collectivity.”<sup>29</sup> The spectacle as image is key to the management of symbolic power, and this image-power nexus is highly concentrated in symbolic sites of memory: places, monuments, icons, logos, signs that rule over the cultural imaginary. Hence these icons are prone to destruction in war and reconstruction in peacetime.<sup>30</sup>

The visual immediacy of the Twin Towers with smoke billowing from their tops, imploding in real time and then remediated and multiplied through split screens, scrolling headlines, radio feeds and cellphones turned the event into an immediate spectacle. The perpetrators designed their acts as theatrical performances, intentionally selecting the date and images to spellbind their audiences.<sup>31</sup>

‘Shock and awe’ tactics of the retaliatory and retributive Iraq war of 2003 were likewise televised as image-spectacles seared into memory as performances and repetitively looped in an endless war of images.<sup>32</sup> The deployment of spectacular imagery, however, leaves vast realms of experience unnarrated and inaccessible to memory, allowing illusions and false options to prevail.

No one thought the World Trade Towers were a site of remembrance until their destruction on 11 September 2001. These cultural icons became the targets of terrorist attacks because they defined the market culture and capitalist ideals of those who created them; they fit the definition of ‘the spectacle’ like a glove.<sup>33</sup> But in the wake of their collapse, the World Trade Towers site was mobilized for spectacular purposes and absorbed into the collective imaginary.

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29 Retort (Iain Boal, T.J. Clark, Joseph Matthews and Michael Watts): *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* (New York: Verso, 2005), p. 131.

30 The horrors of 9-11 were intentionally visible, marking them as distinct from other aerial attacks. There were no cameras at Dresden, Hamburg, or Hiroshima. Retort, “Afflicted Powers The State, the Spectacle and September 11.” In: *NLR* 27 (May June 2004), pp. 5–21; Samuel Weber: “War, Terrorism, and Spectacle: On Towers and Caves.” In: *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, 3 (Summer, 2002), pp. 449–458.

31 For more about the spectacle and the WTTs see Retort *Afflicted Powers*.

32 Richard Grusin: “Remediation and Premediation.” In: *Criticism* 46, 1 (Winter, 2004), pp. 17–40.

33 The spectacle is capital accumulated to such a degree that it becomes an image. Guy Debord: *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983) unpaginated.

It quickly emerged as a tourist destination with the requisite paraphernalia of souvenirs, memory maps, and architecturally designed viewing stands.

Seven years after 9–11, no one is in control of the site, reconstruction is far behind schedule, and the design plagued with disappointments. The warring parties remain unappeased: families of the dead, business interests, government agencies, the larger community.

Three tall towers designed by the world’s most renowned architects, Lord Norman Foster, Lord Richard Rogers and Fumihiko Maki, accompany those by David Childs’ Freedom Tower and 7 World Trade will stand along two sides of the site. The ensemble promises nothing more than a bland office park. Nor has Michael Arad’s and Peter Walker’s memorial plaza ‘Reflecting Absence’ of 2004 been without criticism. The design is a simple ‘forest grove’ of trees at street level contains two large voids marking the famous footprints. At the center of each void is a recessed pool of water filled by a cascade flowing down its perimeter walls. Surrounding the pool will be a continuous ribbon of names of the dead arranged in no particular order. “Standing there at the water’s edge, looking at a pool of water that is flowing away into an abyss,” Arad and Walker claim, “a visitor to the site can sense that what is beyond this curtain of water and ribbon of names is inaccessible.”<sup>34</sup> However, some family members want the memorial to be above ground rather than sunken thirty feet below, while government leaders have placed a cap on cost overruns, causing further design alterations to come. Of course, any attempt to preserve a site necessarily ignores other uses, other engagements with meaning and memory. Arad poignantly remarked as his plans were unveiled: “Every way you find to resolve this satisfies some but causes pain and anguish to others.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Part III: Collective Memory and Amnesia**

#### *Rwanda*

How do countries such as Rwanda remember the brutal and painful history of genocide between 1990 and 1994 that killed nearly a million people, mostly Tutsi, without rekindling divisions that led to the killings? How do Rwandans keep alive an understanding of how and why these killings occurred? Pat Caplan, an anthropologist from the U.K., traveled to Rwanda in search of answers, visiting

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34 Michael Arad and Peter Walker: Statement “Reflecting Absence” Lower Manhattan Development Corporation <[http://www.wtcsitememorial.org/fin7\\_mod.html](http://www.wtcsitememorial.org/fin7_mod.html)>

35 Michael Arad: “January 14, 2004”. Quoted by Martin C. Pedersen: *Goodbye Memory Foundations, Hello Reflecting Absence*. *Urban Journal* posted January 21, 2004. <<http://sixthcolumn.blogspot.com/2005/06/reflecting-absence-indecency-of-91-1.html>>

four major genocide memorials and many smaller sites of memory.<sup>36</sup> She found the Kigali Genocide Memorial typical of many Holocaust museums, done very professionally and movingly.

In addition to the museums, the sites of genocide function as memorials. Since Tutsi death squads lured Hutus to the place of sanctuary in churches and then systematically slaughtered them, these churches became the center of the struggle over the creation and preservation of memory.

To be sure, there are different ways to memorialize genocide. Some advocate excavation of bones and their reburial in order to bring closure for themselves and to publicly blame those responsible; others prefer to allow bones to lie where they have fallen, in order to remember the vast absences that genocide created never to be filled.<sup>37</sup>

In the context of this investigation, we have to ask if the collapse of collective memory was itself among the reasons why and how ethnicity led to genocide. What if 35 years of amnesia, of memories collectively repressed, gave rise to these atrocities? And what if failure of the international community to intervene to stop the killings makes memory an insufficient tool to guarantee that killing will not reoccur?

The writer Benjamin Sehene believes most Rwandans suffer from a lost collective memory. He blames Christianity for destroying the memory of a civilization rooted in myths and built on hierarchy, a tyranny but one imbued with a sense of restraint. In such an atmosphere things were left unsaid, hatreds were self-censored, and three ethnic groups, the Hutus, Tutsis, and Twas, lived in peace.<sup>38</sup> In 1931, however, the Catholic Church deposed Musinga, the Tutsis' last divine-monarch, because he refused to be converted. They tore into shreds all the religious traditions, rituals and myths of the ruling Tutsis—their collective memory and esoteric rights—that were the pillar of Rwandan society.

Just before and after independence in 1962, the Hutus attempted to redress the social balance after centuries of feudal domination. They began a bloody revolt in 1959, massacring 20,000 Tutsis and forcing thousands to flee into Burundi and Uganda. Effecting a transfer of power to a Hutu regime, everything with a Tutsi connotation was banned, including some thousand of words cut from the

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36 Pat Caplan: "'Never Again': Genocide Memorials in Rwanda," *Anthropology Today* 23, 1 (Feb., 2007), pp. 20–22.

37 Cornelius Holtorf: "Can less be more? Heritage in the Age of Terrorism." In: *Public Archaeology* 5, (2006), pp. 101–109; quotation: p. 103.

38 Benjamin Sehene: "Rwanda's Collective Amnesia," (1999), pp. 1–4. [www.unesco.org/courier/1999\\_12/uk/dossier/txt08.htm](http://www.unesco.org/courier/1999_12/uk/dossier/txt08.htm)



language; a quota system was installed allowing only 9% of all positions in higher education or civil services to be held by Tutsis. Government and military service was restricted as well.

“But a past that is forgotten,” writes Sehene, “is bound to repeat itself because forgetting involves a refusal to admit wrongdoing. In Rwanda, amnesia led to successive pogroms against the Tutsis which began in the 1960s and ended in their genocide.”<sup>39</sup> Subtle points lie awake in the deep structure of memory, they rise to the surface time and again, making political power struggles inevitable.

#### *South Africa*

In post-conflict societies, it often takes decades to bring individual untold memories back from the past, to reconnect these voices with the present. The memory problem for South Africa in the 1990s rested on how to remember the apartheid period since the regime displayed exemplary techniques of concealment and silencing.

Mbuyisa Nikita Makhubu was captured in a photograph carrying in his arms the body of Hector Pieterse after the South African police shot and killed the 13-year-old boy on 16 June 1976 during the Soweto uprising. This photograph has become an icon of resistance against apartheid. However, his mother told the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) another story in 1997: her son disappeared in 1977, fleeing from police persecution and has never returned. She wanted to know if anyone can bring him back from the silence, from no-place: does anyone know what happened to him, how did he die, when did he die, where did he die?

With these simple questions revealing her 20 years of pain, she—and many other mothers in truth seeking processes—tore the memory of the Soweto uprising and apartheid from the process of symbolization, commemoration, and

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

memorialization and from the collusion of acts of violence with silence, secrecy, and lies. She brought memories of the event back into the present by reminding the Commission there were still questions to be answered, memories to be listened to, and stories to be told.

Before any process of memorialization can take effect, silencing has to be undone. There are many silences in South Africa: some caused by the experience of trauma that make words fail, others by complicity and guilt that needs to hide from the truth. When stories are told from memory and in official accounts, they blend together, both marked and manipulated by the experience of violence. How then to start the process of memorialization?

### *Lebanon*

During 16 years of civil war in Lebanon, 1975–1991, oblivion of memory set in, many even questioned whether atrocities happened at all or referred to the period of war as “a series of nightmares”.<sup>40</sup> After the war, a law of general amnesty made an attempt to wipe the slate clean without attributing the war to any one cause or group; citizens were inhibited from discussing the war less their conversations became incitements to sectarian behavior. They were told to get on with their lives, and forget the war. Eventually an effort was made to ‘look the beast in the eye’ and to deal with the memory of war lest it return to hold them hostage.<sup>41</sup>

For some collective amnesia gave way to recall in films, memoirs, novels, poetry, the press, through architectural reconstructions and commemorative ceremonies. Others tired of the war, only wanted to forget. And some, believing there was no shared national history to heal egregious wounds, sought to repress memory absolutely, fearing it would give rise to a renewal of war. So many prohibitions against recall and remembering, require one to ask how

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40 Sune Haugbølle: “Looking the beast in the eye: Collective memory of the civil war in Lebanon” (unpublished Master Studies, St. Antony’s Collective, University of Oxford, June 2002). <[www.11101.net/Writigns/listingwritings.php?typerawcmd=a+Haugbolle.+T-6k](http://www.11101.net/Writigns/listingwritings.php?typerawcmd=a+Haugbolle.+T-6k)>; quotation from novelist Ghad Al-Samman (1997) in Aseel Sawalha: “Remembering the Old Good Days: The Reconstruction of Urban Space in Postwar Beirut,” (Unpublished Ph.D. The City University of New York, 2002), p. 52.

41 Desmond Tutu seeking truth and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa explained “None of us have the power to say, ‘Let bygones be bygones’ and, hey presto, they then become bygones. Our common experience in fact is the opposite—that the past, far from disappearing or lying down and being quiet, is embarrassingly persistent, and will return and haunt us unless it has been dealt with adequately. Unless we look the beast in the eye we still find that it returns to hold us hostage.” Quoted by Sune Haugbølle, see note 40, p. 8.

collective memory is being constructed, how the war is actually talked about, and what might be the political and ethical implications of these constructions and words.

In the postwar period, sites of remembrance were quickly lost in the downtown area, once referred to as the ‘center of the country’<sup>42</sup> as properties were condemned, acquired and leveled, and then reconstructed by a governmental/private company *Société Libanaise pour le développement et la reconstruction du Centre Ville de Beyrouth* (Solidere), spearheaded by the late prime minister Rafiq Hariri.<sup>43</sup>

Beginning in 1994, Solidere commissioned well-known international architects to give a new face to the city, obliterating more connections to its past. The company’s declared aim is to rebuild Beirut as it was before the war: “Paris of the Mediterranean” and to replan and rebuild the public space where Beirut’s “intercommunal mixing ... Christians and Muslims continued to meet together at official functions and served on the same committees, courts, and mixed tribunals.”<sup>44</sup> Solidere’s slogan, “Beirut an ancient city of the future,”<sup>45</sup> means the restoration of only selected buildings, the preservation of some facades while changing the functions, use and street plan of the whole.<sup>46</sup> Still, living in an urban memory of pastiche architecture is not to everyone’s liking.

Beginning in November 1994, the Lebanese press reported, on a nearly weekly basis, “the wrecking of mosaics, walls, columns, and other archaeological monuments in Beirut. Working around the clock for more than a year, bulldozers dug into the city, filling dump trucks that promptly emptied their loads into the Mediterranean Sea. More than 7 million cubic feet of ancient Beirut have been lost forever.”<sup>47</sup> In the end Solidere’s bulldozers leveled more structures than did the entire civil war. The archaeological strata and the visible surviving townscape of the late-Ottoman and early-modern French Mandate periods were gone. Some maintain this colonial townscape did not belong to Lebanese national patrimony. Only with the rise of memory studies in the last 20 years, and especially as writers and the media began to lament the hole in

42 ‘wast al-balad’.

43 Sawalha, see note 40, p. 36.

44 Quoted by Kasper Bloch-Jørgensen, Stine Vjlbj Jensen, Metter Vinggaard: “Achieving Reconciliation in Lebanon?” In: *International Development Studies*, BAS (May 2006), p. 67.

45 “Beirut madina ariqa lil mustaqbal.”

46 Sawalha, see note 40, pp. 73–74.

47 Akbert F. H. Naccache: “The Price of Progress” (1996) [www.archaeo1ogy.or/9607/abstracts/beirut.html](http://www.archaeo1ogy.or/9607/abstracts/beirut.html)

memory that Solidere's erasures produced, has any mention of this history and the concept of heritage and patrimony been discussed at all.<sup>48</sup>

#### **Part IV: Conclusions**

Clearly 'heritage terrorism', 'urbicide' and 'wars on memory' or 'selected amnesia' are unbalanced reactions—they not only threaten the memory and material artefacts of individuals and specific groups, they are fraught with problematic over-responses when retribution and restitution are provoked.<sup>49</sup> The anonymous destruction and construction, eradication and preservation, cannot be neatly separated, one gives rise to the other and both transform the sense of the past and places of memory in specific ways.

"Modern memory," Pierre Nora wrote, "is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image."<sup>50</sup> But who has the right to make the final selection of what material artifacts are preserved and what destroyed, whose memories are narrated and whose obliterated? If memory is considered to be the central medium through which identity is formed—individual, group, or national—then has sufficient attention been given to why certain memories are taken up and used at specific times?

Because post-conflict reconstruction and remembering never take place in a vacuum, a builder of places of memory must be aware of lingering resentments, unrecognized privileges, double standards in the treatment of former enemies. In recovering from identity violence, memory can be productive or destructive; it can lead to renewal of war or peace and must be handled with utmost care.

Memories collected in the public sphere represent a multiplicity of arguments: debatable, contestable, suppressible, includable, and transformable. In this contentious complexity, architecture as the archetypal collective memory must ask what its practice obscures, suppresses, transforms, what its icons and symbols are imputed to signify, and how its processes of memorialization are linked to other discourses stored in the archive of memory and time.

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48 An essay based on a public lecture presented by Robert Saliba: "Deconstructing Beirut's Reconstruction: 1990–2000 Coming to Terms with the Colonial Heritage" (April 19, 2000). [www.Csbe.org/Sa1iba-Diwan/essay](http://www.Csbe.org/Sa1iba-Diwan/essay) .htm

49 See note 37.

50 See note 5, p. 13.



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*Zahlreiche Veröffentlichungen, zuletzt: Bauhaus Weimar 1919–1924 (1996); „Deutsche Architekten reisen nach Amerika. Aufbauarbeit in der BRD nach 1954. Amerika in Bildern“, in: Building America – eine große Erzählung (2008); „Denkbilder unter Einfluss - Das Bauhaus und die Versprechen des Amerikanismus“, in: Update! 90 Jahre Bauhaus und nun? (2010); „Bauhausarchitektur und die Internationalisierung moderner Lebensstile“, in: bauhaus global, Neue Bauhausbücher (2010).*



# TERRITORIALITÄT UND INTERNATIONAL STYLE<sup>1</sup>

## *Architektonische Wunsch- bilder einer fröhlichen Weltgesellschaft*

Will man über die Architekturgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts sprechen, so wird ein zentrales Kapitel den politischen Katastrophen gewidmet sein müssen, die den europäischen Kontinent geografisch-territorial vollkommen umgekrempelt haben. Es waren vor allem die radikalen Umbrüche im Vorfeld und im Nachklang der beiden Weltkriege, die dazu führten, dass Nationalstaaten erblühten oder Länder verfielen, ganze Völker und Ethnien umgesiedelt, Menschen und was Heimat gewesen war, vernichtet wurden. Mit den Flüchtlingsströmen und Umsiedlungen lösten sich gleichsam über Nacht territoriale und nationale Integritäten auf, um neu formiert in veränderten Grenzen wieder aufzuerstehen; ein Prozess, der nach 1918 ein Reich wie das der Habsburger Monarchie von der Landkarte tilgte und neue, unabhängige Nationalstaaten hervorbrachte. In wenigen Jahrzehnten

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1 Der Begriff Territorialität / Territorium umfasst unterschiedliche Bedeutungsebenen:

- physische(s) (Landschaft, Boden, Grenze)
- politische(s) (Staaten, Kommunen)
- soziale(s) (soziale Schichtung)
- mentale(s) (kollektive Bewusstseinsform, Lebensstile, Habitus, Raumsymbolik)

Der vorliegende Text verhandelt das Phänomen vorzugsweise als mental-raumsymbolische Setzung.

wechselten im vergangenen Jahrhundert also die Grenzlinien zwischen Staaten und Kulturen, die einen physisch-räumlich, die anderen eher verdeckt in Regularien des Performativen und der *longue durée* (Traditionen). Aus dem Blickwinkel der Weltgeschichte betrachtet geschah diese Raum-Zeit-Verwirbelung im Tempo eines Zeiträfers, nahezu überschaubar für ein einziges Menschenleben, und wenn auch in veränderten Maßstäben und unvergleichlichen Eigenarten der historischen Ereignisse, trieb jener „Sturm vom Paradiese“ (Walter Benjamin) namens Fortschritt oder Moderne das 20. Jahrhundert auf diese Art vor sich her in die Zukunft. Die Antriebskräfte dieser Entwicklungen hatten nicht zuletzt in den unterschiedlich legitimierten expansionistischen Ideologien der europäischen Großreiche bestanden, in deren Schoß doch zugleich das liberale Denken eines aufrührenden bürgerlichen 19. Jahrhunderts heranreife, das meinte, die imperial wildernde Aggressivität in der Befriedungskraft einer modernen, grenzüberschreitenden Weltökonomie fesseln und kanalisieren zu können.<sup>2</sup> In diesem Spannungsfeld aus territorialer Expansion durch Eroberungskriege und der zugleich betriebenen mentalen und sozialen Territorialisierung neu gewonnener Gebiete, eine Praxis, die sich gerne euphemistisch als Proklamation der Befriedung durch Wohlstandsversprechen präsentiert hat, haben die Durchsetzung des Weltmarktes und in seinem Schlepptau die nützlichen Künste immer eine wesentliche Rolle gespielt. Ihren eigenen Part übernahm in diesen Neuordnungen der modernen Welt die Architektur als das raumbildende Medium territorialer Schübe und Verschiebungen; immerhin kam ihr die Funktion zu, die zweidimensionale Abstraktion der neu kartografierten Landvermessungen in die Dreidimensionalität der ortsdefinierenden „Raumbewältigungen“ zu übertragen. Die Ausprägung der historistischen Nationalstile im 19. Jahrhundert und deren Exporte in okkupierte Regionen der Welt haben diese Bewegung begleitet. Ihre Aufgabe bestand darin, „in Kopf und Herzen der Menschen“<sup>3</sup> einzudringen oder, wie Jürgen Habermas dies nannte, die „Kolonisierung der Lebenswelt“ zu vollziehen. Nationalstile bildeten den raumdefinierenden Baustein im System zur Neu- oder Umstrukturierung kollektiver Mentalitäten.

Sucht man Beispiele dessen, so vermittelt ein Blick in die Baupolitik des österreichischen Vielvölkerstaates der k.u.k. Monarchie diese politische Funktion der Architektur seit Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts in physischer Handgreiflichkeit. Im

<sup>2</sup> Siehe dazu Karin Wilhelm: „Ordnungsmuster der Stadt. Camillo Sitte und der moderne Städtebaudiskurs“. In: K. Wilhelm/D. Jessen-Klingenberg (Hg.): *Formationen der Stadt. Camillo Sitte weitergelesen*, Gütersloh 2006, S. 28ff.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Albrow: *Das globale Zeitalter*, Frankfurt/M. 2007, S. 93.

## **Die Stilarchitektur des Historismus folgte der Notwendigkeit, die Territorialität des Nationalen als schöne Macht zu repräsentieren.**

visuellen Repertoire des Ringstraßenstils, seines ornamentalen Beiwerks und der durchdachten Bildprogramme der Fassaden konstruierte das habsburgische Österreich die Bilderwelt seiner nationalen Repräsentation und machte durch Stilübertragung die Gebäude seiner Kronländer visuell gleichsam zu Statthaltern. Auf diese Weise folgte die Stilarchitektur des Historismus auch andernorts der Notwendigkeit, die Territorialität des Nationalen als schöne Macht zu repräsentieren.

Für unseren Zusammenhang bleibt die Paradoxie und Doppelnatur dieser Raumpolitik im Zeitalter der Nationalstaaten festzuhalten. Zum einen hatte der Nationalstaat das Hoheitsgebiet zu formieren und territorial administrativ zu befestigen. Zum anderen drängte die Kapitalisierung seiner Territorien mit dem Blick auf neue Absatzmärkte tendenziell zur „Entbündelung“ (Saskia Sassen) der traditionellen Territorialität des Nationalen, also zur Internationalisierung. Die europäischen Architekten und Künstler der Avantgarde haben diesen Widerspruch frühzeitig als eine Krise ihrer Profession wahrgenommen. Schon mit dem Jugendstil setzte die Abkehr von den visuellen Mustern des anekdotischen politischen Historismus ein. In Erbschaft des aufgeklärten Universalismus vollzog diese Bewegung mit dem Hinweis auf das allen Menschen gemeinsame natürliche Schönheitsempfinden die Selbsterneuerung der Stilkunst. Damit bereitete der Jugendstil, zuweilen gegen die eigenen Intentionen, jene Stilmodernisierung vor, die sich in der Industrialisierung der Arbeit angekündigt hatte und von der Internationalisierung der Märkte begleitet wurde. Walter Gropius gilt als einer der Rädelsführer dieser Stilerneuerung aus der zweiten Generation, die schließlich die kunstreligiöse Gestaltungstheorie der idealistischen Vätergeneration eines Henry van de Velde oder Peter Behrens gleichsam vom Kopf auf die Füße zu stellen unternahm. Für das Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes reflektierte Gropius 1914 über den „Stilbildendenden Wert industrieller Bauformen“ und hatte schon 1910 als ideeller Entrepreneur im Programm einer neu zu gründenden „allgemeinen Hausbaugesellschaft auf künstlerisch einheitlicher Grundlage m.b.H.“ den Aufstieg eines international ausgerichteten pragmatischen Kunstwillens prognostiziert.

zierend betrieben. In seinem detailliert ausgearbeiteten Hausbauprogramm liest man unter dem Stichwort „Unbegrenztes Absatzgebiet“ dann folgende Passage:

*„Die projektierten Häuser sind selbständige in sich abgeschlossene Organismen, die an kein Terrain gebunden, auf die Bedürfnisse eines modernen Kulturmenschen zugeschnitten, überall, auch außerhalb der Grenzen Deutschlands, hinpassen. Der Ausgleich der Kulturvölker untereinander nimmt mit den wachsenden Verkehrsmöglichkeiten ständig zu. Daraus entwickeln sich internationale Bedürfnisse und ein einheitliches Streben in allen wichtigen Lebensfragen. Nationaltrachten nehmen mehr und mehr ab, und die Mode wird für fast alle Kulturländer Gemeingut; in gleicher Weise wird auch eine Konvention des Hausbaues entstehen und die Grenzen eines Landes überschreiten.“<sup>4</sup>*

Gropius konnte dieses Konzept vor 1914 nicht realisieren; vielleicht auch deshalb, weil die nationalstaatliche Autorität die ästhetische Entwertung ihres visuellen Kanons als sozialistisch-marxistische Perspektive einer neuen Weltgesellschaft zu deuten gewohnt war. Diese Option „versetzte“ aber, darauf hat Martin Albrow hingewiesen, „... den Nationalstaat in Panik und brachte dem Internationalismus den Ruf einer subversiven Haltung ein.“<sup>5</sup> Dass sich Gropius' Internationalisierungskonzept erst nach dem verlorenen Krieg in der Weimarer Republik zumindest ansatzweise realisieren ließ, war schließlich der Neuverteilung politischer Einflussphären nach 1918 geschuldet. Erst die große welthistorische Krise und die Neuformierung der Einflussphären zwischen den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika und der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken setzte mit einer weiteren technischen Modernisierungswelle der Arbeit jene Kräfte frei, die die Durchsetzung international gültiger Standardisierungen (z. B. DIN-Formate) der Architektur im Sinne des Walter Gropius vorantrieb.

In vergleichbaren Mustern hat sich nach 1945 die Verbreitung der inzwischen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika technisch-konstruktiv perfektionierten internationalen Architektur des „International Style“ vollzogen. Die Erfolgsgeschichte dieser Architektur im Europa nach dem 2. Weltkrieg basierte nicht zuletzt auf Wunschbildern vom gleichwertig guten Leben, die Walter Gropius schon frühzeitig und durchaus pragmatisch fundiert konzipiert hatte. Schon die internationale Architektur, die im Umfeld des Bauhauses, in den Meisterhäusern

4 Walter Gropius: „Programm zur Gründung einer allgemeinen Hausbaugesellschaft auf künstlerisch einheitlicher Grundlage m.b.H.“. In: H. Probst/Ch. Schädlich (Hg.): *Walter Gropius. Ausgewählte Schriften*, Bd. 3, Berlin 1988, S. 21

5 Ebd., S. 83.

Dessaus ab 1926 etwa, als *promesse du bonheur* projiziert und in sachlich klarem Design gebaut worden war, hatte die Idee der Wohlstandsgesellschaft in einer bequem handhabbaren Alltagsorganisation präludiviert. Die Durchführung dieses Themas setzte mit weltpolitischem Kalkül in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts ein. Will man also die Erfolgsgeschichte des „International Style“ in der europäischen Nachkriegsarchitektur wirklich verstehen und nicht nur oberflächlich als imperiales Muster missdeuten, so wird es nötig sein, sich abermals den kulturpolitischen Motivketten, also dem Zeitgeist in den Geburtsjahren des „International Style“ zu widmen.

### **Die neue Welt**

Kaum ein Text, der von Architekten im frühen 20. Jahrhundert verfasst worden ist, hat die Erscheinungsformen der international wirksamen Modernisierung westlicher Prägung klarer und stilistisch angemessener zum Ausdruck gebracht als der 1926 erstmals in der Zeitschrift „Das Werk“ veröffentlichte Artikel „Die neue Welt“ des Hannes Meyer:

*„das aerophon von theremin,  
der flug lindbergh's amerika - europa,  
das rotorschiff von flettner,  
die nordpolfahrt der 'norge',  
das zeiss-planetarium sind einige zuletzt gemeldete etappen der mecha-  
nisierung unserer erde...*

*unsere Straßen durchströmen Autos:*

*'ford',*

*'voisin',*

*'fiat',*

*'rolls-royce' sprengen den stadtkern und alle grenzen von stadt und land.*

*im luftraum gleiten flugzeuge:*

*'fokker',*

*'dornier',*

*'junkers',*

*'farman',*

*vergrössern unsere bewegungsmöglichkeit und die  
entfernung von der erdkruste ...*

*unsere wohnung wird mobiler denn je und ist abklatsch unserer  
beweglichkeit:*

*sleeping car / massen-miethaus / wohn-jacht/*

*und das internationale hotel der alpen, der riviera,  
der oase biaskra ..., sie untergraben alle  
den herkömmlichen begriff der 'heimat'.  
das vaterland verfällt!  
wir lernen esperanto!*<sup>6</sup>

Im atemlosen Stakkato einer Sprache, die sich an der Schnitt- und Montagetechnik des Films orientiert und die Alfred Döblin drei Jahre später in seinem Roman „Berlin Alexanderplatz“ in literarische Prosa verwandeln wird, erzählt der Schweizer Architekt Hannes Meyer vom rasanten, städtischen Lebensrhythmus des modernen Menschen. Unübersehbar vom Wunsch durchdrungen, den maschinenrollenden Zeitgeist formal einzufangen und die Dynamik der neuen großstädtischen Welt im Schriftbild zu übermitteln, adaptiert Meyer für einige Passagen jene Manier der freien, gebrochenen Versschrift, mit der der unbestrittene Star der sowjetischen Poesie Wladimir Majakowski soeben die westeuropäischen Künstler und Intellektuellen in seinen Bann gezogen hat. Zwei Jahre später, 1928, veröffentlicht Meyer, der inzwischen die Funktion des Bauhausdirektors in Dessau einnimmt, eine erweiterte, zweite Fassung jenes Artikels, der den Rationalisierungsduktus der dichten Beschreibung jetzt auch in der den Bauhausveröffentlichungen eigentümlichen Kleinschreibung vor Augen führt. Noch einmal feiert Meyer die neuen technischen Erfindungen im Reiche der Kommunikation, die sich anschicken, die Welt und ihre Bürger mit Weltläufigkeit anzufüllen, mithin Lebensformen freizusetzen, die sich mit ihrer Verbreitung überall auf der Welt anzugleichen scheinen. Meyers Text fokussiert diese neue pulsierende moderne Lebenswelt des 20. Jahrhunderts auf die Durchsetzung naturwissenschaftlich-technischer Innovationen, deren Natur es ist, nationalstaatliche Grenzen mithilfe des Weltmarktes zu überschreiten und damit zu international gebräuchlichen Standards zu werden. Neugierig blickt der Schweizer Architekt jetzt auf die damit verbundenen kulturellen und mentalen Transformationen, die er als Veränderung des Zeitbewusstseins, als räumliche Annäherung einst getrennter Kontinente wie Amerika und Europa beschreibt und in nomadisch-flüchtigen Lebensstilen erkennt, die das virulent gewordene Problemfeld der Stadt-Land-Dichotomie neu ordnen. Kurz, Hannes Meyer schildert die Folgen der Industrialisierung des 19. Jahrhunderts als Revolutionierung der tradierten Lebensverhältnisse im 20. Jahrhundert. Zweifellos ist Meyer von diesen Lebensverhältnissen fasziniert, eröffnen sie doch den Blick auf eine vom Subsistenz-

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6 Hannes Meyer: „die neue welt“. In: Klaus-Jürgen Winkler: *Der Architekt Hannes Meyer. Anschauungen und Werk*, Berlin 1989, S. 229.

**„Der Kapitalismus hat den Wohntypus seines kollektivierten Haushaltes längst in Reinkultur entwickelt als Luxus-Wohnhotel der City, der Riviera der Alpen. Dort haust die Auslese seiner parasitären Gesellschaft je nach Jahreszeit, Laune und Mode.“**

**Hannes Meyer**

druck befreite Weltgesellschaft, die sein rebellisches Herz ersehnt. Zur Feier des Serienprodukts schlägt Meyer den hohen Ton der sozialen Gleichheit an, er spricht von angeglichenen Bedürfnissen, vom Tod der Vergangenheit mit ihrer Individualkunst, vom Tod der Seele und des Gemüts. Noch spricht der bekennende Kommunist über die Internationalisierung der Lebensformen im gängigen Jargon der Künstleravantgarden, noch teilt er die emphatische Technikbegeisterung mit den Futuristen und denkt in Kategorien der habituellen Entrümpelung durch die klassenübergreifenden Stilmittel der standardisierten Architektur und Gebrauchsgegenstände. Nur zwei Jahre später, also nach seinem „Hinauswurf aus dem Bauhaus“, wird der „wissenschaftliche Marxist“, wie Meyer sich selbst nennt, am Esperanto der nationenübergreifenden Konsumkultur keinen Gefallen mehr finden. Fortan sucht Meyer nach dem proletarischen savoir-vivre und einer, wie er es nennt, „marxistischen Architektur“. In einem Interview mit der Tschechischen Zeitschrift „Leva fronta“ erkennt er im Internationalismus der Lebensstile nur noch das Privileg: „Der Kapitalismus hat den Wohntypus seines kollektivierten Haushaltes längst in Reinkultur entwickelt als Luxus-Wohnhotel der City, der Riviera der Alpen. Dort haust die Auslese seiner parasitären Gesellschaft je nach Jahreszeit, Laune und Mode.“<sup>7</sup> Und im Jargon der naiv bewundernten „Partei Lenins“ führt er aus: „Was soll die Kunst inmitten einer absterbenden Gesellschaft, ... Was soll die Kunst im Städtebau der kapitalistischen City, ...? Was soll die Kunst in der Mietwohnung des Kopf- oder Handarbeiters, ... Die Arbeitermassen kämpfen um Brot und Wohnung, während die bürgerliche Kunst zum Privileg einer dünnen Oberschicht geworden ist, deren Entartungsprozeß sich in ihren Künsteleien widerspiegelt.“<sup>8</sup> Zu diesen Künsteleien zählt Hannes Meyer inzwischen die „Internationale Architektur“, die Walter Gropius 1925 so eindrücklich in der gleichnamigen Bauhauspublikation als architektonische Angemessenheitsformel der Völkergemeinschaft und Völkerfreundschaft vorgestellt

7 Ebd., S. 236.

8 Ebd.

**Der Fordismus war nicht nur ein Disziplinarkonzept, sondern auch ein schillerndes, verlockendes Phänomen, das auch linke Aktivisten fasziniert hat, die verstanden, dass der Kapitalismus damit seine Doppelnatur aus Freisetzung und neuerlicher Beschränkung auf einer neuen Stufe internationalisierte.**

hatte. Immerhin präsentierte Gropius die zweite Auflage des Buches unter Verwendung des sachlich konstruktiven Entwurfs, den Meyer und Hans Wittwer für den viel beachteten Wettbewerb zum Völkerbundpalast in Genf 1927 entwickelt hatten, ein Bekenntnis, das die modernen, international orientierten Architekten der Weimarer Republik zum Weltfriedensgedanken damals abgelegt haben. Für Meyer, der seit 1930 in der Sowjetunion arbeitet, ist dieser ästhetische Internationalismus nur noch ein „Traum aus Glas, Beton und Stahl“, ein Traum „snobistischer ... Bauästheten“<sup>9</sup> im Dienste der großen Trusts.

Der durch Gropius am Bauhaus eingeleitete Versuch, Häuser, Gebrauchsgegenstände und selbst Kunstwerke für Industriearbeiter und Angestellte in aller Welt zu entwickeln, und mit „Welt“ meinte Gropius das, was er die zivilisierte Welt nannte, also die „technisch aufgerüstete“, erscheint dem leninistisch formierten Blick des Sowjetarchitekten Meyer ab 1930 nur noch als Betrugsverfahren kapitalistischer Charaktermasken.

Von heute aus gesehen, müssen wir feststellen, dass es zur Ironiegeschichte des Bauhaus' gehört, dass just der gesellschaftspolitisch Ambitionierteste unter den drei Bauhausdirektoren die Attraktivität eines Lebensstilkonzeptes verkannt hat, das von Gleichheitsstandards, von Bequemlichkeit im Privatleben und der Geschlechteremanzipation durchdrungen war. Meyers Argumentation deckt sich darin mit Positionen der vulgärmarxistisch geschulten deutschen Arbeiterbewegung gegenüber dem Amerikanismus, die gleichfalls die Wirkungsmacht des „Fetischcharakters der Ware“ auf die kulturelle Mentalitätsbildung der Menschen unterschätzte, obwohl Karl Marx dessen machtvoll mysteriöse Ausstrahlung doch in seiner Kapitalanalyse so feinsinnig analysiert hatte.

Meyers Text aus den 1920er-Jahren ist unzweifelhaft von Bildern des amerikanischen Fordismus geprägt worden. Diese Rezeption der amerikanischen Lebensstile teilte er mit Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier und den anderen Architekten, die unter dem Einfluss des Fordismus das Konzept einer „Internatio-

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9 Ebd., S. 239.



nalen Architektur“ entwickelt haben. Denn im Fordismus erkannten sie die Chance, den Lebensstandard der Menschen zu heben und das zentrale Problem ihrer Zeit, den Massenwohnbau, effizient und sozial verträglich lösen zu können. Will man die Konzepte dieser Architekten verstehen und nicht nur denunzieren, so sollte man die Metaphorik der „Wohnmaschine“, die wir Le Corbusier verdanken, oder des „Wohn-Fords“, ein Begriff, den Sigfried Giedion für den präfabrizierten Wohnungsbau gewählt hat, noch einmal auf der Ebene der ideellen Verheißungen reflektieren, die der Fordismus darin hinterlassen konnte. Denn der Fordismus war nicht nur ein Disziplinarkonzept, wie wir heute gerne meinen, sondern auch ein schillerndes, verlockendes Phänomen, das nicht nur liberale Bourgeoisemüther fasziniert hat, sondern auch linke Aktivisten, die gleichermaßen verstanden, dass der Kapitalismus damit seine Doppelnatur aus Freisetzung und neuerlicher Beschränkung auf einer neuen Stufe internationalisierte. Im Alltagsgeschehen waren es eben die Nachrichten aus dem Paradies der Fordfamilie und nicht die aus der Arbeitshölle am Fließband, die den mentalen Raum im Nachkriegseuropa besetzen konnten. (Man denke an die Analysen Siegfried Krakauers zur Angestelltenkultur). Im Übrigen wurden sie weltweit gehört, auch und gerade, was Hannes Meyer verkannte, in der jungen Sowjetunion. Spätestens in den 1930er-Jahren zeigte sich, dass der gesamte europäische Kontinent sich diesen Amerikanismen mehr oder weniger freiwillig geöffnet hatte. Amerika war nicht nur ökonomisch, sondern auch kulturell zur „Macht und zum Modell geworden oder, wie Jean Baudrillard nochmals am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts wiederholte: „Der internationale Stil wurde amerikanisch.“<sup>10</sup>

### **International Style: Signatur der fröhlichen Weltgesellschaft**

Der Internationale Stil oder besser the *International Style* war selbst eine Erfindung oder besser, ein gut gewähltes Label zweier Amerikaner. Henry-Russell Hitchcock und Philipp Johnson wählten diesen Titel für ihre 1932 im Museum of Modern Art präsentierte Ausstellung „The International Style: Architecture since 1922“. Zur Vorbereitung ihrer Präsentation der zeitgenössischen Architektur in New York hatten sie um 1930 eine Europareise unternommen. Begeistert und skeptisch zugleich analysierten sie später die Eigenarten des europäischen Funktionalismus, der auf dem alten Kontinent offensichtlich zu einer international gültigen Formensprache mit gleichen Merkmalen geführt hatte. Dazu gehörte das flache Dach, der undekorierte, nackte Baukörper, die transparente Fassade und die Dominanz der technisch-konstruktiven Form über die bildhaft

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10 Jean Baudrillard: *Amerika*, München 1995, S. 164.

ornamentale, eben das, was sie kunsthistorisch als *International Style* bezeichneten. Natürlich war ihnen aufgefallen, dass dieser Stil vor allem im Wohn- und Siedlungsbau der größeren Städte, allen voran denen der Weimarer Republik, aufgeblüht war, zwar an deren Rändern, aber doch unzweifelhaft als Konzept einer zukunftstauglichen städtischen Lebensform. Aber gerade diese Lösungen beurteilten sie mit äußerster Skepsis und noch heute übermittelt der Katalogtext die Indignation, die die beiden US-Kuratoren gegenüber dem szientifischen Idealismus dieser Konzepte entwickelt haben. Den Argwohn der Amerikaner erregte die gerade im Siedlungsbau durchgesetzte Vereinheitlichung der Formen, die ihnen ästhetisch als dogmatisch und sozial als rigide erschien. Der Grund dieser Wirkung sei in den Planungsparametern zu finden, denn die Architekten des neuen Bauens planten für eine Kunstfigur, für ein „statistisches Monster“ namens „die typische Familie“, wie sie schrieben. Aber, so der Kommentar, „... the typical family has no personal existence and cannot defend itself against the sociological theories of the architects.“<sup>11</sup> Und mit der Ironie des Pragmatikers amüsierten sie sich über die moralisch hohe Tonlage jener Architekten, die sich, wie etwa Le Corbusier, jetzt als „Sozialarbeiter“ definierten: „Too often in European Siedlungen the functionalists build for some proletarian superman of the future.“<sup>12</sup>

Was die Erfinder des *International Style* geflissentlich übersahen, war die Tatsache, dass diese Kombination aus Typisierung und Heroisierung der Arbeiter auch als Botschaft Amerikas über den Atlantik gekommen war. Den Siedlungsbau der Weimarer Republik jedenfalls motivierte der idealisierte Fordismus mindestens ebenso wie die Vorstellung genossenschaftlich organisierter Lebensformen, also die Mischung aus rationalisierter Bauproduktion bei gleichzeitiger Anhebung der Konsumanteile für jene, die man gerne als „minderbemittelte Schichten“ bezeichnete. Dass man diesen verheißungsvollen Bildern des fordistischen american way of life so vieles zutrauen durfte, lag nicht zuletzt daran, dass soeben sogar die Sowjetunion die soziale Tauglichkeit des Systems beglaubigt hatte. Für die meisten Architekten der Zwischenkriegszeit blieb der Fordismus mithin ein schillerndes, ein undurchschautes Phänomen. Das liberale Bürgertum Deutschlands jedenfalls hoffte mithilfe des ökonomischen und kulturellen Amerikanismus den dritten revolutionsfreien friedlichen Weg in die Zukunft zu weisen, ein Projekt, das nach 1945 in den Westzonen und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland später fortgesetzt wurde.

11 Henry-R.Hitchcock / Philip Johnson: *The International Style* (The International Style: Architecture since 1922 1932), New York, London 1995, S. 103.

12 Ebd., S. 104.

Zum Instrumentarium der Befriedungsstrategien nach dem 2. Weltkrieg gehörte auch der Wiederaufbau einiger deutscher Städte, der die Territorialisierung des Mentalen als Versprechen auf Freiheit, Demokratie und Wohlstand durchzusetzen half. Das Symbolsystem dieser Werte, ein während der Kriegsjahre in den USA technisch-konstruktiv perfektionierter *International Style*, hat seine Spuren stadträumlich-architektonisch vor allem in den Westzonen der ehemaligen Reichshauptstadt Berlin (West) als sanfte Okkupation hinterlassen. Herausragende Beispiele dieser politischen Raumbilder sind u. a. die Amerika-Gedenkbibliothek, ein Geschenk der USA an die Stadt nach der überstandenen Blockade 1948 ebenso wie die als „Leuchtturm der Freiheit“ gefeierte, aus Anlass der Internationalen Bauausstellung 1957 errichtete Kongresshalle, das Amerikahaus in der Hardenbergstraße, das 1957 gleichfalls im Westteil der Stadt entstand und der bereits 1954 eröffnete Neubau der Freien Universität Berlin, der Henry-Ford-Bau in Dahlem, der in seinem Namen unmittelbar an das Wohlstandsversprechen US-amerikanischen Kapital- und Produktivitätsimports aus der Weimarer Republik zu erinnern vermochte. Diese Stahl-, Glas- und Betonarchitektur, die inzwischen variantenreich bautechnische Standards internationalisierte, ruhte ideell im politischen Diskurs jener Jahre, der in der Vierzonenstadt Berlin am offensivsten auftreten musste. In den Reden und Rundfunkansprachen, die der erste Bürgermeister der Stadt Ernst Reuter nach dem Vorbild seines New Yorker Amtskollegen im RIAS hielt, wurden jene Argumente popularisiert, die die Dominanz dieser Architektursprache geradezu nötigend nahelegten. Reuter, der Remigrant aus der Türkei, hat sich während seiner Amtszeit notgedrungen immer wieder zur Thematik der „Umerziehung des Volkes“ äußern müssen. In einem Interview führte er 1947 aus: „... es gibt keine interessantere Arbeit als die, die Deutschen durch systematische und geduldige Umbildung in die Gemeinschaft der Völker einzufügen. Es muß eine Organisation des Friedens der Völker durchgesetzt werden ...“<sup>13</sup> Auf die anschließende Frage, ob er sich also als Internationalist fühle, antwortete er: „Ich habe mich immer zutiefst als Internationalist gefühlt, und ich verabscheue den Chauvinismus lokaler Interessen ... Wie könnte ich mich als wirklicher demokratischer Deutscher fühlen, wenn ich nicht zugleich aus innerster Überzeugung ein Internationalist wäre?“<sup>14</sup> Reuters' sozialdemokratisch geprägter Internationalismus referierte die heroisch idealische Komponente der Sozialistischen Internationale gleichsam in amerikanisierter Lesart. An diesem komplexen

13 Ernst Reuter: „Weshalb ich aus der Türkei nach Deutschland zurückkehrte“... (*Telegraf* Nr. 44, 21.2.2947). In: H.Hirschfeld / H.J.Reichardt (Hg.): *Ernst Reuter. Schriften, Reden*, Bd. 3, S. 118.  
14 Ebd., S. 119.

**Der aus den USA zurückgekehrte International Style ist nicht mehr als stilistischer Dogmenkanon der Architektur wesentlich geworden. Seine Funktion bestand vor allem darin, den Amerikanismus als Lebensstil der kommenden Weltgesellschaft zu repräsentieren und gleichsam territorial zu markieren.**

Bedeutungsgemisch eines antinationalistischen und antirassistischen politischen Internationalismus jedenfalls partizipierte die am *International Style* orientierte Architektur der 1950er-Jahre. Ihre ästhetische Dominanz war nicht zuletzt in dieser Lesart legitimiert, die umso unangefochtener Raum greifen konnte, als sie sich den Nachkriegsdeutschen in bekannten Wunschbildern des Amerikanismus vom gleichwertig guten Leben präsentiert hat. Immerhin trat der *International Style* abermals als Botschaft einer fröhlichen Weltgesellschaft auf, mit dem, um Friedrichs Nietzsches Bild zu bemühen, sich die „wiederkehrende Kraft des neu erwachten Glaubens an ein Morgen und Übermorgen, des plötzlichen Gefühls und Vorgefühl von Zukunft“<sup>15</sup> ankündigte.

Als ein Beispiel dieser Verheißung ist der Wiederaufbau und die Architektursprache des Westberliner Zooviertels seit 1950 zu lesen. Vom Verkehrsplatz Ernst Reuter, entlang der Hardenbergstraße über die Bebauung am Bahnhof Zoo an der Budapester Straße bis zum Hilton Hotel im Zoorandgebiet des Tiergartens dominieren bis heute die drei Hochhausvarianten, die mit dem Namen des Architekturbüros Paul Schwebes und Hans Schoszberger verbunden sind. Schon im Bautypus des Hochhauses wird auf ein Leitbild des architektonischen Amerikanismus verwiesen, den die Architekten in Fassadengestaltungen zuweilen ornamentalisieren und andernorts dem Erbe der Berliner Geschäftshausmoderne anpassen. Dem Zeitgeist vom neuen, fröhlichen Zeitalter weltweiter Prosperität wird hier Reverenz erwiesen, um schließlich das Programm der befriedenden Völkerverständigung in der Bauaufgabe des großen Hotels eines international agierenden Hotelkonzerns im Raume zu bewältigen. Als am 15. Januar 1958 das Richtfest des Berliner Hiltons durch den Vizepräsidenten der Hilton Hotels International, Mr. Curt R. Strand, gefeiert wird, offerierte seine Rede diese Option.<sup>16</sup> Man kann

15 Friedrich Nietzsche: „Die fröhliche Wissenschaft“. In: *Werke in 2 Bde.*, München 1978, Bd. 1, S. 483.

16 Der Entwurf für das Hilton Gebäude in Berlin (West) stammte aus dem amerikanischen Architekturbüro Pereira & Luckman. Schwebes und Schoszberger arbeiteten als Kontaktarchitekten und überwachten die Bauleitung.

darin eine Fußnote der Geschichte zur Durchsetzung jener neuen Weltordnung erblicken, deren Ideologie Michael Hardt und Antonio Negri als „Vorstellung eines globalen Konzerts unter der Leitung eines einzigen Dirigenten“ beschrieben haben, „... als die eine „Macht, die den sozialen Frieden bewahrt und moralische Gewissheit bietet.“<sup>17</sup> Immerhin argumentierte Strand in seiner Rede durchaus in diesem Sinne: „Wir von Hilton sind hier, weil die maßgeblichen Persönlichkeiten unserer Gesellschaft überzeugt sind, daß Berlin eine Stadt der Zukunft ist ... Vor neun Monaten erst wurde an dieser Stelle der Grundstein gelegt und einer kaum größeren Zeitspanne werden hier Menschen aus aller Welt ... ein- und ausgehen. Man hört oft, daß die Welt viel kleiner geworden sei. Man meint, denke ich, wohl auch damit, daß das Interesse des einzelnen Menschen am Leben und Schaffen seines Mitmenschen teilzunehmen und ihm dadurch näher zu kommen, viel größer geworden ist. Man kann doch sagen, daß dieses Bestreben zu einer der größten Hoffnungen der Menschheit berechtigt, die stärker ist als der Drang zur absoluten Macht und damit zur absoluten Vernichtung. Für diese Kräfte soll dieses Haus ein würdiger Rahmen werden, der das politische, wirtschaftliche, kulturelle und gesellschaftliche Leben Berlins bereichern und mithelfen soll, neue Kontakte nach aller (unterstrichen, im Orig.) Welt aufzunehmen.“<sup>18</sup> Der aus den USA zurückgekehrte *International Style* dieser Hotelanlage ist, wie auch andernorts, nicht mehr als stilistischer Dogmenkanon der Architektur wesentlich geworden. Seine Funktion bestand vor allem darin, den Amerikanismus als Lebensstil der kommenden Weltgesellschaft zu repräsentieren und gleichsam territorial zu markieren.

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17 Michael Hardt / Antonio Negri: *Empire. Die neue Weltordnung*, Frankfurt/M. 2002, S. 26.

18 Curt R. Strand anlässlich der Richtfeier am 15.1.1958, Typoskript, Archiv: Verfasserin.



# Otto Karl Werckmeister

## Berlin

*Otto Karl Werckmeister war, neben Forschungsaufträgen am Warburg Institute, London und dem Deutschen Archäologischen Institut, Professor für Kunstgeschichte an der UCLA und der Northwestern University in Evanston/Illinois, sowie Gastprofessor an den Universitäten Marburg und Hamburg. Die Strategien von Künstlern des 20. Jahrhunderts auf dem Weg zum Ruhm hat er ebenso untersucht wie das Bildrepertoire frühmittelalterlicher Buchillustrationen oder der japanischen Manga-Comics. Walter Benjamins Forderung nach einer „Aktualität des Denkens“ hat ihm als Motto seiner Untersuchungen gedient.*

*Zu seinen wichtigsten Veröffentlichungen gehören: Ende der Ästhetik (1971), Ideologie und Kunst bei Marx (1974), Versuche über Paul Klee (1981), The Making of Paul Klee's Career, 1914–1920 (1988), Zitadellenkultur. Die schöne Kunst des Untergangs in der Kultur der Achtziger Jahre (1989); Linke Ikonen: Benjamin, Eisenstein, Picasso – nach dem Fall des Kommunismus (1997), Der Medusa-Effekt – Politische Bildstrategien seit dem 11. September 2001 (2005).*

# FRAGEN ZU HANNES MEYER

## **Werk oder Projekt?**

Hannes Meyer war ein Architekt ohne gebautes Lebenswerk. 1953, ein Jahr vor seinem Tode, porträtierte ihn der Schweizer Maler Paul Camenisch neben einer Tafel mit seinen vier ehrgeizigsten Entwürfen. Die beiden größten, politisch exponiertesten davon – der Genfer Völkerbundpalast und die Moskauer Innenstadt – wurden niemals ausgeführt. In seiner gesamten Karriere konnte Meyer nur zwei große Bauwerke errichten – das Basler Freidorf und die Bernauer Gewerkschaftsschule. Trotzdem hat er durch sein kulturpolitisches Wirken, das im Direktorat des Bauhauses gipfelte und in der umfassenden Sammlung seiner Schriften dokumentiert ist, historische Bedeutung gewonnen. Denn Meyer war der prominenteste westeuropäische Architekt seiner Zeit, der die Modernisierung der Architektur an der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kapitalismus und Marxismus orientieren wollte. Seit dem Beginn der Wirtschaftskrise arbeitete er in steigendem Maße auf eine marxistische Bestimmung der Architektur hin, ohne sie je verwirklichen zu können.

## **Aktualität?**

Beim 5. Bauhauskolloquium im Juni 1989, das Meyer zum 100. Geburtstag gewidmet war, diente er als historische Bezugsfigur für das Projekt einer modernisierten Stadt- und Arbeitsarchitektur der DDR. Auf allen vier vorausgehenden Bauhauskolloquien – 1976, 1979, 1983 und 1986 – waren Vorträge über ihn gehalten worden. Seine steigende Bedeutung für die Architektur der DDR, die sich in diesem Rückblick abzeichnet, hängt mit der Abkehr von deren anfänglich stalinistischer Architekturpolitik zusammen, die 1986 zur Neugründung des Bauhauses als Lehrinstitut führte. Zu seinen Lebzeiten hatte ihn eben jene Architekturpolitik von der DDR ferngehalten. Das 5. Bauhaus-Kolloquium von 1989, auf dem Meyers



politische Rehabilitierung ihren Höhepunkt erreichte, fand allerdings zu einem Zeitpunkt statt, da die kommunistische Parteiherrschaft der DDR zusammenzubrechen begann. Als im Frühjahr 1990 der Tagungsband erschien, war bereits eine gewählte Regierung ohne Beteiligung der SED im Amt, die die Auflösung der DDR betrieb.

Das heutige Bauhauskolloquium steht unter dem *Leitbegriff* Empire aus Michael Hardts und Antonio Negris gleichnamigem Buch von 2000. Damit beruft es sich auf eine Fundamentalkritik des globalisierten Kapitalismus, die sich auf die Marx'sche Theorie stützt, ohne deren politische Konsequenzen zu ziehen. In der diffusen Oppositionskultur der Gegenwart ist Hardts und Negris Buch deshalb so erfolgreich, weil der Begriff „Empire“ eine Art kapitalistischer Herrschaft jenseits benennbarer historischer Gegebenheiten in Politik und Gesellschaft charakterisieren soll. Die Autoren bestimmen ihn als systemische Struktur, die nirgends lokalisierbar und zugleich allgegenwärtig ist. Damit sprechen sie ein weit verbreitetes Unbehagen an der globalisierten kapitalistischen Wirtschaftsordnung an, das Klassengrenzen übersteigt und daher keine politischen Konfrontationen nach Maßgabe der Marx'schen Theorie eröffnet.

2005 stellten Hardt und Negri mit ihrem Buch *Multitude* dem Begriff „Empire“ einen ebenso umfassenden Gegenbegriff für die Menschen an die Seite, die der globalisierte Kapitalismus bedrückt und die sich von ihm befreien wollen. Wieder beriefen sie sich auf Marx, doch nur, um sich noch weiter von ihm zu entfernen als zuvor. Die behauptete Universalität beider Begriffe verhindert ihre zeitgeschichtliche Konkretisierung, die die Marx'sche Theorie durch gesellschaftlichen Klassenkampf und politische Revolution zu bestimmen sucht. Weder Klassenkampf noch Revolution werden in Hardts und Negris Büchern angesprochen. Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen „Empire“ und „Multitude“ bleibt auf eine demonstrative Massenkultur begrenzt, wie sie heute überall ohne nachhaltigen Erfolg betrieben wird. Lässt sich auf dieser Grundlage eine Architektur und Formgestaltung bestimmen, die einen glaubhaften Widerspruch zum globalisierten Kapitalismus erheben kann, so wie es Meyer in seiner Zeit versuchte?



### **Marxistischer Architekt?**

Doch bestätigt sich überhaupt Meyers Selbstverständnis als marxistischer Architekt, zu dem er sich seit 1930 bekannte, bei einer Beurteilung seiner Arbeit nach der Marx'schen Theorie? Er bildete es erst im zweiten und dritten Jahr der Weltwirtschaftskrise aus. Weder als er beim Bau des Freidorfs in Basel in der Genossenschaftsbewegung tätig war noch als er in den Führungsgremien der CIAM mitwirkte, nahm er marxistische Positionen ein. Später schwor er diesen beiden Phasen seiner Arbeit im Namen des Marxismus ab. Auch als Direktor des Bauhauses richtete er weder Studiengänge noch Projekte und Produkte an marxistischen Ideen aus. Seine Neuorientierung des Bauhaus-Programms am „Volksbedarf“ wurde zwar kulturpolitisch als „links“ akklamiert oder angefeindet, war aber lediglich volkswirtschaftlich motiviert.

Auch als Meyer beim Bau der Bernauer Gewerkschaftsschule die Gestaltungsprinzipien des Bauhauses auf die Kulturpolitik der Arbeiterbewegung anwandte, berief er sich nicht auf sozialistische Traditionen. Seine Leitideen von Persönlichkeitsbildung und Gemeinschaftsgeist stammten vielmehr aus der genossenschaftlichen Sozialpädagogik. Als der Dessauer Bürgermeister Fritz Hesse ihm bei seiner Entlassung im Frühjahr 1930 eine linke Politisierung der Bauhausarbeit vorwarf, bekannte er sich als „theoretischer Marxist“, rechtfertigte sich jedoch mit der erfolgreichen Bilanz der gewerblichen Bauhausarbeit nach Gesichtspunkten kapitalistischen Wachstums. Erst Meyers Berufung zum Professor in Moskau wenige Wochen nach seiner Entlassung, die ihm zugleich ermöglichte, dort seine vertrautesten Schüler in einer ‚Bauhaus-Brigade‘ um sich zu scharen, ermutigte ihn dazu, sich so vorbehaltlos zum Kommunismus zu bekennen, wie er es dann Ende 1932 in seinen Vorträgen in der Berliner Arbeitsgemeinschaft Revolutionärer Bildender Künstler Deutschlands zum Ausdruck brachte.

Meyer erwartete wohl, auf seinen wechselnden Führungspositionen in der Sowjetunion an der Debatte zwischen den verschiedenen Gruppierungen moderner und traditioneller Architekten über die Ausbildung einer sozialistischen Architektur, wie sie zu diesem Zeitpunkt im Zusammenhang mit den Wettbewerben um den Sowjetpalast geführt wurden, teilnehmen zu können. Dass er allerdings gerade der Architektenvereinigung WOPRA beitrug, die den Konstruktivismus und Funktionalismus anderer sowjetischer Architektengruppen bekämpfte, lässt erkennen, wie wenig er seine früheren Anschauungen weiterhin vertreten wollte. Nach dem Aprildekret von 1932, das alle kontroversen Debatten unterband, steigerte er sich in einen plakativen Bekenntnisdiskurs hinein, in dem er keine eigenen Gedanken mehr vorbrachte, sondern seine Bereitschaft zum Umlernen bis zur Selbstkritik beteuerte.

### **Kunstloser Funktionalismus?**

Das Grundproblem, um das es bei allen ideologischen Stellungswechseln Meyers ging, war die ästhetische Reduktion der Architektur im Einklang mit der Technik ihrer Konstruktion und mit der Praxis ihrer Verwendung. Meyer gründete sie auf gesellschaftspolitische Leitvorstellungen, die er in der Schweiz und in Deutschland durchzusetzen suchte, die er jedoch in der Sowjetunion widerrief. Allerdings erhielt er nie die Gelegenheit, eine „kunstlos funktionale“ Architektur, wie er sie zwischen 1924 und 1927 propagierte, bauen zu können, sondern konnte sie nur in seinen Entwürfen vorführen. Kenneth Frampton hat diese programmatisch Ästhetik der Kunstlosigkeit „Idealisierung der Erscheinung des Gebrauchswerts“, Karlheinz Winkler „ideologischen Ausdruck“ technischer Prinzipien genannt. Sie gipfelt in dem Satz „Einzelform und Gebäudekörper, Materialfarbe und Oberflächenstruktur erstehen automatisch“ in Meyers Aufsatz „Die Neue Welt“ von 1926. Ihre postulierte Wirklichkeitsnähe beinhaltet eine Ethik der Nüchternheit, die sich über technische Gegebenheiten hinwegsetzt.

Meyers Wettbewerbsentwurf für den Genfer Völkerbundpalast von 1927, sein berühmtestes und zugleich hypothetischstes Bauwerk, demonstriert die expressive Ästhetik seiner Architektur am eindeutigsten, im Widerspruch zu seiner Behauptung, es sei „nicht schön und nicht hässlich“ und symbolisiere nichts. Wenn Meyer schrieb, sein Entwurf biete „offene Glasräume für die öffentlichen Unterhandlungen offener Menschen“, dann gab er der internationalen Politik eine Gesinnungsethik vor. Und wenn der sowjetische Architekt Moissej Ginsburg urteilte, Meyers Bau sei eher für eine „Internationale der befreiten Völker der ganzen Welt“ geeignet als für den Völkerbund, dann bezog er sich auf kein Organigramm der Komintern, sondern verklärte die Verbindung von Technik und Transparenz zur politischen Ideologie.

Erst als Direktor des Bauhauses verfolgte Meyer das Ideal einer kunstlosen Gestaltung mit aller Konsequenz, wobei er Rentabilität und Kulturpolitik verband. Er wollte es gegen das Ideal einer ästhetischen Harmonisierung von Kunst und Technik durchsetzen, das bislang am Bauhaus vorherrschte. Die ‚wissenschaftlichen‘ Fächer, die Meyer an Stelle künstlerischer Übungen in den Lehrplan aufnahm, sollten die objektive Überlegenheit einer „biologisch“ richtigen Gestaltung über die subjektive Beliebigkeit künstlerischer Formgebung absichern. Kunstlosigkeit wurde zum anthropologischen Prinzip gesellschaftlicher Stimmigkeit erhoben. Als Meyer gleich nach seiner Ernennung mit dem Bau der Bernauer Gewerkschaftsschule beauftragt wurde, gelang es ihm, die Arbeit des Bauhauses nach diesem Prinzip auf ein gesellschaftlich und politisch funktionales Bauvorhaben auszurichten. Hier konnte er die sozialpolitische und die anthropologische Komponente seines reformierten Lehrprogramms zur Deckung bringen.

## **Funktionalistische Kunstform?**

In seiner Arbeit für die Genossenschaftsbewegung in Basel setzte Meyer seit 1924 unter dem Markenzeichen *Co-op* die geometrische Abstraktion des internationalen Konstruktivismus für den ästhetischen Ausdruck der industriellen Rationalisierung ein. Dabei verklärte er den kategorischen Verzicht auf Formdifferenzierung zur Ideologie eines standardisierten Lebensstils. Das Schlafzimmer mit extrem vereinfachten Möbeln und Geräten, das er 1926 in seinem Baseler Büro einrichtete und in Werbefotografien verbreiten ließ, stilisiert eine asketische Lebensweise, und zwar nicht als Idealbild für eine funktionale Verbesserung der Lebensverhältnisse, sondern als Programmbild einer reduktiven Baugesinnung. Die ‚Vitrine Co-op‘, die er für eine Ausstellung der Schweizer Genossenschaftsbewegung entwarf, enthielt verpackte Produkte teils aufgeschichtet wie in einem Warenlager, teils scheinbar bewegt wie beim Ausstoß einer Produktionsmaschine. Sie ästhetisierte die genossenschaftliche Zusammenführung von Produktion und Konsum zum abstrakten Warenfetischismus.

In seinen beiden gebauten Großprojekten in Basel und Bernau stellte Meyer die Ästhetik der Architektur von der Topografie bis zur Farbgebung in den Dienst einer Reglementierung der Lebensverhältnisse nach Maßgabe politischer Ideologien der Vergesellschaftung, erst der Genossenschaftsbewegung, dann der Arbeiterbewegung. Im symmetrischen Stadtgrundriss des Baseler Freidorfs nach dem Vorbild Palladios geben Anordnung, Größe und Form der Gebäude den Rahmen für die genossenschaftliche Lebensform vor. „Die Uniform des einfarbigen Hausanstrichs ist künstlerisch im innersten Wesen der Vollgenossenschaft begründet“, schrieb Meyer dazu. Bei der Bernauer Gewerkschaftsschule gab ihm die Bestimmung des Gebäudes für Ferienkurse von Arbeitervertretern die Möglichkeit, die architektonische Gestaltung in Abstimmung mit der straffen Organisation gewerkschaftlicher Erziehungspolitik zu funktionalisieren. In vier Wochen sollte sie die Kursteilnehmer zu „neuen Menschen“ bilden.

Weil Meyer funktionalistische Formreduktion zur gesellschaftlichen Notwendigkeit erklärte und damit moralische Konsequenzen aus wirtschaftlichen Existenzbedingungen zog, musste er sich mit seinen Auftraggebern über die gesellschaftspolitische Absicht seiner Arbeit ins Benehmen setzen. Als Bauhausdirektor verfolgte er das Ziel, diese ideologische Aufladung der Formreduktion in ein schlüssiges Ausbildungsprogramm zu überführen, noch dazu in Auseinandersetzung mit Vertretern eben der ästhetischen Verselbständigung der Formgestaltung, die er damit außer Kurs setzen wollte. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, der Meyer als Bauhausdirektor ablöste, hatte kurz zuvor in seinem Referat „Die neue Zeit“ auf der Tagung des Deutschen Werkbundes in Wien gerade das Gegenteil

dieser gesellschaftspolitischen Verantwortlichkeit moderner Formgestaltung vertreten, als er diese schlechtweg für „wertindifferent“ erklärte.

### **Sozialistische Architektur?**

In der Sowjetunion glaubte Meyer offenbar zunächst, seine Ästhetik der Reglementierung in eine politische Universalkunst des Sozialismus einbringen zu können. Innerhalb dieser – zusammen mit „Massenfilm, Massensport, Massentheater, Massendemonstration“ – sollte „das Bauwerk selber ... kein Kunstwerk“ mehr sein. Es scheint, dass Meyer auf seiner ersten Professur an der Moskauer Kunsthochschule 1931–1932 diese Konzeption noch lehren konnte. Doch wurden seine wichtigsten Studenten nach ihrem Abschluss Wortführer der neuen restaurativen Architekturpolitik, allen voran Karo Alabian und Wassili Simbirzew, die 1935 das Moskauer Theater der Roten Armee erbauten. Meyer selbst vertrat in seinem großen, undatierten Aufsatz oder Vortrag „Über marxistische Architektur“ seine Auffassungen zwar weiterhin, bekannte sich jedoch zugleich zur neuen Architekturpolitik. Noch 1936 gelang es ja modernen sowjetischen Architekten, allen voran Iwan Leonidow und Konstantin Melnikow, ihre Entwürfe durch bildhafte, symbolische und dekorative Elemente zu verbrämen – unbeanstandet, doch erfolglos.

Das Aprildekret der Partei von 1932, das die Rückwendung zur traditionalistischen Bauform einleitete, machte nicht nur ein neues Stilvorbild verbindlich, sondern nahm auch den sowjetischen Architekten die Kompetenz für gesellschaftliche Innovation aus der Hand und schränkte sie auf rivalisierende Auslegungen einer kulturpolitischen Generallinie ein. Das widersprach dem Berufsverständnis moderner westeuropäischer Architekten, die bis dahin in der Sowjetunion gearbeitet hatten und sie daraufhin verließen. Da Meyer bleiben wollte, sah er sich gehalten, dieses Berufsverständnis zu widerrufen. Nun rechnete er seine früheren Arbeiten dem Kapitalismus, ja dem ‚Sozialfaschismus‘ zu. In „Über marxistische Architektur“ berichtet er, wie ihm ausgerechnet im April 1932 eine Massenversammlung von Bauarbeitern mit Forderungen nach einer triumphalistischen Bau- und Bildkunst entgegengetreten sei. So befolgte er eine Sprachregelung der sowjetischen Architekturpolitik, die mit ihrer restaurativen Wendung den Wünschen der Bevölkerung zu folgen vorgab.

Dass Meyer den Wechsel der sowjetischen Architekturpolitik vorbehaltlos bejahte, zumindest öffentlich, mag ihm die Weiterarbeit in führenden Stellungen der Stadtplanung und die Entsendung zu Propagandavorträgen im Ausland eingetragen haben, doch erhielt er nie die Gelegenheit, seine neue, konforme Einstellung in einem eigenen Bauprojekt unter Beweis zu stellen. Wenn er bald nach seiner Rückkehr in die Schweiz Karola Bloch-Pjotrowska schrieb, er habe

als „Nichttrasse“ keinen Beitrag zur sozialistischen Architektur leisten können, dann schloss er sich noch im Verzicht der nationalistischen Bestimmung des sozialistischen Realismus an. Seine politischen Bekenntnisse bewegten später auch die Architekturfunktionäre der DDR nicht mehr dazu, ihn zur Mitarbeit heranzuziehen. Sie konnten ihn nur nach seinen Leistungen vor der Emigration beurteilen, von denen er selber nichts mehr hielt.

### **Schluss**

Auf dem 5. Bauhaus-Kolloquium 1989 diente Meyer als mögliche Leitfigur für die Architektur eines politischen Systems, dessen Zusammenbruch im Gange war. Die stalinistische Konsequenz von Meyers Selbstbezeichnung als marxistischer Architekt wurde dabei kaum berührt. Vielleicht hätte die Aufwertung seiner vormarxistischen Architektur dem Begriff „Erbe“ entsprochen, der in der DDR die Aneignung nichtsozialistischer Kulturleistungen erleichtern sollte. Vielleicht hätte sie sogar zu dem Projekt einer demokratischen Reform der DDR nach dem Abriss der Berliner Mauer gepasst. Aber dafür war es nun zu spät. So beinhaltet Meyers historische Bedeutung das Scheitern seiner Karriere als Architekt. Sie führt uns die Ausweglosigkeit des Kurzschlusses zwischen kulturellem Führungsanspruch und politischer Unterordnung vor Augen, die zahlreiche Künstler und Intellektuelle in Europa – von Brecht bis Picasso – zwischen 1933 und 1953 befiel.

Zwanzig Jahre später erfordert Hardts und Negris *Empire* als Referenztext des 11. Bauhaus-Kolloquiums, die Frage einer marxistischen Architektur zu einer anti-kapitalistischen Kultur in Beziehung zu setzen, wie sie die Autoren in ihrem späteren Buch *Multitude* entwerfen. Diese Kultur soll eine Individualisierung der Massen befördern, indem sie sich deren politischer Organisation entschlägt und sie eben dadurch politisch aktivieren will. Dagegen stützte sich Meyers Ästhetik der sozialen Reglementierung auf die fest organisierten Massenverbände der Genossenschafts- und der Gewerkschaftsbewegung. Die kulturpolitische Logik von *Multitude* sieht keine Architektur der Massen vor.



## **Wolfgang Pehnt**

### Ruhr-Universität Bochum

*Wolfgang Pehnt lehrte Baugeschichte an der Ruhr-Universität Bochum. Er hat zahllose Arbeiten zur Architekturgeschichte der Moderne veröffentlicht und Monographien über Baumeister wie Gottfried Böhm, Hans Poelzig, Rudolf Schwarz und Karljosef Schattner geschrieben; er war Autor bei der Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte und Mitarbeiter von Fachzeitschriften,*

*Katalogbüchern, Tageszeitungen und Rundfunkanstalten. Seine Bücher „Die Architektur des Expressionismus“ und „Deutsche Architektur seit 1900“ gelten als Standardwerke. Er wurde vielfach ausgezeichnet, zuletzt mit dem Deutschen Preis für Denkmalschutz (Karl Friedrich Schinkel-Ring).*

# MODELLWECHSEL

## *Das Bauhaus und die Organisation seines Nachruhms*

Im reichen Erbe des Bauhauses befindet sich auch ein immaterielles Erbstück, eine gegenstandslose Hinterlassenschaft von diskutierbarer Qualität: die Organisation des eigenen Nachruhms und zugleich die Erfindung oder zumindest Benennung eines Stils.

Wie hat es eine kleine Schule in vergleichsweise kleinen Städten, Weimar und Dessau, geschafft, eine ganze Epoche auf den eigenen Namen zu verpflichten? Wie war es möglich, dass ein Künstler wie Peter Behrens, bei dem Walter Gropius in seinen Anfängen assistiert hat – und nicht umgekehrt –, heute in der populären Presse als „Bauhaus-Künstler“ bezeichnet werden kann? Oder Bruno Taut oder Erich Mendelsohn, die ihre erfolgreiche Praxis bereits längst gestartet hatten, als das Bauhaus in der Architektur kaum mehr als ein hölzernes Präriehaus (für seinen Mäzen Adolf Sommerfeld) und ein knapp über 100 qm kleines, damals höchst umstrittenes Musterhaus vorzuweisen hatte? Behrens, Taut, Mendelsohn – alles Bauhaus-Künstler?!

### **Die ganze Welt ein Bauhaus?**

Taut wie Mendelsohn waren Schüler des bedeutenden Architektenlehrers Theodor Fischer in Stuttgart und München, ebenso wie Dominikus Böhm, Martin Elsaesser, Ferdinand Kramer (der sein Studium am Bauhaus begonnen, aber es unbefriedigt verlassen hatte), Alfred Fischer, Hugo Häring, Ernst May, Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud, Wilhelm Riphahn. Denn die großen Architekten der Moderne, des Neuen Bauens, sind nicht am Bauhaus ausgebildet worden – das war schon aus Gründen der Chronologie unmöglich –, sondern bei Carl Schäfer, Otto



Abb. 1: Bauhaus, Tel Aviv.  
Lageplan von sogenannten „Bauhaus“-Gebäuden.  
Um 1995.

Abb. 2: Last-Minute-Bauhaus-Aktion. Werbung für ein italienisches Möbel-Versandhaus. 2008.

Wagner, Hermann Billing, Theodor Fischer oder Hans Poelzig, sofern sie aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum kamen.

Wie konnte es geschehen, dass eine Stadt wie Tel Aviv sich heute als Bauhaus-Stadt rühmt (Abb. 1) – wo von den zweihundert Architekten, die während der 1930er- und 40er-Jahre an die 4 000 Gebäude modern bauten, nachweisbar sechs am Dessauer Bauhaus studiert hatten?<sup>1</sup> Und wie ist es möglich, dass ein Versandhaus in Italien sein Design-Angebot von Le Corbusier und Eileen Gray bis Magistretti und De Lucchi als „Last-Minute-Bauhaus-Aktion“ anpreist? (Abb. 2) Die Avantgardeproduktion einer ganzen Epoche und sogar deren Nachfolger in späteren Jahrzehnten sind mit dem Label Bauhaus versehen worden. Offensichtlich wohnen wir der Verbreitung eines Stilbegriffes bei, der sich von seinem realen Kern weit entfernt und vieles einbegreift, was historisch mit seinem Namensgeber so viel zu tun hat wie die Gotik mit den Goten.

In seinen Anfängen ist dieses Phänomen schon während der Existenz des Bauhauses beobachtet worden; eine Reihe von Autoren in dem von Regina Bittner herausgegebenen Band *Bauhausstil*<sup>2</sup> hat einschlägige Beobachtungen zusammengetragen. Ernst Kállai, ehemaliger Bauhaus-Schüler in der Ära Hannes Meyer, schrieb 1929/30 in der *Weltbühne*: „Wohnungen mit viel Glas- und Metallglanz: Bauhausstil... Lampe mit vernickeltem Gestell und Metallglasplatte als Schirm: Bauhausstil. Gewürfelte Tapeten: Bauhausstil... eine Wiener Modezeitschrift empfiehlt, Damenwäsche nicht mehr mit Blümchen, sondern im zeitgemäßen Bauhausstil mit geometrischen Dessins zu gestalten.“<sup>3</sup> Bereits damals hatte sich der neue Auftritt in Entwurf und Gestaltung in der Vorstellung eines breiteren Publikums mit dem Bauhaus verbunden, gleichgültig wo die fraglichen Produkte

1 Shlomo Bernstein, Chanan Frenkel, Munio Gitai (Weinraub), Edgar Hed (Hecht), Shmuel Mestechkin, Arieh Sharon. Vgl. Irmel Kamp-Bandau: *Tel Aviv, Neues Bauen 1930–1939*. S. 38. Myra Wahrhaftig: *Sie legten den Grundstein. Leben und Wirken deutschsprachiger jüdischer Architekten in Palästina 1918–1948*. Tübingen, Berlin 1996. S. 127ff.

2 *Edition Bauhaus* Band 11. Dessau, Berlin 2003.

3 Ernst Kállai: „Zehn Jahre Bauhaus“. In: *Die Weltbühne* 26 (1930)4, S. 135–139.



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tatsächlich hergestellt worden waren. Das Groteske ist, dass die Urheber dieser Äußerungsform, der schlanken Sachlichkeit, die bald das Firmenschild Bauhaus trug, alles andere gewollt hatten, als einen neuen Stil zu erfinden. „Darum keinen ‚Stil‘, keinen eigenen Baustil. Gemeinsame Gestaltung. Fließendes Übergehen der Dinge“, schrieb Sigfried Giedion<sup>4</sup>, immer ein treuer Anhänger von Gropius. Der Begriff Stil war tabu, da belegt und verdorben durch den Karneval historischer Maskeraden, der das 19. Jahrhundert und noch die ersten Jahre des 20. beherrscht hatte. Dass der eigentliche Wert der Architektur – und man kann hinzusetzen: der Gestaltung überhaupt – von der Stilfrage unberührt bleibe, konnte man schon kurz nach der Jahrhundertwende lesen. Es komme nicht darauf an, die historischen Stile durch einen neuen Stil zu ersetzen. Es gehe vielmehr um Ehrlichkeit, Sachlichkeit, Gediegenheit.<sup>5</sup> Daraus könne sich womöglich ein neuer Stil ergeben, der aber von manchen Autoren eher als ein Stil jenseits aller Stile betrachtet wurde, einer, der so vernunftgerecht wäre, dass mit ihm die Abfolge der Stile abgeschlossen wäre.

Gropius selbst hat sich immer wieder erbittert dagegen gewehrt, dass seine Arbeit mit dem Etikett eines Stils versehen würde. Für das, was am Bauhaus getrieben wurde, für die Bauhauslehre, beanspruchte er objektive Gültigkeit, nicht, weil sie immer gültigen Regeln folgte, sondern weil sie sich am „Fluidum des Lebens selbst“ orientiere. „Das Ziel des Bauhauses ist eben kein ‚Stil‘, kein System oder Dogma, kein Rezept und keine Mode... Ein Bauhausstil wäre ein Rückschlag in Stagnation, in lebensfeindlichen Trägheitszustand, zu dessen Bekämpfung das Bauhaus einst von mir ins Leben gerufen worden ist.“ Walter Gropius schrieb es 1935 in einer in England erschienenen Schrift<sup>6</sup>, die zur internationalen Kanonisierung des Bauhauses beitrug – und damit mittelbar auch zum „Bauhausstil“.

4 Sigfried Giedion: *Bauen in Frankreich*. Leipzig o. J. (1928). S. 7.

5 Vgl. z. B. Hermann Muthesius: „Architektonische Zeitbetrachtungen“. In: *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung* 20 (1900) 21. S. 125ff.

6 Walter Gropius: *The New Architecture and The Bauhaus*. London 1935. Zit. nach der deutschen Ausgabe: *Die neue Architektur und das Bauhaus*. Mainz 1965. S. 63.

Was auch unter Bauhäuslern ein durchaus wohlgeleitener Gedanke war, das war die Vorstellung eines größeren, eines die ganze Gegenwart umfassenden Bauhauses. Der junge Max Bill schrieb 1928: „Ich fasse das Bauhaus größer, als es in Wirklichkeit ist: Picasso, Jacobs, Chaplin, Eiffel, Freud, Strawinski, Edison usw. gehören eigentlich auch zum Bauhaus.“ Das Bauhaus sei „eine geistige, fortschrittliche Richtung, eine Gesinnung, die man Religion nennen könnte.“ Das Bauhaus wurde derart als eine allumfassende, wenn auch nicht genau zu definierende Idee begriffen – denn was verband den Begründer der Psychoanalyse und den Erfinder der Glühlampe miteinander? Der Gedanke einer solchen Bauhaus-Religion reklamierte bereits die Zuständigkeit des Bauhauses für alles und jedes. Der Klee-Schüler Fritz Kuhr setzte noch eins darauf: „Die Welt hat nur dann einen Sinn, wenn sie ein ‚Bauhaus‘ ist... Die ganze Welt ein Bauhaus!“<sup>7</sup>

### Konkurrenten des Bauhauses

Von den zeitgenössischen Schulen hätte eine Reihe wohlbeleumundeter Institute die gleiche Publizität verdient wie das Bauhaus mit seinen insgesamt nur zwölfhundertfünfzig Schülern und gleichzeitig kaum mehr als je einhundertsechzig Schülern.<sup>8</sup> Eine Reform der Ausbildung war an vielen Akademien und Kunstgewerbeschulen eingeleitet worden. Der Werkstattgedanke griff um sich. Lernen durch Tun galt als zukunftssträchtige Pädagogik. Handwerkliche Ausbildung statt der Reißbrettkunst und dem Ornamentzeichnen wurde lange vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg an vielen Lehrstätten im deutschsprachigen Raum gepflegt. Der Bericht, den das Jahrhundertgenie in spe Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, später Le Corbusier genannt, seiner Schule in der Schweizer Uhrmacherstadt La Chaux-de-Fonds gab, enthält einen eindrucksvollen Katalog solcher Orte, wobei er einen der wichtigsten, Hans Poelzig's Kunstakademie in Breslau, nicht aufgesucht hat.<sup>9</sup>

Jeanneret-Le Corbusier war beeindruckt von der unglaublichen Vitalität, Robustheit und Kraft der kunstgewerblichen Bewegung in Deutschland. Ihre Lehrer betrachteten Schüler als erwachsene Menschen und ließen ihnen jede kreative Freiheit. Vieles, was als Neuerung in Weimar galt, war hier schon vorgegeben: etwa die Teilung der Aufgaben auf „Formmeister“, die Künstler, und „Werkmeister“, die fachlich zuständigen Handwerksmeister, der Vorkurs oder im Organisatorischen die Zusammenführungen von Kunstgewerbeschule und Akademie. Die

7 Max Bill und Fritz Kuhr in: „Interviews mit Bauhäuslern“. In: *bauhaus* 1928/2–3. S. 25f., 28f.

8 Hans M. Wingler: *Das Bauhaus 1919–33. Weimar Dessau Berlin*. Braunschweig 1968. S. 551. Hans M. Wingler (Hg.): *Kunstschulreform 1900–1933*. Berlin 1977.

9 Charles-Edouard Jeanneret: *Etude sur le mouvement d'art décoratif en Allemagne*. La Chaux-de-Fonds 1912.

Neuordnung der Schulen war keine alleinige Leistung der Bauhäusler, ganz abgesehen davon, dass ein Teil der theoretischen Vorarbeit im Berliner Arbeitsrat für Kunst unter Federführung von Otto Bartning geleistet worden war. Die Moderne hatte viele Ausbildungsorte: in Berlin die Vereinigten Kunstschulen und die private Reimann-Schule, die Magdeburger Kunstgewerbeschule, die Folkwangschule in Essen, die Kölner Werkschulen, später die kleine Aachener Handwerker- und Kunstgewerbeschule unter Rudolf Schwarz. Die Frankfurter Kunstschule sah sich auf Augenhöhe mit dem Bauhaus und versuchte, bei dessen Auflösung in Weimar 1925 die wichtigsten Dozenten für Frankfurt zu gewinnen.

Besonders intensiv war in der föderalistischen Hochschullandschaft die Konkurrenz zwischen Bauhaus und der Kunstgewerbeschule Burg Giebichenstein in Halle mit einer regen Fluktuation von Schülern und Lehrern in beiden Richtungen. Viele Entwürfe könnte man für Produkte der jeweils anderen Schule halten, auch wenn in der klösterlichen Abgeschlossenheit der „Burg“ eher die zeitlos-gültige Norm gepflegt wurde und im Bauhaus eher die vibrierende Nähe zur aktuellen Gegenwart. Zur Nachfolgeschule des Bauhauses in Weimar unter Otto Bartning war die Konkurrenz aus naheliegenden Gründen besonders ausgeprägt; und dann ging auch noch Ernst Neufert, die rechte Hand von Gropius beim Bau des Bauhausgebäudes, an Bartnings Weimarer Bauhochschule! Warum also das Bauhaus als Namensgeber einer internationalen Stilbewegung und nicht Berlin, Halle, Frankfurt oder Köln? Oder, was die Zentren der Modernität im Ausland betrifft, Paris, Rotterdam, Mailand, Moskau?

Ein kulturpolitischer Glücksfall und Vorsprung des Bauhauses im Wettstreit der Schulen ergab sich durch die Zeitumstände, durch die Wahl Weimars zum zeitweiligen Sitz der deutschen Nationalversammlung. So ärgerlich die Wohnungsnot in der nun auch noch von Abgeordneten überlaufenen Stadt für alle wohnungssuchenden Bauhäusler war, der frisch gegründeten Schule eröffnete die vorübergehende staatstragende Rolle Weimars eine symbolische Perspektive, die als Prestigegewinn nicht zu unterschätzen war. So lange wie die Republik, die von ihrem kurzen Aufenthalt in der Klassikerstadt den Namen Weimarer Republik behielt, bestand auch das Staatliche Bauhaus, vierzehn Jahre lang. In der kollektiven Erinnerung prägte es sich ein als das Institut, das den ersten demokratischen Staat auf deutschem Boden begleitet hatte. Die Republik begann 1919 in Weimar, und sie endete 1933 in Berlin – wie das Bauhaus. Den viel beschworenen demokratischen „Geist von Weimar“ konnte das Bauhaus auch auf sich beziehen.

### Meister der PR

Was das Bauhaus besser konnte als die konkurrierenden Anstalten, das war Werbung, Reklame, PR.<sup>10</sup> Die Manifeste, die Bauhaus-Mappen, die Bauhaus-Bücher, die Bauhaus-Postkarten, die Bauhaus-Sigel und -Stempel, die Bauhaus-Feste, die Bauhaus-Ausstellungen waren nicht nur begleitende Veranstaltungen, sie waren ein Teil der Programmarbeit selbst. Die zuständige und sehr erfolgreiche Werkstatt hieß bald vornehm „Werklehre für Buch- und Kunstdruck“, bald unumwunden „Reklamewerkstatt“. Heute würde sie wohl „Visuelle Kommunikation“ heißen. Ungewohnte Typografie, vorzugsweise mit serifenloser Schrift, ungewohnte Orthografie, ungewohnter Satzbau, Einbeziehung von Fotos, Auszeichnung durch rote Balken oder kreisförmige Interpunktionen, Diagonalstellung machten auf die zu transportierenden Inhalte aufmerksam. Das waren zum Teil eigene Veranstaltungen oder auswärtige Auftritte der Bauhausmeister und zum nicht geringen Teil Auftragsarbeiten für Kunden, die sich ein fortschrittliches Image geben wollten.

Zeitgenössische Medien, Leuchtschrift, Film, Collagetechniken wurden auch in der sonstigen Selbst- und Fremddarstellung eingesetzt. In Dessau drehte man einen Lehrfilm zur Instruktion der Besucher, in dem die Künstlergattinnen pädagogisch wirksam die Türen neu entworfener Küchenschränke schwenkten und Schubladen aufzogen. Nicht zuletzt war es die Gestaltung von Ausstellungen, die den Ruhm des Bauhauses ins Ausland trug. In Barcelona 1929, wo Mies van der Rohe, damals noch nicht Bauhaus-Chef, den Deutschen Pavillon entwarf, oder in Paris 1930, wo Walter Gropius, damals nicht mehr Bauhaus-Chef, die Leitung der deutschen Sektion hatte, oder bei den internationalen Ausstellungen auf deutschem Boden war nicht das Bauhaus Thema und war auch nicht das Bauhaus als Institution Auftragnehmer. Aber da die gestaltenden Künstler zum großen oder überwiegenden Teil Bauhäusler waren oder wurden, kamen Erfolg oder Skandalerfolg stets auch dem Bauhaus zugute. Das Bauhaus genieße Weltruf, das konnte man 1928 schon behaupten, ohne sich lächerlich zu machen.<sup>11</sup> Walter Gropius, der im selben Jahr das Bauhaus verließ, habe zuviel Radau gemacht, grollte Hans Poelzig, der bei seiner Berufung nach Weimar als Ratgeber beteiligt gewesen

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10 Vgl.: Patrick Rössler: „Die visuelle Identität des Weimarer Bauhauses“. In: Hellmut Th. Seemann, Thorsten Valk (Hg.): *Klassik und Avantgarde. Das Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1925*. Klassik Stiftung Weimar. Jahrbuch 2009. Göttingen 2009. S. 367ff. Kerstin Eckstein: „Inszenierung einer Utopie. Zur Selbstdarstellung des Bauhauses in den zwanziger Jahren“. In: Andreas Haus (Hg.): *Bauhaus-Ideen 1919–1994*. Berlin 1994. S. 15ff.

11 Grete Dixel: „Warum geht Gropius 1928?“ In: Frank Whitford (Hg.): *Das Bauhaus. Selbstzeugnisse von Meistern und Studenten*. Stuttgart 1993. S. 256.

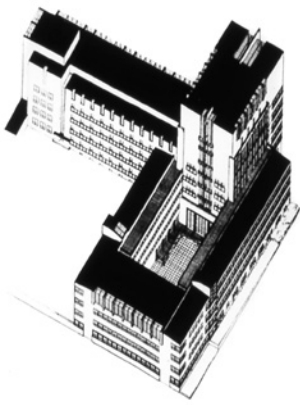


Abb. 3: Martin Elsaesser. Kunstschule der Stadt Frankfurt am Main. Nicht ausgeführter Entwurf. 1926-27.

Abb. 4: Walter Gropius. Bauhausgebäude. Dessau, 1926.

war.<sup>12</sup> Heinrich de Fries, als Redakteur der *Baugilde* kein Konservativer, klagte 1925, die Bauhausleitung habe der Baukunst von morgen „durch das geradezu hysterische Propagandageschrei... in der schwersten Weise geschadet“.<sup>13</sup> Dass das Bauhaus sein Licht unter den Scheffel gestellt habe, fanden jedenfalls auch seine Freunde nicht.

In Dessau kam ein Faktor von unschätzbarem Aufmerksamkeitswert hinzu, eine Art Propaganda durch Architektur. Das Bauhaus lehrte und arbeitete in einer eigenen errichteten Gebäudeanlage, dem Bauhausgebäude, das es – unter kräftiger Nachhilfe durch Bauhaus-Publizistik und Bauhaus-Fotografie – bald zum Status einer Ikone schaffte.<sup>14</sup> Seine Meister konnten in ebenfalls neu errichteten Häusern wohnen, die ihren Lebensstil ausdrückten. Das war ein Vorzug, den der Umzug nach Dessau ermöglicht hatte und den keine andere deutsche Hochschule der 1920er-Jahre genoss. Die Frankfurter Kunstschule hatte sich – genau gleichzeitig mit Dessau – einen Komplex von Martin Elsaesser entwerfen lassen, der aber nie gebaut wurde. (Abb. 3) Mit seinen Teilsymmetrien und dem eng umbauten Innenhof hätte er auch mit Sicherheit nicht die Publizität erreicht, die das Bauhaus, sein lockerer Grundriss, seine straßenüberspringende Brücke und vor allem die gläserne Fassade seines Werkstattgebäudes erzielten. (Abb. 4) Offenheit und Gleichberechtigung der Teile suggerierte Elsaessers Vorschlag jedenfalls nicht.

Zur Gleichsetzung der fortschrittlichen Moderne mit dem Bauhaus haben nicht zuletzt die zahlreichen Krisenfälle beigetragen, in denen Gropius Hilfe von außen erbat und erhielt. Schon bald nach der Gründung, im Winter 1919/20, gab es im ersten Bauhaus-Streit Sympathieerklärungen für das Bauhaus u. a. von Adolf Behne, Hilberseimer, Mendelsohn, Poelzig als Vorsitzendem des Deutschen

12 Wolfgang Pehnt: *Die Architektur des Expressionismus*. Stuttgart 1973. S. 215 (Anm. 12). Ostfildern 1998. S. 163.

13 Hans Poelzig an Ernst Jäckh, 16.1.1920. Nachlass Poelzig, ehemals Hamburg. Heinrich de Fries an Syndikus Emil Lange, 31.1.1925. Manuskript im Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.

14 Vgl. Anm. 10.



Abb. 5: H.M. Lindhoff.  
Dessauer Bauhaus-Krach.  
1928. „(Das von der Stadt  
Dessau mit großen Ko-  
sten übernommene, vom  
Baurat Gropius geleitete  
und den allermodernsten  
Baustil propagierende  
'Bauhaus' ist verkracht.)/  
Oben auf des Hauses  
Trümmern, Hört man den  
Herrn Gropius wimmern.“

Werkbunds und den Brüdern Taut.<sup>15</sup> Solche Solidaritätsbekundungen wiederholten sich, so bei der drohenden Schließung der Schule in Weimar 1924/25, dem Fortgang von Gropius 1928 und bei der Vertreibung aus Anhalt 1932 durch die nationalsozialistisch-bürgerliche Mehrheit des Dessauer Gemeinderats. (Abb. 5) Jedes Mal kam das Haus in die Schlagzeilen und mobilisierte die Anteilnahme aller Gutwilligen; immer stand es unter Legitimationszwang.

Erich Mendelsohn gab dem Unbehagen Ausdruck, das diese Manifestationen bei ihm und seinesgleichen hervorriefen, als er an Moholy-Nagy schrieb: „Zu allerletzt wird auch Ihnen nicht unbekannt sein, dass das Bauhaus in seiner bisherigen Zusammensetzung und Tätigkeit für uns alle nicht ohne Probleme geblieben ist, wenn wir auch selbstverständlich für das von der Gegenseite bekämpfte Prinzip des Bauhauses stets eintreten werden.“<sup>16</sup> Auch interne Gegner bekannten sich nolens volens nach außen zum Bauhaus. Theo van Doesburg, dessen scharfe innere Kritik 1922/23 wesentlich zur Neuorientierung des Bauhauses beigetragen hatte, mahnte, „man kann das Bauhaus in mancher Hinsicht kritisieren, bekämpfen darf und kann man es nicht“.<sup>17</sup> In der Öffentlichkeit konnte so der Eindruck entstehen, die verstreut im Reich und darüber hinaus tätigen fortschrittswilligen Geister erblickten im Bauhaus ein Zentrum auch ihres Strebens und Wollens; konnte man zu der Auffassung gelangen, das Bauhaus sei Vorort und Mittelpunkt aller Moderne.

Das galt umso mehr, als das Bauhaus in den schnell wechselnden Zielen seiner Arbeit, im häufigen Paradigmenwechsel tatsächlich den Eindruck erzeugen konnte, als decke es die verschiedensten Erscheinungsformen der zeitgenössischen Avantgarde ab. Das Bauhaus erfand sich alle zwei, drei Jahre neu. (Abb. 6) Wer sich auf Tendenzen oder Ergebnisse des Bauhauses berufen wollte, fand

<sup>15</sup> Vgl. Justus H. Ulbricht: „Bauhaus und Weimarer Republik – politische und kulturelle Hegemonialkämpfe“. In: Jeannine Fiedler, Peter Feierabend (Hg.): *Bauhaus*. Köln 1999. S. 26ff.

<sup>16</sup> Erich Mendelsohn an László Moholy-Nagy; 23.3.1935. Manuskript. Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.

<sup>17</sup> „Ein Holländer über das Bauhaus“. In: *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung*. Deutschland. 25.7.1924.

immer etwas, auf das er sich beziehen konnte. In der Summe waren stets einzelne Posten enthalten, die Aspekte der zeitgenössischen Lebenswirklichkeit trafen. Aus der Sicht jener Tage, aus der Sicht eines sympathisierenden Zeitgenossen, mochte es tatsächlich erscheinen, als sei ein Stil, der alle Stile beendet, denkbar geworden.

Die Ausdrucksemphasen der allerersten Jahre, die Handwerksromantik und die zeittypischen Rituale der romantisch-expressionistischen Frühphase mochten zwar nicht mehr zitierfähig sein. Gropius selbst sprach von einem „atavistischen Irrtum“.<sup>18</sup> Aber alle anderen Wendungen blieben aktuell: Die neue Devise „Kunst und Technik, eine neue Einheit“, die sich ab 1922 durchzusetzen begann; (Abb. 7) die soziale Zuwendung unter Hannes Meyer, dem zweiten Bauhaus-Leiter, unter dessen Direktorat unspektakuläre Laubengang-Häuser, die Gewerkschaftsschule in Bernau und preisgünstige „Volksmöbel“ entstanden („Unser Tun ist Dienst am Volke“<sup>19</sup>); schließlich die gediegenen, akademischen typologischen Studien unter Mies van der Rohe. Das offene Ideenlabor, die Coop-Werkstatt, die Fachschule für gehobene Baukultur und gleichzeitig die Pflege der freien Künste: „Die ganze welt ein bauhaus!“

### Ein Meinungsmonopol in Sachen Moderne

Mit der Exilierung vieler Bauhauskünstler, so einschneidend sie für das Leben des Einzelnen war, gewann das Bauhaus ein internationales Forum. Lehrern und Schülern wuchs im Ausland, in Großbritannien, in der Türkei, vor allem aber in den USA, so etwas wie ein Meinungsmonopol in Sachen deutscher Moderne zu. Gropius und das Bauhaus unter seinem Direktorat, dann auch Mies van der Rohe erhielten in der strategisch wichtigsten Institution für die Fixierung der Geschichte in Sachen Kunst, Design und Architektur, dem New Yorker Museum of Modern Art, Einzelausstellungen. Bauhauskünstler in den USA gewannen wichtige Lehrämter und große Aufträge. Die politische Entwicklung machte sie notgedrungen zu *global players*.

Das derart befestigte Renommee strahlte nach 1945 wieder zurück auf Europa. Die ersten Monografien über Bauhaus, Gropius und



Abb. 6: Marcel Breuer. ein bauhausfilm, fünf Jahre lang. autor: das leben, das seine rechte fordert. operateur: marcel breuer, der diese rechte anerkennt. es geht mit jedem jahr besser und besser. am ende sitzt man auf einer elastischen Luftsäule. 1926

18 Walter Gropius: „Der Baugeist der neuen Volksgemeinde“. In: *Die Glocke* 10 (5.6.1924) 10. S. 314.

19 Hannes Meyer: „Bauhaus und Gesellschaft“. In: *Bauhaus* (1929) 1. S. 2.



Abb. 7: László Moholy-Nagy. Titelblatt für: *Kat. Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar. 1919 1923. Weimar, München, 1923.*

Mies waren Übersetzungen aus dem amerikanischen Englisch (Abb. 8): eine weitere Voraussetzung für die Inthronisation des Bauhauses als universalem Bauhaus-Stil. Versuche, Zweifel an der Vorherrschaft von Materialismus, Technizismus und Funktionalismus öffentlich zu machen, wie der berühmte Bauhaus-Streit von 1953, scheiterten, zumal dessen Initiator Rudolf Schwarz sie mit unglücklichen persönlichen Invektiven gespickt hatte.<sup>20</sup> Das Bauhaus, im Prestige gestärkt, übernahm die Patenschaft über die bundesrepublikanische Zweite Moderne.

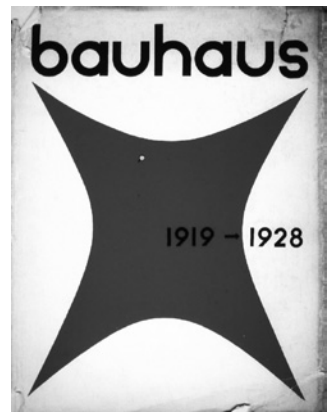
Gropius hat im amerikanischen Exil behauptet, er habe das himmelstürmende Pathos des ersten Bauhaus-Manifestes von 1919 nur gewählt, um in den jungen Leuten schöpferische Spontaneität auszulösen, „wie der Schöpfungsakt biologischen Lebens immer eines Elementes der Überschwenglichkeit und Illusionskraft bedarf“. Ein sachlicher Aufruf zu sachlicher Arbeit würde damals seinen Zweck verfehlt haben.<sup>21</sup> Diese nachträgliche Selbstinterpretation hat man gedeutet als Versuch, sich von den gesinnungssozialistischen Anfängen der ersten Bauhausjahre zu distanzieren. In den USA, deren Kulturleben unter den Nachwirkungen des Kommunistenjähgers Joseph McCarthy stand, war es in der Tat nicht ratsam, sich zu einem Dokument zu bekennen, in dem eine „Kathedrale des Sozialismus“ beschworen wurde.

Aber vielleicht hatte Mr. Bauhaus doch mehr recht, als wir (und ich) es damals geglaubt haben. Vielleicht war bei aller tatsächlichen Identifikation mit der Seelenlage von 1919 doch ein Stück Taktik dabei gewesen, sich der Stimmung der Nachkriegszeit anzupassen. Vielleicht war der Habitus des Bauhausgründers einschließlich der eindrucksvollen Lesungen bei Kerzenlicht und dem weihnachtlichen Abendmahl, das Gropius persönlich seinen Studenten auftrug, auch ein beabsichtigtes Stück Inszenierung, eine Stil-Wahl. Er wählte, was in der Luft lag,

<sup>20</sup> Vgl. Ulrich Conrads u. a. (Hg.): *Die Bauhaus-Debatte 1953. Bauwelt-Fundamente* 100. Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1994. Wolfgang Pehnt: *Rudolf Schwarz. 1897–1961. Architekt einer anderen Moderne*. Ostfildern 1997. S. 137ff.

<sup>21</sup> Walter Gropius an Tomas Maldonado, 24.11.1963. In: *Ulm* 10/11. S. 67f.





*Abb. 8: Herbert Bayer.  
Schutzumschlag für: Her-  
bert Bayer, Walter Gropi-  
us, Ise Gropius. Bauhaus  
1919-1928. Stuttgart, 1955.*

gab ihm ein eindrucksvolles Ritual und war dabei elastisch genug zu rechtzeitigen Revisionen.

Seine Berufungspolitik entspricht dieser Strategie. Sie birgt letzten Endes das Erfolgsgeheimnis des Bauhauses. Wo sonst trafen so viele und so unterschiedliche Genies der Epoche zusammen wie in Weimar und Dessau: neben den prominenten Architekten-Direktoren Feininger, Itten, Kandinsky, Klee, Schlemmer, Moholy-Nagy und viele andere. Eine Auswahl berufserfahrener Spezialisten, die eine fachgerechte Ausbildung in Kunstgewerbe, Design und Architektur gesichert hätten, etwa im Sinne redlicher Werkbund-Philosophie, wäre anders ausgefallen. Gropius setzte für sein Haus auf Risiko. Das erlaubte Weite, Flexibilität und schließlich auch: die Qualifikation, zum Statthalter der Moderne zu avancieren.

Soweit ich sehe, ist in der überschaubaren Vorvergangenheit ein einziges Mal eine ähnliche, alle Kunstgattungen umfassende Stileinführung geglückt, die plötzlich und als bewusst gewählter Akt auftrat, der Jugendstil, Art Nouveau, Modern Style, Sezessionismus. An diesem Neuanfang waren viele Länder und viele Künstler beteiligt, von London und Brüssel über Paris, Barcelona, Wien, Budapest und Helsinki bis Darmstadt, München, Berlin und – Henry van de Velde sei Dank – auch Weimar. Auch das Neue, wie es das Bauhaus vertrat, hatte viele Vorgänger. Aber nur das Bauhaus hat es geschafft, seinen Namen mit der zukunftszugewandten Sachlichkeit zu verbinden. Wir sprechen nicht vom School of Arts-Style oder vom Ecole de Nancy-Stil, wenn wir vom Jugendstil als Gesamterscheinung sprechen. Aber der Modernismus der 1920er-Jahre und aller Produktionen, die sich auf ihn berufen, beginnt nach dem Bauhaus zu heißen. Hier und nirgendwo anders, so suggeriert der Name, sei die Zukunft erfunden worden.

### **Das Neue und seine Vorgänger**

Eine übliche Rechtfertigung des eigenen Standorts ist die Berufung auf Vorgänger. Wer Tradition für sich in Anspruch nehmen konnte, beglaubigte das eigene Tun. Das Bauhaus hat auf solche Argumentation mit der Geschichte im Rücken weitgehend verzichtet. Es gab hin und wieder einen dankbaren Hinweis auf den

Pionier vor Ort, Henry van de Velde, auf den Deutschen Werkbund, auf die Arts and Crafts-Bewegung, auf Schinkel. Oft waren es Beispiele des anonymen Bauens, die als Anregungen dienten, oder weit zurückliegende Kulturepochen. Gemäß einem Wort von Oskar Schlemmer „fernste vergangenheit wie fernste zukunft liebend“, paradierten nun in den Veröffentlichungen und Lichtbildervorträgen der Modernen die Zelt- und Pfostenbauten fremder Kulturen als Vorbilder des Neuen, Lianenbrücken im Urwald, Lamellenkuppeln aus der Südsee, nordafrikanische Lehmbauten, die Trulli in Apulien und Iglus der Eskimos, die Pueblos der Indianer und immer wieder das altjapanische Haus, der altjapanische Tempel, die altjapanische Kaiservilla mit ihrer modularen Komposition und strikten Scheidung zwischen tragenden und füllenden Teilen als Ausdruck der jeweiligen Notwendigkeiten. Aber im Wesentlichen liebte es das Bauhaus und mit ihm die europäische Avantgarde, das ganz und gar Anfängliche zu betonen, das ganz und gar Andersartige, das sich qualitativ von allem Bisherigen unterschied.

Das Eigenschaftswort, das die 1920er-Jahre über alles geschätzt haben, wo sie Avantgarde waren, lautete „neu“. Die Rede war von der Neuen Wohnung, der Neuen Raumkunst, dem Neuen Bauen, der Neuen Stadt, der Neuen Werkkunst, der Neuen Malerei, der Neuen Musik, der Neuen Küche, der Neuen Frau, dem Neuen Fotografen. Meist war der Begriff den Autoren so wichtig, dass sie ihn mit Großbuchstaben schrieben. Eine Publikumszeitschrift hieß *Die Neue Linie*, Fachzeitschriften *Das Neue Frankfurt*, *Das Neue Berlin*. Jenseits der Grenzen hielten es die Gesinnungsgefährten nicht anders: *La Città Nuova*, *L'Esprit Nouveau*, *New Ways*. Ein Neubeginn war gewollt, wie immer er definiert war. „Es hat das Wort neu in bezug auf das bauen die Bedeutung eines neuen anfangs“, befand Hugo Häring,<sup>22</sup> Sekretär der avantgardistischen Architektenvereinigung *Der Ring*. Die Krönung dieses Dranges bildete das Wort vom Neuen Menschen.

Der Zeitbegriff, der dieser Sehnsucht nach dem Neuen entsprach, war nicht der einer gleichmäßig verstreichenden Zeit, in der Reform und Entwicklung möglich gewesen wären. „Ich hasse die Historie, soweit sie mich einzwängen will, und liebe die Vergangenheit, soweit sie künstlerische Instinkte bei mir weckt“, dieses Wort Hans Poelzigs<sup>23</sup> hätte nicht von einem Bauhaus-Meister oder gar -Direktor stammen können. Nicht Kontinuität war gewünscht, sondern der Bruch, die Unterbrechung der Traditionskette. Nicht die allmähliche Verbesserung des Vorhandenen war gewollt, sondern der Sprung ins Unbekannte. Auf Plakaten oder in Büchern wurde das Alte, wurden die überfüllten Interieurs, die ornamentüber-

22 Hugo Häring: *Vom neuen bauen. über das geheimnis der gestalt*. Berlin 1957. S. 6.

23 Hans Poelzig: „Festspielhaus in Salzburg“. In: *Das Kunstblatt* 5 (1921) 3. S. 81.

krusteten Fassaden des 19. Jahrhunderts gern mit zwei temperamentvollen Strichen durchkreuzt – wie bei dem Plakat für die Stuttgarter Weißenhofsiedlung, an der mit Gropius und Mies van der Rohe der ehemalige, erste Direktor des Bauhauses und der künftige, dritte und letzte Direktor des Bauhauses entscheidend beteiligt waren. Ein neuer Anfang? Ein Neuer Anfang, mit dem N als Versalie geschrieben. Ein schwebender Aufstieg ins helle Licht der neuen Zeit, wie Oskar Schlemmer es in seinem Gemälde *Die Bauhaustreppe* dargestellt hat.

Dass sich das Wort vom Bauhaus-Stil auch in anderen Ländern und Kontinenten dauerhaft durchsetzen konnte, erstaunt umso mehr, als es sehr früh, zu Beginn der 1930er-Jahre, eine wirkungsvolle Initiative gab, die neuen Bewegungen unter einem anderen gemeinsamen Label zusammenzufassen. Namensspender war das kurz zuvor gegründete Museum of Modern Art in New York, wo das Schlemmer-Gemälde heute hängt. Das MoMa hat seitdem immer wieder die Meinungsführerschaft in Sachen Theorie und Begriffsbildung beansprucht. Der Begriff, den die jungen Kunsthistoriker Alfred Barr, Henry-Russell Hitchcock und Philip Johnson 1932 erfanden, war eine eher blasse Prägung, *The International Style*. So hießen eine Ausstellung und eine sich daraus ergebende Buchpublikation. Gotik, Renaissance, Barock und Klassizismus hätte man ähnlich benennen können, internationale Stile auch sie.

Gezeigt wurden in New York natürlich auch Bauhaus-Bauten, von Gropius, der als angeblicher Funktionalist bei den Ausstellungsmachern weniger Sympathien genoss, und vor allem von Mies van der Rohe. Barr war 1927 als erster der drei Harvard-Absolventen in Dessau gewesen. Das Kunsthistoriker-Trio definierte die moderne Architektur nach Kunsthistoriker-Art, nämlich ästhetisch, als „style and nothing but the style“, und sah von gesellschaftlichen, wirtschaftlichen und politischen Zusammenhängen ab.<sup>24</sup> Dass bei einem so nachdrücklich etablierten Etikett wie *International Style* der Begriff *Bauhaus-Stil* in der Konkurrenz der Markennamen überhaupt eine Chance hatte, bleibt verwunderlich. Denn auch das Wort vom *Bauhaus-Stil* tendiert dazu, nur die ästhetischen Kriterien anzuvisieren, und handelt damit ganz und gar gegen die Vorstellungen aller drei Bauhaus-Direktoren. Gropius und noch prononcierter Hannes Meyer sahen und förderten natürlich die Internationalität, die sich durch weltweite Kommunikation hergestellt hatte. Nicht das „Internationale“ am *International Style* musste sie stören,

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24 Vgl. Wolfgang Thöner: „Austreibung des Funktionalismus und Ankunft im Stil“. In: Regina Bittner (Hg.): *Bauhausstil zwischen International Style und Lifestyle*. Berlin 2003. S. 108ff. S. G. Kantor: *Alfred H. Barr jr. and the Intellectual Origins of the Museum of Modern Art*. Cambridge, Mass., London 2002.

sondern der „Stil“. Wenn Gropius dem Phänomen der globalen Verbreitung neuer Bauideen nachging wie im ersten Band der Reihe der Bauhaus-Bücher, lautete der Titel *Internationale Architektur*, nicht *Stil*.

### **Auslotungen des Markenprols**

Bert Brecht hat 1926 eine Erzählung mit dem skurrilen Titel *Nordseekrabben* geschrieben, die in den *Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten* erschien und, wahrscheinlich von der Redaktion, im Titel den Zusatz *Die moderne Bauhaus-Wohnung* erhielt. Darin wird die Einrichtung eines Konsumenten beschrieben, der sich „vorsätzliche Harmonie“ und „reformatorische Zweckdienlichkeit“ zur Devise gemacht hat.<sup>25</sup> Brecht hatte Erfahrungen mit solchen Interieurs, etwa dank seiner Bekanntschaft mit Friedrich Kroner, Chefredakteur der Zeitschrift *Uhu*, und dem Regisseur Erwin Piscator, dessen Wohnung Marcel Breuer im Erscheinungsjahr der Brecht-Skizze einrichtete. Die Satire gibt Auskunft auf die Frage, an wen sich die Bauhaus-Produktion, an wen sich der „Bauhaus-Stil“ eigentlich wendete.

Für die verschiedenen Etappen der Entwicklung wird die Antwort unterschiedlich lauten, für Gropius anders als für Hannes Meyer und für Mies van der Rohe anders als für Meyer. Aber die Intention, durch Normierung der Teile, durch Standardisierung, Typisierung, Rationalisierung und Industrialisierung die Herstellungsverfahren zu verbilligen und die Produkte größeren Bevölkerungskreisen zugänglich zu machen, war zweifellos ein durchgehendes Moment. Bei Brecht ist der Klient des Bauhaus-Interieurs ein bei der AEG angestellter Ingenieur, der reich geheiratet hat. Der Technik und dem Neuen gegenüber ist dieser Angehörige einer aufsteigenden Sozialschicht aufgeschlossen. Wenn der bürgerliche Mittelstand seine Repräsentationsbedürfnisse aus der Tradition absicherte und Arbeiter sich noch an der Selbstdarstellung der besser gestellten Mittelklasse orientierten, so bildete sich hier eine Schicht mobiler, großstädtischer Adressaten heraus, die Modernitätssymbole als Mittel ihrer Repräsentation wählten.

Stahlrohrmöbel seien „stillos“, meinte Marcel Breuer, da sie „außer ihrem zweck und der dazu nötigen konstruktion keine beabsichtigte formung ausdrücken sollten“.<sup>26</sup> Das war ein Irrtum, denn natürlich bedient sich eine bewusste Formung auch außerästhetischer Bedingungen wie Herstellungsprozess und Funk-

25 Bert Brecht. „Nordseekrabben‘ oder: Die moderne Bauhaus-Wohnung“. 1926, Erstveröffentlichung 9.1.1927 in den *Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten*. In: Bert Brecht: *Ausgewählte Werke*. Band 5. Frankfurt/M. 1997. S. 310. Dazu: *Brecht Handbuch*. Bd. 3. Stuttgart, Weimar 2002. S. 94ff.

26 Marcel Breuer: „Metallmöbel und moderne Räumlichkeit“. In: *Das Neue Frankfurt* (1928) 1. S. 11.

Abb. 9: Verschiedene Architekten. „Bauhaus-Siedlung“ Am Horn. Weimar, 2008.



tionalität. Die Verkaufspreise, die solche Erzeugnisse im Bauhaus-Stil forderten, sortierten die Käuferschaft. Für Proletarier waren sie zu teuer und erschwänglich nur für Kunden, die sich die Hemden im Proletarier-Look beim Herrenschneider anfertigen ließen. Bei diesen Leuten konnten das Maschinelle der Arbeitswelt, die Materialsymbolik des Metalls, das elegant Ausgemagerte, die Entlastung vom staubfängenden Überfluss, die Leichtigkeit und Transportierfähigkeit der Produkte zu Distinktionsmerkmalen moderner Großstadtnomaden werden.

Die „hinterbeinlosen“ Stahlrohrmöbel, die Wagenfeld-Lampe, der Barcelona-Sessel und natürlich auch die Le Corbusier-Liege, Eileen Gray-Tischchen und die späteren Fortsetzungen bei Herman Miller oder Knoll International entwickelten sich zu einer Klassik der Moderne, die bis heute einem kulturell aufgeschlossenen, wirtschaftlich gut aufgestellten Milieu als Selbstaussdruck dient. Zu einem Teil ist die Hoffnung der Gründerväter der Moderne also in Erfüllung gegangen: dass ihre Produktion nicht dem Verfall der Stile anheim fiel, sondern eine Stufe der Zeitlosigkeit erklomm. Für Nachschub sorgt die weiter laufende Produktion, ordnungsgemäß nach Urheberrecht mit erworbenen Lizenzen oder nicht so ordnungsgemäß im Nachbau zu billigeren Preisen. Heutige Reeditionen und Kopien erreichen eine breitere Adressatenschicht als die damaligen Originale, wenn auch die universale Gemeinde aller Zeitgenossen außerhalb ihrer Reichweite bleibt.

Andere Vorstellungen, die sich an den Aufbruch des Bauhauses und vergleichbarer Avantgarde-Organisationen knüpften, sind nicht in Erfüllung gegangen. Die – wenn auch differenzierte – Einheitlichkeit kultureller Äußerungen ist nie erreicht worden. Im Gegenteil, niemand hält sie noch für wünschbar. Was die Bauhäusler, ihre gleichgesinnten Kollegen schufen und ihre Nachfahren reproduzieren, ist ein Angebot unter vielen geworden, eine Stil-Offerte unter anderen, die sich bald größerer, bald minderer Publikumsgunst erfreut, aber nie Ausschließlichkeit beanspruchen kann. So sind Bauhaus-Villen, neu gebaute selbstverständlich, derzeit wieder vermehrt auf dem Immobilienmarkt vertreten, (Abb. 9) und bei manchen neuen Großobjekten im Stadtbild könnte ein Avantgardist der 1920er-Jahre Wiedersehensfeste feiern. Freilich müsste er auch bereit sein,

an der nächsten Straßenecke das ganz und gar Andersartige zu tolerieren, eine Rekonstruktion aus der Plankammer der Retrokultur, den postmodernen Schnee von gestern, eine abermalige Volte des Dekonstruktivismus, ein Erzeugnis des Ökodesign oder ein weiteres Experiment der High Tech. Die sektionale Dauerhaftigkeit des Bauhausstils ist bezahlt mit dem Pluralismus konkurrierender Stilangebote: Er existiert noch immer, aber muss viele andere neben sich dulden.

Die Überraschungswirkung des plötzlichen Auftritts hat das Bauhaus vorge-macht und die schnellen Wandlungen auch: vier, fünf Wendungen innerhalb von vierzehn Jahren. Es waren Auslotungen des Markenprofils Bauhaus innerhalb dessen, was es an Erprobungsspielräumen eben noch erlaubte, ohne die Erkennbarkeit der Marke aufs Spiel zu setzen. Solche schnellen Modellwechsel innerhalb der Identität eines Labels können inzwischen andere auch, haben andere nachvollzogen. Aber zum Erbe des Bauhauses gehört auch diese Tempobeschleunigung in der Erfindung, im Verbrauch von Methoden, Formen und Anmutungen und in ihrer erfolgreichen Globalisierung.





## **Stanford Anderson**

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# RATIONAL RECONSTRUCTIONS AND ARCHITECTURAL KNOWLEDGE

The “rational reconstruction” of the title stems from the thought of Imre Lakatos, from his logic of scientific discovery as constructed in the essay and book titled *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*.<sup>1</sup> Lakatos, a student of Karl Popper, retained his mentor’s *fallibilism*—there is no certainty in our intellectual pursuits—but rejected Popper’s *falsificationism*—the growth of knowledge through the assertion of bold hypotheses tested to failure (to state Popper’s position without the appropriate subtleties). Lakatos’ methodological unit of inquiry was not that of Popper, not Popper’s theory, or concatenation of theories, but rather *research programs* as set out in Lakatos’ methodology.

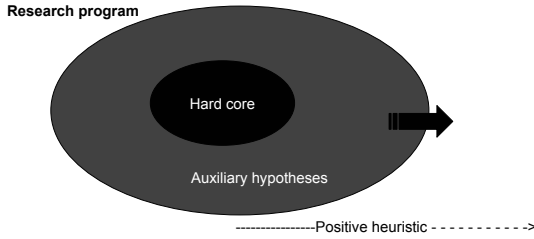
Long ago I made an attempt to place Lakatos’ epistemological position into the architectural discourse.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I rely more directly on another of Lakatos’ essays, “History of science and its rational reconstructions.”<sup>3</sup> However, the

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1 The essay, first published in 1970, appears in an edited version as “Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes.” In: Imre Lakatos: *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), I: pp. 8–101.

2 Stanford Anderson: “Architectural Design as a System of Research Programmes,” and “Architectural Research Programmes in the Work of Le Corbusier,” *Design Studies* (London), V (July 1984), pp. 146–158. Reprinted in K. Michael Hays, ed.: *Architecture | Theory | since 1968* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998), pp. 490–505.

3 Imre Lakatos: “History of Science and its Rational Reconstruction.” In: see note 1, I: pp. 102–138.



The Hard core is asserted and maintained by convention. For the life of the program it is considered irrefutable.

This accounts for the "high degree of autonomy of theoretical science."

*Fig. 1. Diagram of Imre Lakatos' Methodology of Research Programs.*

argument of Lakatos' essay on history is entailed by his Research Programs, and thus I cannot avoid a brief consideration of Lakatos' main essay.

### **Lakatos' research programs**

According to Lakatos' methodology, the unit of appraisal in scientific discovery is not a theory or even a conjunction of theories, but rather a *research program* (fig. 1). He describes the program as composed of a "hard core" that is sustained for the life of the program, a band of "auxiliary hypotheses" that are revised in order to sustain the logic of the program as it confronts new conditions, and a "positive heuristic" that guides the course of the inquiry.

The hard core is not a matter of truth. Fundamental to Lakatos' thought, and perhaps counter-intuitive, is this: What Lakatos terms the '*hard core*' of a research program is accepted by convention and, during the pursuit of the program, the hard core is methodologically considered irrefutable. Now, quoting from Lakatos, the *hard core*, joined with a '*positive heuristic*,' "... defines problems, outlines the construction of a belt of auxiliary hypotheses, foresees anomalies and turns them victoriously into examples, all according to a preconceived plan. ... *It is primarily the positive heuristic of his programme, not the anomalies, which dictate the choice of his problems.* Only when the driving force of the positive heuristic weakens, may more attention be given to anomalies. The methodology of research programmes can explain in this way *the high degree of autonomy of theoretical science.*"<sup>4</sup>

### **Lakatos' autonomy and its limits**

What Lakatos' explanation of the hard core may not adequately emphasize is this: it is the methodologically sustained hard core that provides a *high-degree of autonomy* to the enterprise. Thus autonomy is not given by some absolute foun-

4 Ibid., pp. 110–111. The following paragraphs are indebted to the following pages of the same essay.



Fig. 2. Le Corbusier, *Villa at Garches, France, 1927.*

dation, but rather is asserted, held by convention, in order that an intellectual (or creative) enterprise can be conducted—and that enterprise is to be judged by its results rather than by some ultimate authority. Autonomy without authority.

So, with Lakatos, anything goes? Thanks to the methodologically-held hard core, programs can, and indeed should, be held tenaciously. Yet research programs can be assessed. One program, in its development, may predict a novel fact and thus show itself to be “theoretically progressive.” That prediction may be corroborated, and thus the program is also “empirically progressive.” “Program shifts” of another program may be degenerative. For example, a competing program may lag behind in prediction and incorporate new facts only by *ad hoc*, increasingly complex, auxiliary hypotheses introduced solely to sustain the program’s hard core.

Lakatos does not assume that the apparently degenerative program can be definitively eliminated—he is a fallibilist, we have no certainty. Nonetheless, to use a Popperian term, a demarcation, though one less rigid than with Popper, is drawn between science and pseudo-science thanks to the critical analysis and comparison of programs.

### **Lakatos’ historiography: External and internal history**

There is of course much more to be said about Lakatos’ methodology, but for current purposes I wish to move on to its implications for history. Lakatos asserts that any methodology also constitutes a *historiographic* research program.<sup>5</sup> With Lakatos, for example, the historian is led to look for research programs and progressive or degenerating problem shifts within the programs. This constitutes the *internal* history of the program. Note that Lakatos, concerned with science, speaks of *rival* research programs, and looks to those occasions where one program defeats another. Looking to architecture, for the word “rival” I would substitute “competing,” as it would be more common that

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

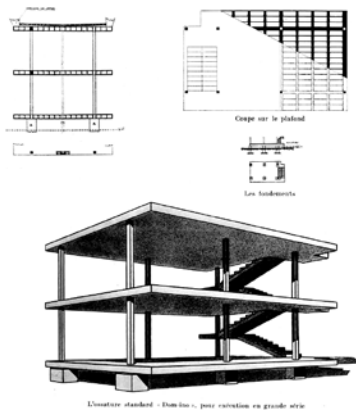


Fig. 3. Le Corbusier, *Maison Dom-ino*: clockwise from top left: transverse section; reflected ceiling plan/horizontal section; foundations; skeleton perspective, 1914; from his *Oeuvre complète*: 1910-1929, 1930.

multiple programs can thrive. In the arts, some programs may lose their force, but “defeat” may be rare.

Any internal history must be supplemented with an external history. What research programs are established, which ones thrive or may disappear for lack of support, are largely issues external to the program itself. However, in Lakatos’ formulation, it is possible that what for others would be seen as external to scientific research may be held within the program and thus in the internal history.

### Research programs in the work of Le Corbusier

Here I recall my effort to recognize research programs in the work of Le Corbusier, but now give more emphasis to the related issue of internal history.<sup>6</sup> I assert, and it is a common claim, that Le Corbusier’s Five Points and his villas of the late ‘20s constitute a significant innovation in the discipline of architecture (fig. 2). I see them as parts of a research program and thus as the subject of an internal history. They emerge as contributions to knowledge, to the autonomy of architecture.

Le Corbusier’s achievement took place in the context of, and requires the presence of certain material conditions. In accord with Lakatos, these material, and seemingly external conditions, may be assigned to both the internal and external history of the program, as I will later demonstrate. Especially in a field like architecture, it is precisely because some material matters must be assigned to the program and its internal history that I prefer to speak of the *quasi-autonomy* rather than the autonomy of architecture.

Commentators often locate the underlying concept of the Five Points in Le Corbusier’s famous perspective drawing of the skeleton of the *Maison Dom-ino*, a work that precedes the Five Points by more than a decade (figs. 3, 4). This, despite the fact that Le Corbusier, in the first volume of his *Oeuvre complète*, in

6 The reference is to my “Architectural Research Programmes in the Work of Le Corbusier.”

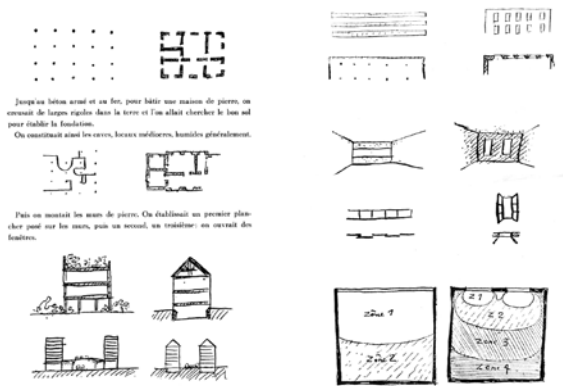


Fig. 4. Le Corbusier, “Five Points” as published in his *Oeuvre complete*, 1930.

his presentation of the Maisons Dom-ino project, relates that 1914 work not to the Five Points and the villas of the late 1920s, but rather to the cognate housing project of the Maison Loucheur of 1929.<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, the Maisons Loucheur do modestly draw on the Five Points, but the implication of Le Corbusier’s reference is to continue to see the Maisons Dom-ino as the beginning of an experiment in rationalized social housing rather than as the seed of an intrinsically architectural innovation. In so doing, Le Corbusier is consistent with what I will call the external history of the Maison Dom-ino project.

The Maison Dom-ino project was distinctly pragmatic in its origins; its premises are more fully revealed by attention not only to the famous “ossature” perspective, but especially to other Dom-ino project drawings: plans, detail drawings, and perspectives of possible houses/housing based on the project (figs. 3, 5). The project grew out of Le Corbusier’s interest to develop a system using the relatively new technology of reinforced concrete, calculated to meet the severe housing needs in Flanders, an area particularly devastated by the locally sustained battles of World War I. Le Corbusier sought to form an industrialized company for production of the rationalized frame system that could be deployed and then in-filled locally. Under then current exigencies the infill might include rubble from destroyed buildings, though Le Corbusier also envisioned industrialized in-fill systems.<sup>8</sup>

The reflected ceiling plan of the Maison Dom-ino shows that it did not involve “slabs” in the usual sense of that word as monolithic concrete floors (fig. 3). Rather it is a framework of cast-in-place girders and beams formed by small repetitive cement or tile units, destined to have a plaster ceiling. For stability, infill walls would then have preferred locations on the structural lines. Referring to the Maison Dom-ino plans, there is no innovative exploitation of structure or space

7 Le Corbusier: *Le Corbusier: The Complete Architectural Works, Volume I 1910–1929* (original edition, Zürich: Girsberger, 1930); in the English edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964) the Maisons Dom-ino project is presented on pp. 23–29; the Maisons Loucheur, pp. 198–200.

8 See Eleanor Gregh: “The Dom-ino Idea,” *Oppositions* 15/16 (1979), pp. 60–87.

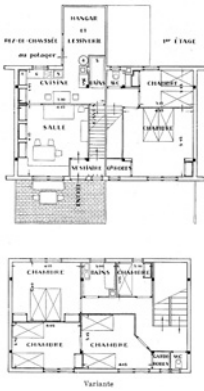


Fig. 5. Le Corbusier, *Maison Dom-ino*, typical plans, 1914, from his *Oeuvre complet*.

(fig. 5). Whenever possible, columns are buried in walls. Where an interior wall is of lesser dimension than a column, the exposed part of the column is boxed-in or projected into the less significant space. Neither is the structure emphasized nor is the planning free from the structure. The cantilevered space beyond the columns on the long sides of the building merely sets the dimensions of insignificant spaces. Where a principal room is projected through that space, there is no distinct recognition of space within or beyond the column line. In brief, examination of the *Maison Dom-ino* project as a whole, and as it was propounded in 1914, reveals nothing of the Five Points, including the free plan.

Examination of all the drawings of the *Maisons Dom-ino* project, not just the famous perspective drawing of the skeleton, convinces me that Le Corbusier's thought and work of the time is fully accounted for by the external historical and technical conditions then under consideration.

### Internal history and Le Corbusier's early work

Nonetheless, later events have allowed commentators to make larger claims for the *Maison Dom-ino* project that can be accepted if we also conceive of "internal histories." The Five Points were first adumbrated, still in incomplete form, in conjunction with Le Corbusier's projects for the *Weissenhof Siedlung* in Stuttgart of 1927 (fig. 6).<sup>9</sup> Published in several forms by Le Corbusier in the mid-1920s (fig. 7),

<sup>9</sup> Le Corbusier: "Calendrier d'architecture" in his *Almanach d'architecture moderne* (Paris: G. Crès, 1926). Here, Le Corbusier makes an extended presentation within which, with hindsight, one can discern the Five Points. The Five Points are, however, stated succinctly, as points, in two publications associated with the *Weissenhof* exhibition: Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, "Fünf Punkte zu einer neuen Architektur." In: Deutscher Werkbund, *Bau und Wohnung: Die Bauten der Weissenhofsiedlung* (Stuttgart: F. Wedekind, 1927), pp. 27–28; and in Alfred Roth: *Zwei Wohnhäuser von Le Corbusier und Pierre Jeanneret* (Stuttgart: F. Wedekind, 1928). In "Ou en est l'architecture?," *l'Architecture vivante* (Autumn/Winter 1927), pp. 7–29, Le Corbusier lists six points, adding one on the "suppression of the cornice." His discussion is heavily weighted to issues of snow on flat roofs and to his sixth point—not to what one would deem the more important architectural issues. Since this is a publication of late 1927, the concern to defend flat roofs in northern winter conditions is probably

Fig. 6. Le Corbusier,  
a dwelling for the  
Weissenhof Exhibition,  
Stuttgart, 1927.



the Five Points can, through a rational reconstruction, be seen as part of an internal history of the Maisons Dom-ino project. The Five Points, like the Maison Dom-ino, are premised on a reinforced concrete frame. In the Maison Dom-ino, the independence of the bottom floor plate from the ground may be taken as an anticipation of the *pilotis*. The stair does ascend to the roof and some of the drawings show people and plantings at the roof. Horizontally extended windows are hinted at. The key point, the free plan, is missing, though, with hindsight, its potential can be recognized.

With the Maisons Dom-ino, Le Corbusier made a relatively modest architectural proposition, but his own efforts more than a decade later constitute a rational reconstruction of the original proposition—a reconstruction that opened a genuine architectural innovation. That rational reconstruction is part of an internal history of a significant part of Le Corbusier's first decades of production. Today we do not accord the Five Points the necessity that Le Corbusier then attributed to them. On the other hand, the Five Points are so intrinsic to architectural thought that it is a conscious decision to adopt them—or not. The Five Points are a contribution to the quasi-autonomy of the discipline of architecture.

### **Peter Eisenman, the Maisons Dom-ino, and self-referentiality**

Peter Eisenman's early architectural work, his "Cardboard Architecture" houses, made commitments remarkably similar to what the famed New York art historian Meyer Schapiro had, sixty years earlier, in 1936, ironically anticipated from some future architect besotted with dreams of autonomy: such an architect would seek "in the name of a similar purity, ... an art which conceals or suppresses the tectonic, constructive elements as non-artistic, and which constructs independently of these factors its own effects of mass and space and light." (fig. 8)<sup>10</sup>

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emphasized because of the heavy criticism of the flat roofs of the Weissenhof exhibition.

10 Meyer Schapiro: "The New Viennese School," *Art Bulletin*, XVIII (1936), pp. 258–266. A critical review of Otto Pächt, ed., *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen II* (Berlin: Frankfurter,

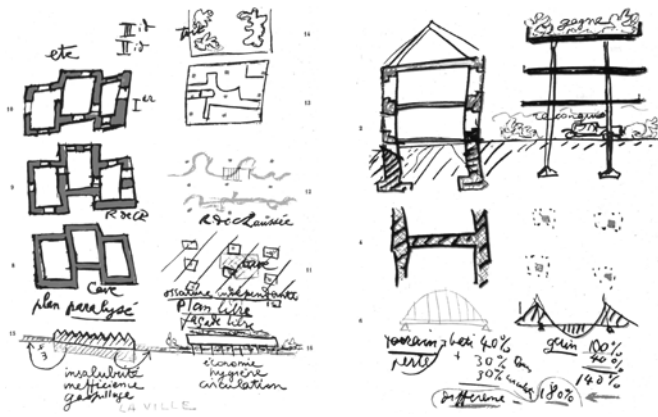


Fig. 7 a-b. Le Corbusier, “Five Points” as presented in Buenos Aires, 1929.

A notable version of autonomy in art involves the search for how works exhibit internal reference to themselves and their media. Self-referentiality, aside from its appearance in innovative art, including cinematography, from the late nineteenth century onward, had also been theorized. The major art theorist of mid-twentieth century New York, Clement Greenberg, built his theory, criticism, and indeed his history on the concept.<sup>11</sup> Though his influence was soon to wane, Greenberg’s thought was compelling in the circles in which Eisenman moved in the years of his cardboard architecture.

Accepting that self-referentiality defined modernism in the arts, Eisenman noted that architecture had been slow to adopt this Modernist stance.

Eisenman’s cardboard architecture involved the ambition to bring modernist self-referentiality to the discipline of architecture, and thus to claim for himself a significant position in the cultural world of New York and beyond.

In a 1979 essay, “Aspects of Modernism: Maisons Dom-ino and the Self-Referential Sign,” in his journal *Oppositions*, Peter Eisenman provided a new reading of the Maisons Dom-ino as an early precedent for “self-referential” architecture in the modern movement—and thus sought to give his thesis of self-referentiality a firmer theoretical base.<sup>12</sup> Eisenman proposed a theoretical interpretation internal

1933), Schapiro gives particular attention to Emil Kaufmann’s thought on autonomy in architecture. Whether or not Eisenman knew of this comment by Schapiro, I find it strangely anticipatory of Eisenman’s work of the 1960s and early ‘70s. It is not inconceivable that Eisenman did know the Schapiro text. In 1959, Eisenman and I took art history courses at Columbia University, where Schapiro was so highly esteemed. Eisenman’s close relations with Colin Rowe in the immediately ensuing years would also have kept him in contact with such publications and thought.

11 See the hugely influential collection of writings, Clement Greenberg: *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961); and now the esteemed critical study of Greenberg and his thought: Caroline Jones: *Eyesight Alone: Clement Greenberg’s Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

12 Peter Eisenman: “Aspects of Modernism: Maison Dom-ino and the Self-Referential Sign,” *Oppositions* 15/16 (Winter/Spring 1979), pp. 118–128; reprinted in K. Michael Hays, ed.: *Oppositions Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), pp. 188–198.



Fig. 8. Peter Eisenman,  
House VI, Connecticut,  
1972-75.



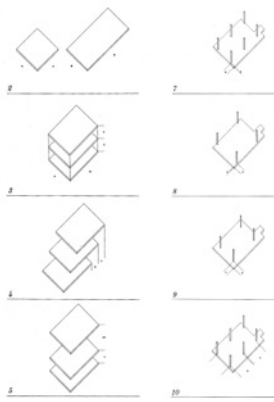
to the image of the Dom-ino skeleton—the perspective drawing of the “ossature” (fig. 3). In so doing, Eisenman set aside the reigning interpretation of that work, stemming largely from the writings of his mentor Colin Rowe.<sup>13</sup> Eisenman asserts that Rowe’s claim for the innovative modernity of the Maison Dom-ino, revealed fully in Le Corbusier’s great villas of the late 1920s, marks only one more instance of historical change in an established mode of representation.

Rather than establishing a historical continuity, as he found in Rowe, Eisenman discerns features of the Maisons Dom-ino that he poses as a radical break with tradition. Relying solely on the famed perspective drawing of the skeleton of the Maisons Dom-ino, Eisenman enters upon a close description entailing such observations as the different lengths, A and B, of the sides of the slabs, the alignment of the slabs and the equal spacing of their vertical stacking (fig. 9a). The possibility of many variations of these factors is noted, and also that such variations entail little more than geometrical distinctions. However, in Le Corbusier’s “ossature” drawing, Eisenman notes, these features are what they are; his respect for Le Corbusier and the renown of the Maisons Dom-ino diagram are such that he unquestioningly makes the assumption that there must be formal intentionality in the given configuration of the Maison Dom-ino skeleton.

What then is that intentionality? Eisenman finds it to be crucially revealed in the relation of the columns to the slabs (fig. 9b). The columns are set back from the long side of the slabs, but are close to the edge of the narrow ends of the slabs. Quoting Eisenman: “[As the difference, A versus B, of] the column locations *acts to reinforce the original geometric A B relationship which in itself is so clear as not to need reinforcement*, one interprets this as an intention to underscore a condition of being, that is as a significant redundancy. ... The redundancy

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13 See, for example, Colin Rowe: “The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa,” *Architectural Review* (1947); reprinted in Rowe, *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976), pp. 1–27.



9a, b. Peter Eisenman, diagrams of the Maison Dom-ino skeleton drawing.

of the mark thereby signals that there is something present other than either the geometry or the function of the column and slab.”<sup>14</sup>

Eisenman concludes: “Thus, the fact itself—the slab—plus the spatial marking—the location of the columns—suggest an idea about sides A and B which is an idea only about itself, a self-referential statement. This then may be a primitive though truly Modernist phenomenon, one that speaks about its mere existence and its own condition of being.”<sup>15</sup>

As I read Eisenman’s account, he seems to locate his self-referential reading of the Maison Dom-ino in the intentions of Le Corbusier. Self-referentiality, he asserts, is found in the Maison Dom-ino.

In any case, aside from the always near-impossible task of discerning intentions, I find that the entire set of Dom-ino drawings, as I argued above, undermines Eisenman’s account. The collection of drawings undermines Eisenman’s account *if* these drawings are examined according to a conventional, external historical account. But we need not read Eisenman’s account in that way. Indeed, he surely was not offering an external history of the Dom-ino project. Let us rather take Eisenman’s essay as a claim for yet another rational reconstruction of the Maison Dom-ino. We may recall that within Lakatos’ formulation, the hard core of a theoretical program may entail positions not realized by those who constructed it. Thus I have no issue with such an attempt by Eisenman, except to say that the claim must still withstand criticism. It is not fruitful to accept that the Maisons Dom-ino hard core can incorporate any interpretation. Of course, one is inclined to respect Eisenman’s claim to find in Dom-ino an impetus for the kind of work that he was engaged in. Eisenman’s essay can be seen as generosity in acknowledging a source for his own thought. At the same time, one can raise the question of whether Eisenman was reading his position back on Le Corbusier. It is clear from Eisenman’s article that he sought to make Le Corbusier a pioneer in

<sup>14</sup> See note 12, p. 194.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

an effort in which Eisenman was involved sixty years later and in so-doing to give Le Corbusier a modernist position that Eisenman could use to bludgeon a more conventional historian and theorist like his mentor Colin Rowe. For myself, I am not so convinced that Eisenman's position can be rationally reconstructed in the Maisons Dom-ino ossature.

Eisenman was involved in a different, honorable but different, research program. But Le Corbusier might give luster to Eisenman? The roles of such things as redundancy or overtly atectonic elements establishing self-referential markings in Eisenman's cardboard architecture remain, for me, so distant from the nature of the Maisons Dom-ino, that I must question an internal history of the Maisons Dom-ino research program as incorporating Eisenman's self-referentiality. But recall that I earlier suggested that something so fundamental to Le Corbusier's achievement as the free plan is only to be visited upon the Maisons Dom-ino by seeing Le Corbusier's research program as extended in time, incorporating the thought and work of the 1920s. That same extended research program, incorporating the ingenious complexities of Le Corbusier's villas of the 1920s might provide an internal history that would connect with modernist self-referentiality—which was, after all, a contemporary phenomenon in other artistic ventures.

### **Quasi-autonomy**

Returning to an earlier point: we may consider the widespread destruction in Flanders as an external history posing, as do so many other historical circumstances, the need and opportunity to address a housing crisis. But under what program? Viewing the extended history of the Maisons Dom-ino, one recognizes that Le Corbusier sought a distinctive architectural solution. However, one must also recognize external factors that were made internal to his research program: for example, the then still innovative reinforced concrete frame, the felt need for a rationalization of building practice, the presence of quantities of materials from ruined buildings that encouraged a distinction between structure and infill. External factors are integral to the internal history. There is an autonomous aspect to his extended Maisons Dom-ino program, but it has to be seen as “only” quasi-autonomous. This is an important claim for the integrity and, yes, autonomy of the architectural discipline, but also that this discipline must always be understood to operate with and in external conditions. “With” and “in” because a research program is typically facilitated by external history but also only becomes effective by selectively bringing some of that externality into the program.

To summarize my argument: Le Corbusier's 1915 Maison Dom-ino project receives an adequate account with an external history.

Le Corbusier's achievements in the late 1920's, the Five Points and the exceptional villas, require an internal history that incorporates the Maison Dom-ino project and certain external conditions.

Incidentally, I believe this internal history can be continued in Le Corbusier's career, for example in the Carpenter Center at Harvard University.

While Eisenman's early architectural projects deserve an internal history of their own, I reject that one can find its source in the Maison Dom-ino project of 1914. At best it would be related to the continuity of Le Corbusier's program, perhaps down to the Carpenter Center—not as the model for Eisenman's Cardboard Architecture, but perhaps as an instance of self-referentiality in architecture.

With these examples and others, I would argue that architecture does possess quasi-autonomous knowledge, incorporating internal and external conditions, that gives uniqueness to this discipline—allowing architecture to make its unique contributions to society and the environment.

Now I risk a bridge to a question put in the call for papers for this Bauhaus Colloquium: Can theory “assume a more constructive, projective role of influencing future [global] practice”? Pursuing neither abstruse theorization alone, nor simplistic rationalistic problem-solving, I suggest that the intellectual construct of research programs, and the quasi-autonomy of its selective incorporation of externalities, can bring intellect and design and art to bear on societal conditions.

Finally, our conference program asked about “a more constructive, projective role of influencing future *global* practice.” Has my presentation addressed this question? How so? What are some possibilities?

- The logic of Research programs opposes meta-histories that would make of such phenomena as globalization a historical necessity or an unassailable force.
- The logic of Research programs reveals and values multiple lines of inquiry.
- The logic of Research programs is resistant to periodization and apparent necessities imposed by claims for a *Zeitgeist*.
  - Modernity is not a period, but, as Foucault has said, an attitude.<sup>16</sup>
  - Modernity itself might be seen as a broad and extended research program. How do rationalism and the pursuit of liberty and justice, survive, adapt, and thrive under changing external conditions?
    - Globalization should not be re-ified, periodized. It is not new in our time. It is not monolithic. It presents opportunities.

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16 Michel Foucault: “What is Enlightenment.” In: Paul Rabinow (ed.): *Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 32–50.

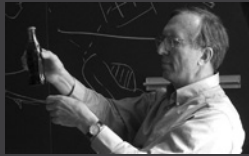
- Earlier positions may be rationally reconstructed to serve well in new circumstances.

- The internal history of architecture, and architectures, is more crucial than the conventional or external history.

- The logic of Research Programs offers internal histories that recognize what architecture can uniquely bring to the table, but nonetheless also recognizes the quasi-autonomy of architecture – that it must engage its social and technical dimensions.

I am ready to join in severe criticism of what the Colloquium has termed “Empire,” but we may nonetheless recognize some promising conditions within globalism. Do our patterns of global activity provide also a positive breeding ground: for example, does it provide conditions and opportunities that facilitate interchange, learning and understanding, that, whether observed at the level of individuals or societies, nurture a robust form of cosmopolitanism, encouraging and making provision for world-citizens?

If so, then, in the realm of architecture, one might share the fruit of our rational reconstructions: quasi-autonomous architectural knowledge that is not local in concept but capable of acting locally and responsibly.



## Douglas Graf

### The Ohio State University

*Douglas Graf received an A.B. in architecture and urban planning from Princeton and a M.Arch. from Harvard and currently teaches courses in design and architectural theory at the Knowlton School of Architecture at the Ohio State University. His teaching career has included the Kentucky, Washington, and Yale, as well as positions in Britain, Germany, and Finland, where he first went on a Fulbright to study the work of Alvar Aalto. He has received five teaching awards. His interest in design theory has a primary focus on formal analysis, which is applied not only to architecture but also to urban form, landscape, photography, painting, product design, and graphics. One of his signature investigations has been into the structure and use of diagrams as tools*

*for 'close reading.' Many of his investigations have explored 'metaphoric time' as a central design strategy. He has written about the idea of the 'encyclopedic set' as a persistent means of modeling complexity and the use of 'fictive landscapes' to derive narratives for the city. He currently divides his time between Columbus (the one in Ohio) and London (not the one in Ohio), where he has been researching the design strategies in English gardens and the formal structure of the pre-industrial village. He is one of the principals in Mid-Ohio Design, a firm of architects and urban designers whose work elides from the real to the academic and who have won a number of urban design competitions.*

# FORM'S FOLLOW FUNCTION

Le Corbusier said that there was no such thing as primitive man. Only primitive means, but even so it might seem that architecture betrays a degree of primitiveness that staggers the imagination. However it is described, it manifests the sort of vocabulary that seem shockingly simple: plane and line, point and volume. And at a basic level, architecture is about relatively simple things: boundary, centrality, intersection, extension, attachment, juxtaposition, resemblance, dissimilarity. The use of these is not optional. They cannot not be employed. Although some aspects of architecture are clearly progressive—materials, technologies, motifs, programs, etc.—there are clearly other aspects that resist this progress and insist on a conservatism, not so much by design as by indifference. Corresponding to this situation, there are equivalent limitations on the part of homo sapiens to respond to sensory input, both because of the hardware employed and because of the pesky way this hardware is wired. Although some of my students might disagree, it is not possible to say “Architect X decided to use the Gestalt laws of grouping”. It is not that the laws of perception are available, it is that they are unavoidable. This is an empire that can be ignored but not denied.

Form is a primary means of communication and closely links perception and cognition, as evidenced at least in part by the connections implied by language: form/information, image/imagination, sign/significance, a figure/to figure, to stand under/to understand, to take a position, to see. Relational opportunities might be limited, but they are varied enough, so that it would be silly to lament the impoverishment of English with its pitiful number of characters, 26, compared to Chinese or Cherokee. It would be strange to argue that more stories can be told in these other languages than in English or German. In form as in language, communication depends on the superimposition of larger configurational entities

so that certain questions focusing on smaller components, such as “How many times does Shakespeare use the letter T in MacBeth?” seem unimportant. One of the differences between language and architecture is that in the former, there is a break in the continuity between its representation and its meaning, whereas in architecture, the connection is more seamless, and simple structures can quickly lead to consequences of profound significance.

The linkage is figurality between presence, and representation means that there is a strong presence of ideality in any configuration. It would be useful to have some sort of device that could, for a moment, eliminate conflicting arguments and present a reduced version of the object, and among potential candidates for this role is the diagram. Although we can think of diagrams as relatively artificial and particularly visual, they are in reality already embedded in many things, even language, acting as a sort of meta-criticism, both dependent on but separate from a particular object. The word ‘wall’, for example, can be read as a diagrammatic construction which records its evolution from the Latin word ‘*valus*’, a wooden stick or log. The Roman legions would have placed these linear elements in a row to produce a defensive barrier for their camps. Although this would result in the accumulation of lots of lines, or ‘*vali*’, the new construction seemed more singular than plural, and thus a new word was crafted, ‘*valum*’, the lateness of its appearance being signaled by the adoption of the neuter gender and abandoning the masculine. Thus, Pythagoras’ notation of the connection between lines and planes has been embedded in English by the inventions of the Roman armies to produce the word ‘wall’, derived from the multiplication of many lines to produce a single plane.

Etymology is essentially diagrammatic in nature and it would be useful to have something in architecture that could perform a similar task, although in this case, the connections need not be historical, but only formal. Typologies are a form of diagram, but they remain too limited and too static to deal with the quickly transformative nature of figure and fail to articulate the strategic use of form. Even at a primitive level, formal constructions can quickly change their characteristics, or exemplify multiple characteristics.

Diagrams do not tell us what to do, so they are not theory, and they are not predictive, so they are not science, but similarly to the former, they can illuminate opportunities, so they are critical, and similarly to the latter, they can reveal surprising connections. In terms of science versus philosophy, the development of an expertise in diagrammatic analysis is probably similar to the sort of expertise one develops with differential equations, handy, a bit inelegant, but definitely scientific, even if only through the back door. Unlike differential equations, and



unlike German, where for the most part the gender of things cannot be derived, but must be memorized, diagrams can be derived, which means that they are the result of a sort of laboratory of scrutiny, and they can lead to discovery, so they must be a science. When Zaha Hadid refers to any drawing she has ever done as ‘research’, if she is referring to their intrinsic diagrammatic nature, she must be right.

Oddly, we live in a world where, to many, the formal dimensions of configuration seem foreign, if not cryptically Masonic, regardless of their availability, common recurrence, seeming universality, and sheer necessity of existence. Diagrammatic meaning embedded in form is relentless, even if it seems to be invisible to some. It is as though someone named ‘Dolores’ wonders why she seems to be unhappy. Configuration offers us the opportunity to figure, to think and to see and inform ourselves via form, and perhaps we could better avail ourselves of the openings it presents.

When Colin Rowe wrote “The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa” for *Architecture Review* in 1947, he continued the diagrammatic methodology that had been developed by Wolflin as transmitted through Wittkower. The purpose of the diagrams in this article was to compare two buildings, Palladio’s Villa Foscari (or Malcontenta) with Le Corbusier’s Villa Stein. These particular buildings were selected because Rowe wanted to reveal something about the buildings of Le Corbusier and a connection with the strategies that were organizing a 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian villa would be suitably revelatory.

The juxtaposition was clearly meant to be somewhat provocative. But he was also particularly interested in the buildings of the 16<sup>th</sup> century because a fascination with Mannerism had arisen with its recent elevation to the status of a full-fledged art historical era, which was caused, at least in part, by its affinities with early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture, possibly in a similar way that Modern Art elevated the status of Primitive Art. Mannerism often involved ambiguity, complexity, exaggeration, and wilfulness. Palladio’s revisitation of the architecture of Rome resulted in discoveries concerning the ability of Roman architectural vocabulary to produce surprising spatial readings and effects presumably unintended by the original designers. Unmasking connections between 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture and Mannerist precedents would be surprising, but it wouldn’t condemn contemporary practices.

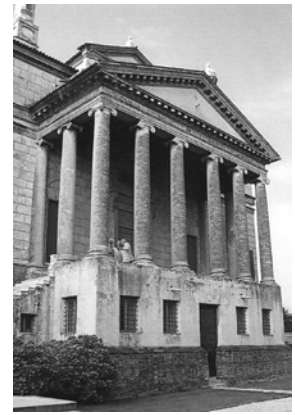
Practices more contemporary to the present moment can be argued to have similar connections, whether it be Koolhaas’s loving reveries based at least in part on the architecture of early Le Corbusier and that of the fifties in general, or Gehry’s insistence on using at least some of the devices that would have been cen-

tral to the production of Beaux Arts architecture. In this regard, something akin to Rowe's analytical inspection of potential similarities might again be fruitful in the work of designers like Koolhaas and Gehry, but probably not as surprising, since we have long ago become accustomed to the idea of influence contaminating the presumed novelty of contemporary design invention.

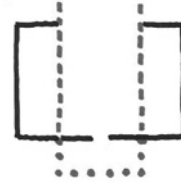
Revisiting Rowe's comparison of Palladio and Le Corbusier reveals that the analysis was somewhat incomplete in at least three ways: one, in that the work of the former was used to illuminate the latter rather than the opposite; two, significant devices present in Villa Foscari are never remarked upon, even though they are representative of similar strategies in a range of buildings over time and, thus, could only increase the significance of Palladio's work and influence; and three, that Rowe never explores the implications that even diagrams based on the simplest principles could reveal a complex world that lay just behind, yet structured and focused some of the most significant arguments made by a building.

The basic methodology of Rowe's analysis was the juxtaposition of the comparable drawings of the two houses, side by side, plans and elevations. The argument was clearly meant to appeal as much to the eye as to the seduction of the text. It wasn't really meant to provide new illumination to Palladian devices, more to assure us that there were strong connections which linked the two buildings together. Among the arguments made was the point that the two buildings both displayed a similar proportioned matrix, which in the case of Villa Stein determined the position of the columns, while in the case of Villa Foscari it determined the positioning of the walls. In the case of both buildings the boundaries which formed the outer perimeter of the matrices were coplanar with the exterior walls. That two types of buildings, bearing wall and structural frame, could share a common organizing scheme and be seen immediately to be comparable by the simple act of juxtaposition were the foundations of the argument. The potential irony is that they might also be seen as the basic argument that was being made not just by the comparison of the two buildings, but as the central argument that was made by the composite nature of the composition of Villa Foscari, that it represents the collision between two different buildings of two different types, the "wall building" that encloses most of the program and the "columnar building" that is perhaps most evident at the entry porch.

Juxtaposition is, thus, also a basic element of Palladio's scheme and possibly one of the things that most distinguishes the building as a Mannerist exercise. As with many Palladian projects—one need only think of his church elevations—the strategy seems focused on an idea of superimposition of several buildings and a resultant transformation in the idea of density. In the case of Foscari, what is be-



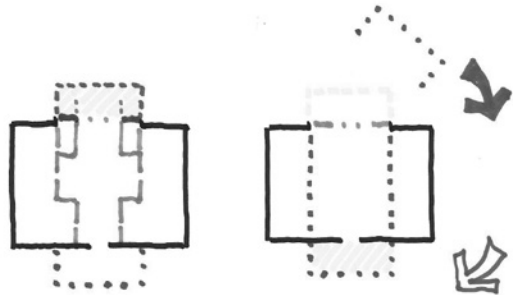
Left: Fig. 1.  
 Right: Fig. 2.  
 Bottom: Fig. 3.



ing superimposed are two different buildings which are easily distinguished by their structural systems, one walled and one columnar. While hardly unique to this building, the entry stairways are quite unlike those found at all four facades of Villa Rotunda. Here, they are almost independent of the architectural scheme, placed off to either corner to require the arriving visitor to move up along the wall of the façade and to be inserted through the side of the portico’s colonnade in a manner that might seem somewhat unceremonious (fig. 1). What the route permits, however, is a close view of the column of the portico which is engaged in the wall of the Villa itself (fig. 2). The nature of this engagement might be ambiguous. Is it a half round column attached to the smooth surface of the wall, or is it a full column that is disappearing into the wall itself, like a hot knife through butter (fig. 3)? The details Palladio has chosen to employ here tend to favor the latter reading. The light rustication applied to the wall serves to flatten its appearance as though it were merely a surface, which contrasts greatly with the three dimensional figurality of the column itself and the visual momentum of the plane of the colonnade as it intersects the wall.

At Villa Rotunda this detail is different, too. Here, the columns on the side of the portico are replaced with walls each of which contains a slightly off-center archway. The walls almost touch the corner columns and the off-centeredness of the archway argues that at least some of the mass of the column should be incorporated into the ensemble (fig. 4). Although the configuration is different, the theme is similar to that of Villa Foscari, that the perimeter of the portico is intersecting and possibly penetrating the volume described by the wall of the building. This superimposition can be seen as the cause of the gridded matrix described by

Top: Fig. 4.  
 Left: Fig. 5.  
 Right: Fig. 5a-b.  
 Opposite page: Fig. 6-8.



Rowe, as in both buildings, the interior walls seem to be aligned with the porticos, as though they were tracing the outlines of embedded structures. On the garden façade of Villa Foscari, there is no portico (fig. 5). However, there is something that argues for something of a kinship. The surface of the façade projects slightly, there is the suggestion of a pediment above, and the “thermal windows” group together to describe a large void, as though a cavity used to extend beyond the surface of the existing façade (fig. 5a). What seems to be described are the remnants of an attachment that might have been similar to the entry façade, except in this case, it seems to have been removed rather than added. And what specifically seems to have been removed is, more or less, what seems to be on the other façade of the building (fig. 5b).

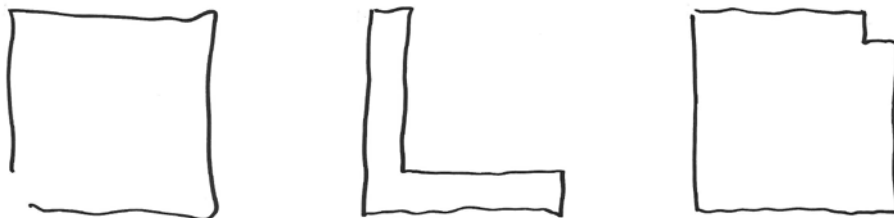
Thus, Villa Foscari offers us a bit of a conundrum. The entry façade shows us the collision between two buildings, the garden façade shows us a late revision of that collision with a removal, and the missing piece now seems placed on the opposite front of the building as an attached fragment rather than an embedded whole. The initial dilemma which the close observation of the portico half column provokes returns to play a central role in this conundrum, in which it seems to be contradictorily, both a protrusion and an attachment, an addition and a subtraction, something both early and late. The idea of superimposition implies the existence of a narrative, a story which describes a series of events in the build-

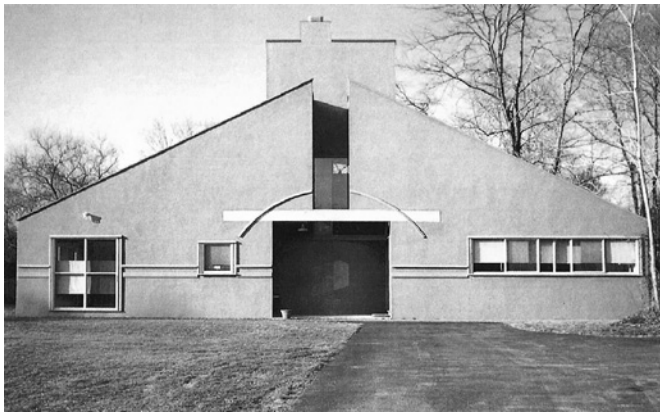
ing's evolving creation, and perhaps nowhere else is that narrative stronger than at Villa Foscari.

The word 'narrative' shares a similar derivation as the word 'know'. Rather than just being a description of a series of actions, in the case of Foscari those descriptions are seen as a consequence of 'knowing', of reading the forms to derive their meaning. The relationship between the words, form/information, sign/significance is typical of many languages where a word describing shape is closely linked to a word involved with meaning or thinking: figure/figure. The association between shape and thought was a central concern of Gestalt psychology as it evolved in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the distinction between perception and cognition proved to be in fact not so distinct.

Narrative is built into the way the brain conceives the organization of form because of various Gestalt principles such as various laws of grouping, good continuation, and virtually present norm. All three of these are present in the following figure (poorly drawn square) (fig. 6). There is a strong tendency on the part of observers to describe this shape as a square. It is perhaps interesting to note that this is one of the few of the infinite range of rectangles that has actually been given a name, which is perhaps some indication of its conceptual significance and might explain its ubiquity in architecture across oceans and eons. Very few shapes actually have names and usually they are given the name of something that they resemble. Popular culture is not so far removed from more academic architectural nomenclature in this regard: Villa Rotunda versus the Gherkin. The next figure, (fig. 7), is usually described as an 'L', the alphabet being a useful repository of shape names.

The last figure in this particular sequence (fig. 8) is usually described something like, "A square with a piece removed." This description is very different from the first two which merely involved a search for an apt resemblance. This description involved a narrative, in which a whole story is told. There was a square, something happened, and a bit is now missing. It is a description that invokes a history: there was an early period, followed by a period during which an event





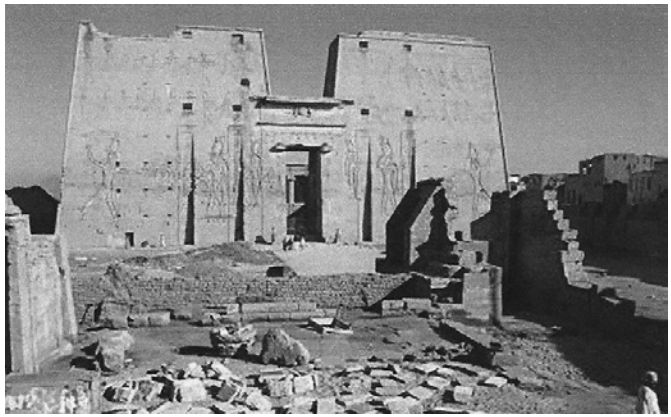
took place, and here we are now, enveloped in lateness and perhaps a certain sense of loss. As a description, it could hardly be more different. Of course, the odd thing is that, as a figure, although the observer usually uses the qualities of a square to initiate the narrative associated with this piece, the shape itself would seem to fit very comfortably within the domain described by L-shaped things. Yet, its L-shapedness will usually go un-remarked upon in deference to the action and theme of the narrative, removal.

The brain will often intercede with what might be expected to be the rather passive activity of vision to produce new arguments. These arguments might extend certain properties that would arise from a casual inventorying of a particular composition. An example of this might be the optical refinements incorporated into the organization of a Greek temple, which seek not to call attention to themselves and not to revise the basic argument, but to support the visual strength of an idealization that doesn't stray from the basic inventory, but merely corrects opportunities for misreading. Although they operate as narratives, they tend to be narratives that wish to remain anonymous and invisible, devices which act more as correctives than as revisers.

However, this is not always the case. The façade of Venturi's house for his mother in Philadelphia is a good example (fig. 9). Here, rather than merely supporting the inventory, the façade is organized to produce a number of revisionist narratives. The most basic of these involve the most primitive description of the organization. Is it made of two pieces, a left and a right, or is it made of two pieces, a void and a solid?

The entry façade of the Vanna Venturi House is the result of years of design study resulting in what one might assume to be a relatively casual organization. Sometimes described as a child's drawing of a house, sometimes with affection sometimes not, it has also been pointed out the perhaps surprising similarities to a typical entry gateway to an Egyptian temple, two configurations that are elsewhere seldom critically aligned as similar, not even in the event that the drawing of the Egyptian temple gateway was also produced by a child (fig. 10).

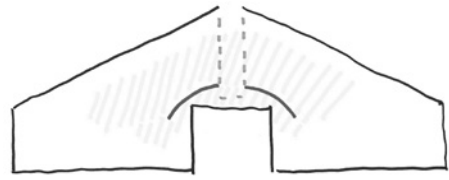
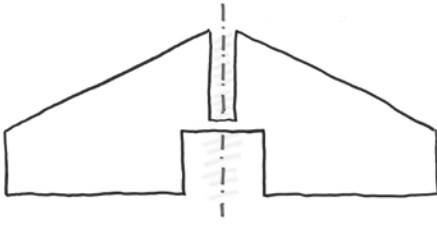
Opposite page: Fig. 9.  
 Top: Fig. 10.  
 Bottom left: Fig. 11.  
 Bottom right: Fig. 12.



In a typical Egyptian example, the upper portions consisted of two pieces, the two pylons, which produced as a consequence of their existence and juxtaposition at least two different things: the partial description of a plane of which they both formed a part; and a residual void between them, suggesting the existence of a pathway that continued through them (fig. 11). The lower portion was formed by the introduction of a figural void into a much larger plane, suggesting a much stronger statement of the existence of the plane and a much more figural statement of its absence or removal to make a doorway. This configuration created a much stronger impression of a defended boundary through which the continuation of a pathway is less assured.

These two variations support the variety of meanings that arise from the concept of 'gate', which are all easily set up by the juxtaposition of two figures (fig. 12). They describe a plane, an opening in the plane, two halves on either side of the opening, and an alternative plane or pathway. The word 'gate' should describe all of these resultants, but over time its various linguistic children have drifted towards specific foci. In English-speaking countries, gate has come to mean a negotiable barrier. In the rest of the Germanic languages, it has come to mean a street or pathway, as in 'Gasse'. But all these readings remain active in the façade of the Vanna Venturi House in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania. In the 'pylon reading',





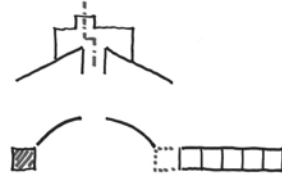
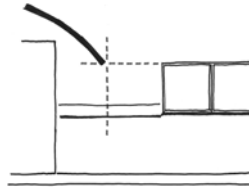
Top: Fig. 13-14.

Below: Fig. 15-16.

Opposite page:

Top: Fig. 18a-b.

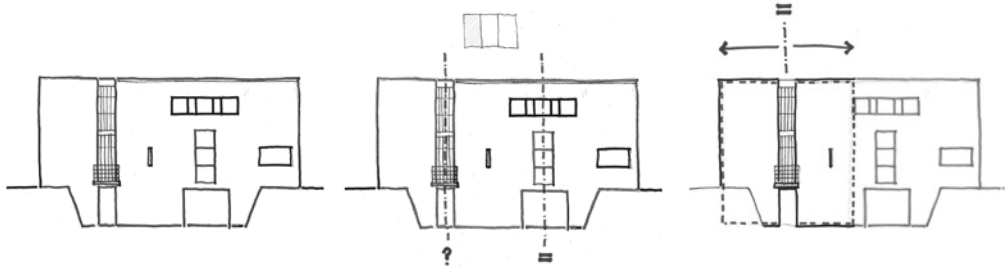
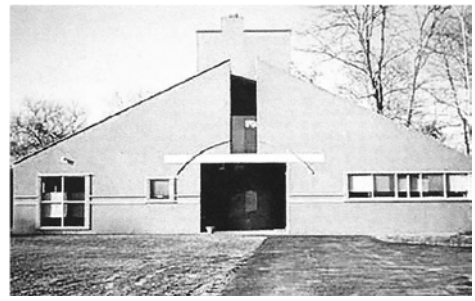
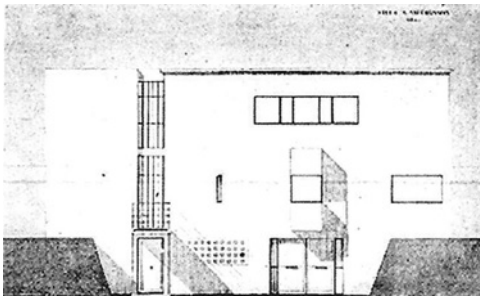
Below: Fig. 17; 19; 20.



the figurality of the doorway is absorbed into the slot between the two halves (fig. 13). In the 'door reading' (fig. 14), the slot becomes part of the surrounding plane, an operation that is encouraged by the existence of the lintel which serves to staple the two pieces together, and by the broken arch, which also argues for a continuous perimeter around the doorway opening. In each case, something is transformed by its context to become something else. In effect, the doorway becomes a nothing, and the nothing of the slot becomes a something.

Nothing becoming a something is also a theme for another part of this façade. The line of ribbon windows to the right, the 'chair rail' molding just beneath it, and the trajectory and endpoint of the 'eyebrow' combine to activate the area of the façade between all of them (fig. 15). The result is the description of an area of the façade almost as if it were another window, an additional module of the ribbon window to its right. Thus a narrative transformation is set up, from field to emergent figure. In addition, however, another simultaneous narrative is established, through the relationship that is suggested between this implied window and the real one in a similar, mirrored position to the left (fig. 16). Now, instead of the implied window seeming to be a late-comer to the configuration, it seems more that it was actually an original component and an actual window that has been moved, or whipped, to the other side like a contestant in a roller derby match. In this reading, it is the left-hand window that is 'late', an arriving intrusion onto the previously blank left half of the façade, at least for the moment. Its purpose here is open to debate. Is it to reinforce an idea of equivalence between the two halves of the elevation, even as it threatens the momentary symmetry? Is it to reinforce the suggested continuity of the arc implied by the 'eyebrow' moldings and, thus,





the figurality of the doorway and the continuity of the surrounding plane? Is it to reinforce the sense of symmetry by rearranging the windows into something more balanced, at least numerically, 5 and 5, while also maintaining another idea of an equality of window types, square versus ribbon? Is it all of these things?

A similar condition occurs on the front elevation of Le Corbusier's Villa Besnus in Vaucresson (fig. 17). We know from the surviving drawings that the decision to move the stairway to run laterally along the front façade was made relatively late in the design process. What was the strategy? The end result is to compromise the relative purity of a façade that beforehand would have seemed remarkable similar to Venturi's (fig. 18a–b), an almost symmetrical composition made slightly screwy by the size and positioning of some of the windows. To this composition, Le Corbusier added a completely blank wall and the slot between the two. As a result of this move, the nature of the façade is transformed (fig. 19). What was previously the façade's left edge has now become interior to the plane and has become similar to the vertical organizing axis of the 'original' façade, something somewhat akin, in fact, to the French flag, where the whole composition can be read as three equal bands.

If the two on the right can share an axis between them and become a larger whole, can this also apply to the two on the left? In fact, this is exactly what seems to be in the process of happening (fig. 20). Now, the previously inexplicable asymmetries of the windows can be seen as a resultant, the consequence of the façade attempting to reflect the blankness to the left of this new axis of symmetry onto the right. In the process of this, the window on the left is being 'closed' or closed down, as the blankness of the façade fills the area. Somewhat similarly



Fig. 21a-b; 22.

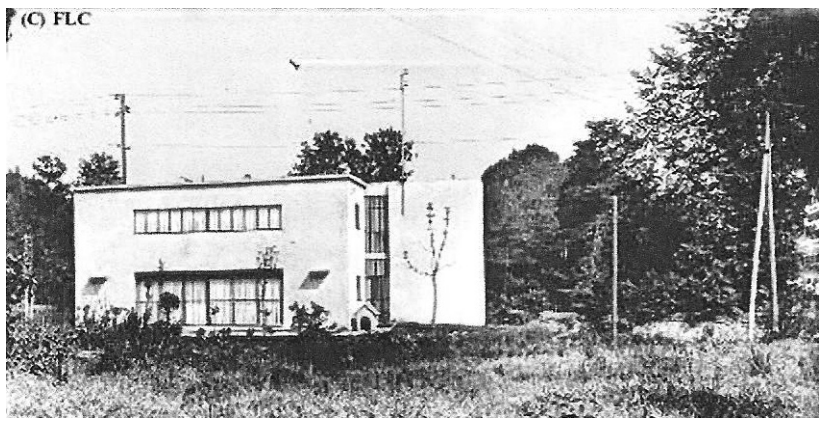
Opposite top: Fig. 23.

Opposite bottom: Fig. 24; 27.

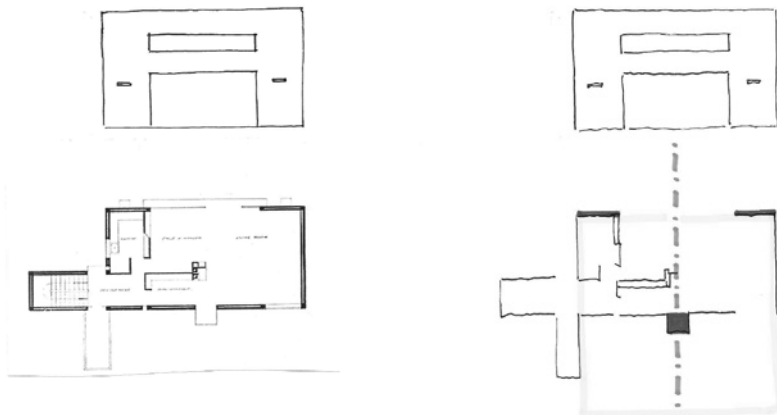
to the Venturi House, the window on the right is linked to this process by an accompanying enlargement (fig. 21a, b). Unlike Venturi, at Vaucresson the process has been caught in the middle of the transition and the narrative has created a sort of ‘stop action’ aspect to the façade. A very minor detail, the drip cap along the roof edge of the ‘original’ building is not present in the ‘new’ blank façade on the left, although it’s exactly the same construction on exactly the same roof (fig. 22). What is the point of it? Perhaps it is done as a way of maintaining the absolute minimalist credentials of the left panel in distinction to what, somewhat surprisingly, might be referred to as the Beaux Arts motivations of the axis on the right, as though the composition were meant to be read as the unstoppable consequences of abstraction operating on a historicist organization, perhaps as a way of repositioning his current architectural output with respect to the work almost immediately preceding this building in La Chaux du Fonds.

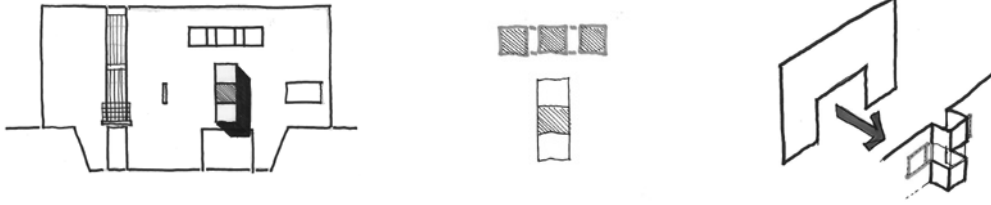
Even if certain aspects of the front façade seem a bit retardataire, the rear elevation seems especially surprising (fig. 23). Here, the classicism is blatantly overt. Comparisons have been made to certain 18<sup>th</sup> century equivalents, such as the Petit Trianon at Versailles. Although Rowe compared Villa Foscari to Villa Stein, in some ways Vaucresson might have also been appropriate, although the obviousness of the classicizing strategies would have made the comparison less revelatory. Obviously, the two buildings share a model, at least on the facades. They also share a strategy in the superimposition of buildings. On the front façade, this strategy originally places the pieces abutting each other, and then, as has been observed, they begin to integrate. The multiple building blocks, the fragmentation of the pieces, the multiple doorways, the relative complexity, all hint of something more urban, as though this was a series of facades stretched along a street instead of a single building, similar to what Aalto seems to propose along the western façade of his architecture offices in Munkkiniemi. Both buildings even offer the piano nobile of a palazzo configuration.

As a villa, the rear elevation of Vaucresson is in stark contrast to this reading. It sits serenely in the landscape, such as it is. This seems to be part of the pack-



age that Le Corbusier is offering the client. Two houses instead of one, in two places far better than the one the building is actually situated in. One façade is a palazzo, one is a villa. One is in the ‘country’, one is in the ‘city’. In fact, the client gets three buildings, because the interiors make only the most minimal accommodation with either of these two organizations (fig. 24). The interiors are more completely modernist and offer much more of a free plan than either façade would suggest is possible. The tricolor uniformity suggested by the front façade is not particularly evident on the interior, nor is the central axis of the ‘traditional’ right hand elevation. When the visitor walks out of the house into the unprepossessing back yard and turns around to look at the façade, he discovers that he has just left a building he doesn’t seem to have been in. The suggestion of ‘villa’ at this moment creates a narrative that proposes an alternative condition and an alternative site. The situation is reminiscent of that at Foscari, where a comparison between the two facades creates a reading of transformation, except that, in this case, one façade contains all the complexity and activity and the other is more of a datum, or even a cartoon. This later quality is emphasized by the photograph authorized by Le Corbusier to be used in *Oeuvre Complete*, in which the dog





house is allowed to remain, signaling certain affinities between the two structures in their reductionist organizing principles (fig. 25).

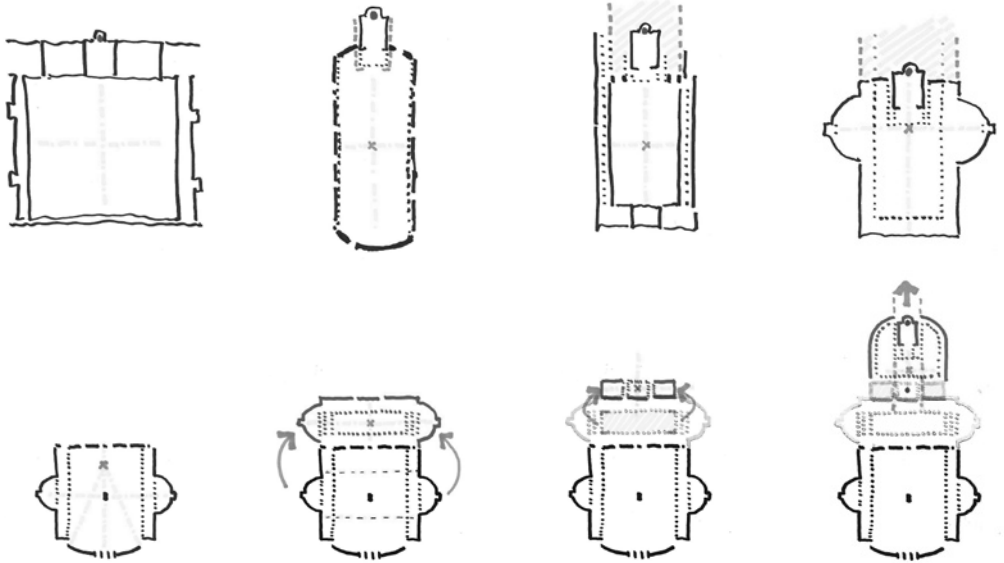
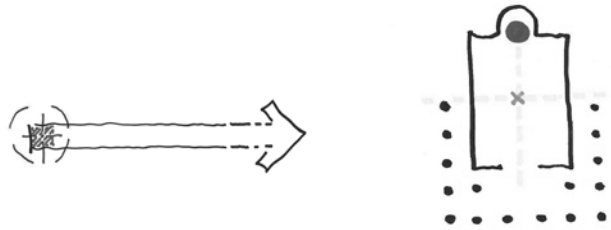
Of course, the rear elevation is also the apotheosis of the classicism suggested by the organization of the right portion of the front façade and is one of the few things that takes any notice of its axis. The feature on the front façade which is on this axis and seems thematically related to the garden elevation is the small box which projects beyond the façade (fig. 26). This element is almost completely idealized, a composition of squares on a plan that could almost have been authored by Bramante. East, west, up, down, why differentiate? It's almost as though someone has glued a telephone booth to the façade of the building as part of some sort of Halloween prank. If the two façades of the building demonstrate relative independence from the plan, this element demonstrates relative independence from both the plan and the facades and perhaps even gravity, given its lack of evident support and its multiple symmetries. In its ideality and scale and relative a-functionality, it might be seen to resemble a garden pavilion in an 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape garden. In its ideality, the most closely related element is the rear elevation, which also is organized by the same axis. In an extended analogy of reversals, if the rear yard has turned out to also be the surprise garden for the palazzo, this projecting element seems to argue that it is, in turn, the garden pavilion for the villa (fig. 27). And if the relatively weedy back yard is transformed into a garden by its association with the rear façade, the transformation here turns the urban space along the main highway through Vaucresson into the pavilion's garden.

The window pattern on the front façade deserves further scrutiny (fig. 28). The windows above the projecting element bear a strong resemblance to those within the pavilion, three square windows separated by smaller rectangles. The configuration is reminiscent of the manner in which the delicate components in a model kit are packaged, the windows for example, to be broken off at the appropriate time and reassembled into a new object, from a planar armature to three dimensionality. At Vaucresson, the axis is in just the right position to supply the necessary pressure to effectuate the transformation (fig. 29). Is it possible that the two windows are locked into a before and after pairing that illustrates this narrative? If they are, they are only illustrating a condition that is represented in a huge number of architectural configurations.

Opposite page: Fig. 26; 28-29.

Right: Fig. 30-31.

Below: Fig. 32a-h (line by line).



Once created, a line is something that is difficult to control for various reasons. For one thing, it has within itself all the data that would organize its further extension. No further information is necessary. Thus, it could effortlessly be extended indefinitely as a single homogeneous entity (fig. 30). But contrarily, it also seems to authorize conditions of difference at its endpoints. Like a stick of butter, the ends of which make themselves available for distinction, isolation, and potential detachment, in a condition that might be known as 'pavilionization'. The phenomenon can be seen in the cellas of all the temples in the Imperial Fora in Rome (fig. 31), in which a niche occurs when the main axis hits the back wall, which tends to decentralize the space and create an alternative emphasis on the perimeter. In this respect, the configuration imitates the same diagram as that of the fora themselves, as each involves the device of a centralizing object, the temple, employed as an edge to the perimeter of the sanctuary precinct. Although the temple is to varying degrees designed to be an object in space, it is also employed to make space exterior to itself by acting as a boundary. One could put a sequence together to illustrate the degree to which the temple in each sanctuary argued for further extension of the space even as it was involved in terminating it. It would

perhaps run Vespasian, Nerva, Caesar, Augustus, and Trajan, but Trajan would have the added feature of providing a complex mini-narrative all on its own, in a sequence of expansions in which the temple succeeds in leaving its own forum (fig. 32a-h).

The principles of extendability and pavilionization are also on view in cathedral complexes such as Norwich (fig. 33). When the cult of the Virgin Mary developed after construction of the building, the problem of an addition developed. Where to put it? Almost universally, Lady Chapels were built as an extension of the nave axis behind the choir, behind the altar, as a means of claiming the most authorized position available (fig. 34). The dual principles of extendability and pavilionization assure that the new element has the characteristics of being both part of and distinct from the rest of the organization, creating simultaneously the dual narratives of both growth and separation, continuation and disjunction, dependent and independent. Of course, even prior to the construction of the Lady Chapel, these themes were evident in the organization of the building. For one thing, the central axis itself was already differentiated by a series of distinctions: narthex, nave, crossing, choir, altar, ambulatory, etc., each linked in a continuity of sameness and distinguished by a difference (fig. 35). For another thing, the situation and configuration of the chapels, attached to but somewhat independent from the geometry of the rest of the church, establish a model for future additions (fig. 36). Clearly, Le Corbusier had something similar in mind when designing the side chapel and the visitation rooms at La Tourette, where the components are both partially dependent on their connections to the larger facility but also independent from it, as expressed by the loss of the dominant orthogonality.

Another example of extension versus differentiation occurs at Norwich in terms of the dialogue established between its different basic components and their arguments about the essential compositional structure of the scheme. Is the cloister an afterthought which, somewhat after the fact, finds the opportunity to nest within the intersection determined by the Latin cross of the church (fig. 37)? Or is the cloister primary and the church involved merely in a sort of subservient framing of it? In the latter case, this framing would also explain the differentiation between the nave and the choir, that the choir is 'outside' the organizational perimeter of the cloister and thus isolated by its extension into new, unauthorized territory (fig. 38). This option is also reinforced by the reiteration within the cloister configuration of the basic structure of a Roman temple, with the chapter house assuming the position of temple, leaving the church in a subservient position, although the chapter house and the choir are linked by a figural similarity and also by the fact that they both represent projects of the axial geometries of

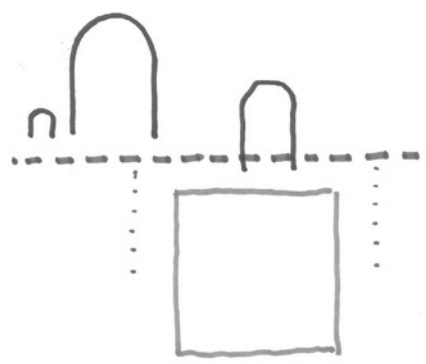
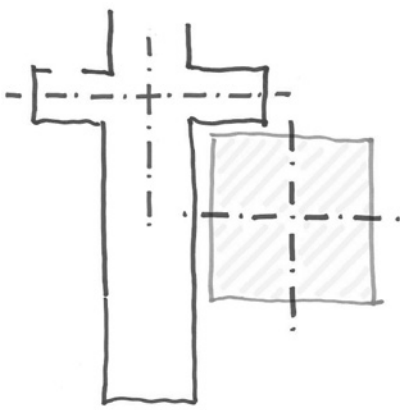
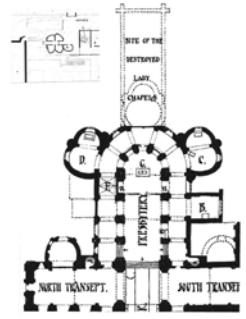
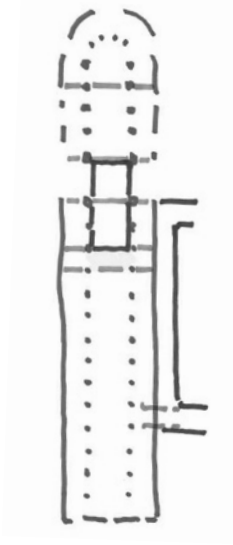
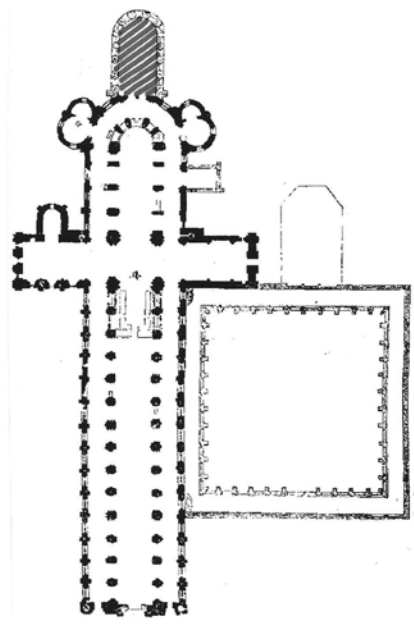
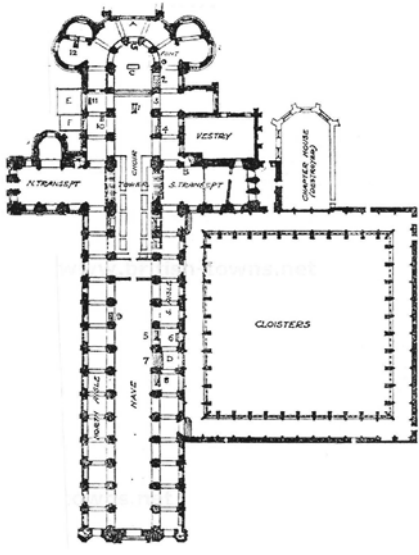
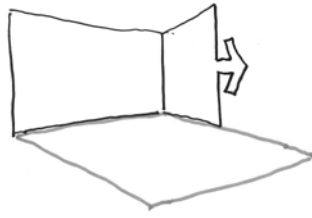
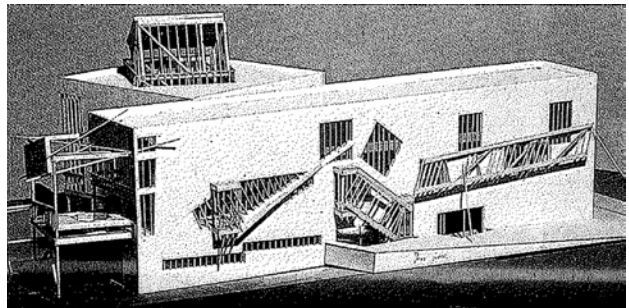
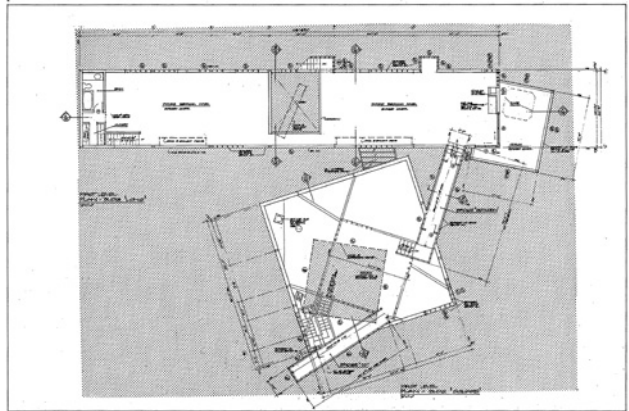


Fig. 33-38  
(line by line).



Top: Fig. 39a-b.  
Middle: Fig. 40.  
Bottom: Fig. 45.

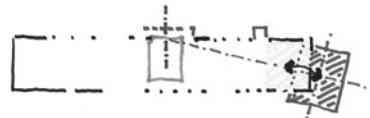
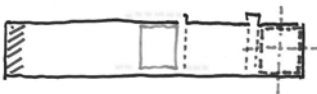
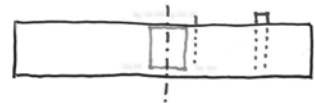
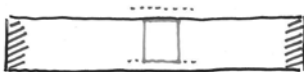
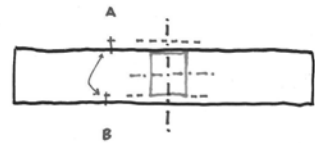
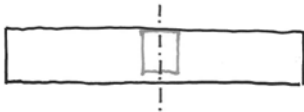
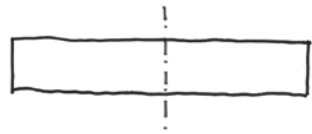
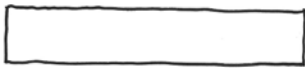


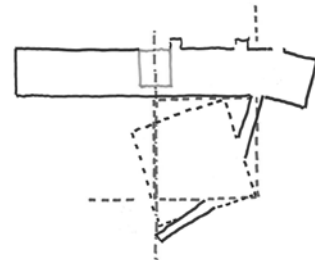
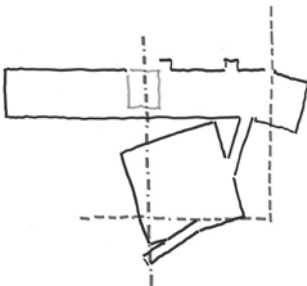
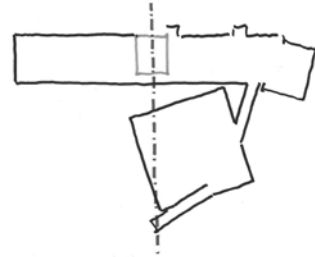
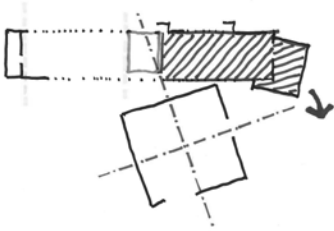
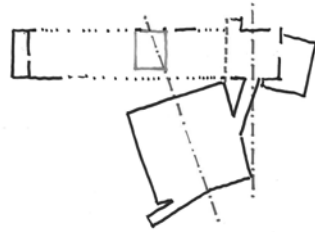
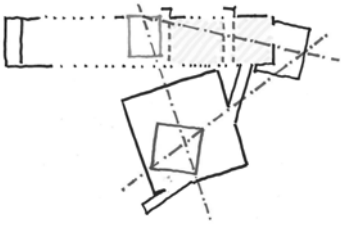
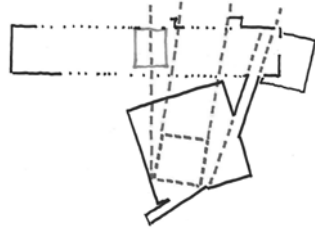
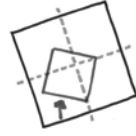
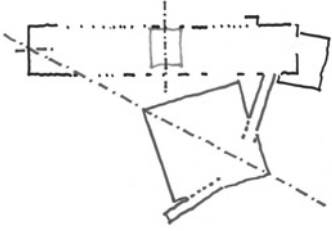


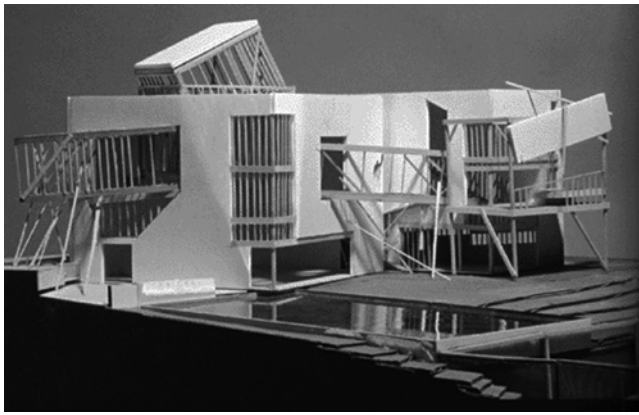
adjacent figures. Rather than the church and the cloister being the juxtaposition of two stationery figures, the view of the crossing from the cloister (fig. 39a) reveals that the nave and the south transept can be read as a continuous element, (fig. 39b) a bar which has wrapped the corner and is in the process of moving across the eastern edge of the cloister perimeter.

Many of these features reappear in the final scheme for an unbuilt Gehry project of 1978, the Familian House (fig. 40). Not unlike Norwich, a view of the plan shows a conflict between the primacy of the bar versus the square as essential organizers of the project, although here the difference in orientation underscores the conflict between the two. This presumed independence might allow us to focus for a moment on the bar (fig. 41). Although staggeringly simple, there is an unavoidable geometry that occurs internally to the bar. First of all, it has a middle, and secondly it has ends (fig. 42). Gehry has chosen to emphasize the middle by establishing within the plan a double height space in this position, ostensibly the family room, possibly somewhat akin to the crossing at Norwich. The position of this element is not completely neutral as it is slightly off center to one of the long sides (fig. 43), which creates a slight inflection to the surrounding area. It also creates the possibility that some sort of a shift has been made towards one side and away from the other, allowing circulation to remain within the bar along one elevation and possibly implying the abandonment of a similar element on the other side, outside the bar. Oddly enough, a similar situation occurs in Norwich at the corner of the crossing, where the side aisle associated with the nave is externalized and incorporated into the exterior walkway of the cloister along the south transept (fig. 44). Gehry capitalizes on this situation by revealing what might be interpreted as a 'ruin', not unlike Villa Foscari, in the form of what looks something like a collapsed series wooden walkways that conform to this zone (fig. 45). Two of the pieces are actually usable: a stairway that connects the two levels of the family room and a small projection reminiscent of the projecting box at Vaucresson.

Sympathetic to the principles of pavilionization, there are also bits of geometry that describe the architecture of the ends of the bar similarly, but one as a solid and the other as a void (fig. 46). Like Norwich, these initial disturbances begin to orchestrate additional distinct pieces in the configuration (fig. 47). The implied walkways either reinforce existing elements or suggest new ones, such as the implied module at one end of the bar, seemingly closely akin to the double height space (fig. 48). From this figure emerges the frame of a porch that is similar in size and shape, but 'loosened' from the bar's orthogonality, again reflecting both a sense of origin but also a sense of gained independence. It is almost as







*Previous pages:*  
*Left page: Fig. 41-44;*  
*46-51 (line by line).*  
*Right page: Fig. 52; 54-61;*  
*63 (line by line).*

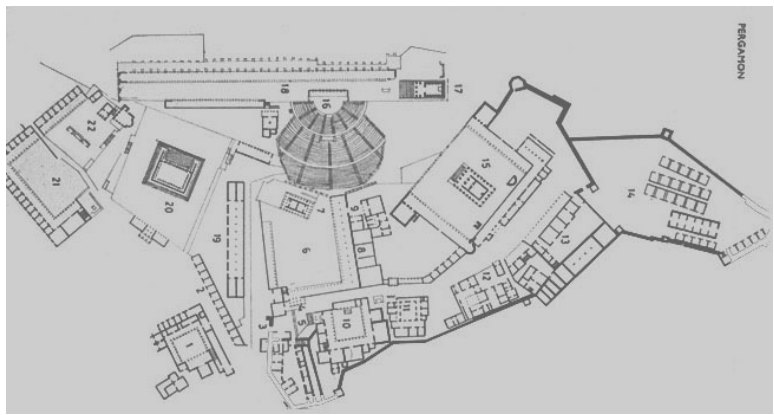
*Left: Fig. 53.*  
*Opposite page: Fig. 62.*

though we were now able to witness that moment in Villa Foscari in which the removal of most of the elements that constituted the garden façade was taking place (fig. 49). And like Foscari, and like the elements strung along the outer edge of the bar, there is the strong sense of ruin, or hasty reconfiguration with too little material, or too little attention.

The new independent orientation is seemingly disinterested in that of the larger figure (fig. 50), like an errant sock drawer in a decaying clothes cabinet, and yet one of its axes nails the midpoint of the axis through the double-height space, either in suppressed homage or an attempt to reinforce a particular idea of center. The edge of this figure that is still embedded in the bar seems to spawn another projection (fig. 51), this one a bridge that extends out into space. The geometry of this figure seems to align itself with the diagonal skylight that slices across the roof of the double-height space, which is in turn bisected by the line extending from the porch, perhaps again creating a figure that might be sympathetic to other cathedral complexes, Canterbury for example, with its multiple transepts and its bend to the right.

What the bridge is headed for is not nothing, it is a substantial something, it is the square living room pavilion (fig. 52) that, in the Norwich model, takes on some of the aspects of the cloister. Its orientation at first glance again seems to argue for its independence, and yet there are countervailing arguments as well. First of all, its diagonal axis seems to originate at the far end of the bar (fig. 53). The significance of this relationship is underscored by the manipulation of the opposite corner of the square and the intersection of the matching bridges which are disposed symmetrically around it, in good Beaux Arts fashion. Secondly (fig. 54), another of its axes is fixed on the axis of the double-height space and the far façade, like that of the emerging porch, as though they are both locked back into at least some of the organization of the bar, whatever other arguments they are making about their freedom, like the hands of a clock, sort of George Nelson-esque.

If the living room module were to be read as a cloister, its internal paradise garden might be referenced by the sky light that punctures its ceiling, which re-



produces a perfect model of what might be read as a quadrant (fig. 55). Again, at the same time, this element seems to stress its independence by a new orientation, and yet, again, at the same time, its position seems to reference or be determined by other elements in the composition (fig. 56). For example, the living room skylight is almost equidistant from the axes extending from central double-height space and the connecting bridge; it seems to be claiming an affinity to the module in the bar between the double-height space and the projecting box; and it bears a strong resemblance to the emerging porch. As opposed to the other half of the bar, this half seems to be increasingly delineated into smaller modules which then seem to seek to effectuate a dispersion of these modules or their representatives into the surrounding area, or possibly even their alternative inclusion into the square figure of the living room/cloister.

The living room skylight betrays a further interest in the emerging porch by the alignment of one of its diagonal axes (fig. 57), which intersects the porch's axis at its outer façade. There are a lot of other potentially interesting and integrating relationships indicated by some of the geometries in this area. If the area within the bar that the porch from which the porch seems to be emerging is read as a figure, its central axis determines both the originating point of the bridge and the outer corner of the living room module (fig. 58). The other axis of the living room/cloister seems to be directing the rotation of the porch and to be claiming it as a component, one of its quadrants (fig. 59). The other half of the bar seems remote from all this action, yet potentially equal to it, especially as the living room/cloister seems to be redirecting its attentions to the middle, as opposed to the far end of the bar, as though it wants to contend with the entire composition, not just half of it, unlike the cloister at Norwich, which contents itself with addressing the nave alone.

There is another bridge that mirrors the first one at the outer corner of the living room module. This one appears to be every bit its equal, but turns out to be distinctly less useful in that it seems to be a bridge to nowhere. Of course, it's doing something. Other than marking the significance of that corner, it seems to be



*Fig. 64.*

tracing the sweep of an arc around a center, like a clock, much like the dispersion of the modules themselves (fig. 60). The sequence of the emerging porch and the cloister together constitute a little less than a quarter of the circuit, which would be determined exactly by the line of the bar's cross axis. And this is the line to which the bridge extends, at least somewhere formally significant if not programmatically so, as if to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the building's various and seeming far-flung components. As much as the square of the living room/cloister strives to establish itself as the originating object, orchestrating the position of the bar as it wraps the corner [not unlike the view of the cathedral from the cloister at Norwich], the implied geometries of the bar reach into space to provide an alternative framework with which to reconstruct and measure the whole composition (fig. 61).

Although a seemingly unlikely comparison, especially given their relative ages, the effect is not unlike the acropolis at Pergamon (fig. 62), where a series of large temple complexes swirl around the organizing bar of the gymnasium, or the gymnasium describes the diameter of the collection of circling objects. Like Pergamon, the winner of the endless struggle is ambiguous. As much as the size and shape of the living room/cloister seems to be determining the bending and decomposition of the bar into pavilions attendant to the square, determined in part by the ability of the geometry of the square to fix the important controlling dimensions that seem to be organizing the manipulation of the bar, this same relationship allows the position of the square to be read as nesting within the armature of the implied cruciform (fig. 63), like Norwich, and thus make the relative dominance less certain.

Just as the square form reinterprets various of the components to become fractured figures of its own incomplete paradise garden, the bar seems to offer the same proposition to the encircling figures (fig. 64); that they are, in fact, dancing to its tune as they proceed around the composition. In this interpretation, another template emerges, on in which the living room square becomes just a subset in the overall composition of another, as of yet incomplete but evolving paradise garden involving all the figures, and one which describes perfectly the initial stages of pavilionization which set the alternative reading in motion.

It is perhaps unlikely that when designing the Familian House, Gehry was tempted to seek inspiration from Norwich or Pergamon. But nonetheless, the works are connected, developed, and perhaps even based on a common interest in the devices proposed by the simplest of diagrammatic organizations. If we were return to the Rowe's original subject of Le Corbusier and the relatively surprising shared affinities exhibited by his work, a possibly equally surprising comparison could be made between the basic organizational strategies of the Familian House and that of the pilgrimage church at Ronchamp, but that is probably best a topic to be covered elsewhere.



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*Space (Cambridge University Press, 1984, 1990), das eine allgemeine Theorie über das Verhältnis von Menschen zu dem sie umgebenden, gebauten Raum darlegt, Space is the Machine (CUP 1996), das den grundlegenden Untersuchungsstand zu dieser Theorie beinhaltet, sowie zahlreicher Artikel, die sich mit dem Raum und dessen Wirken befassen. Auch über andere Aspekte der Architekturtheorie hat er ausgiebig geschrieben.*



# SPACE SYNTAX

## *Eine Denkmachine für die Architektur*

*Wie kann das rein Architektonische greifbar gemacht werden, als Fachkenntnis, Entwurfswissen oder Architekturverständnis kartiert oder dargestellt werden? Kann ein solches Fachwissen erklärt werden oder lässt es sich überhaupt nicht in Worte fassen, muss es unausgesprochen – gar verborgen – bleiben?* Ich werde mich dieser Frage mit Bezug auf einen der wichtigsten Bereiche des Architekturverständnisses zuwenden: dem Raum und den räumlichen Zusammenhängen. Zuerst möchte ich jedoch einige naive Überlegungen das Architekturverständnis im Allgemeinen betreffend diskutieren.

Wenn ein Bauherr einen Architekten bestimmt, um ein Gebäude zu entwerfen, dann tut er das, weil er oder sie glaubt, dass dies zu einem Gebäude führen wird, welches *besser funktioniert* oder *besser aussieht*. In der Tat glaubt der Bauherr, dass der Architekt über ein Wissen oder ein Verständnis verfügt, das anderen fehlt. Da den meisten Bauherren gefällt, was sie bekommen, können wir wohl annehmen, dass sie sich darin nicht täuschen und dass Architekten etwas wissen, dass der Entwurf in gewissem Sinne ein *auf Wissen zurückgreifender* Prozess ist und dass es eine Art – oder Arten – von Wissen gibt, welche Architektur *ausmachen*. Es stellt sich also eine einfache Frage: Was glauben Bauherren, das Architekten wissen? Was *umfasst* dieses Wissen oder Verständnis und wie ist es *geartet*?

Die physischen und räumlichen Formen von Gebäude sind die zwei Bereiche des architektonischen Wissens. Was auch immer zu Zeiten Vitruvs der Fall gewesen sein mag, in der modernen Welt hat das entscheidende Wissen des Architekten ganz sicher nichts mit der Konstruktion zu tun. Es wird vom Architekten er-

wartet, dass er über dieses Wissen verfügt, aber es ist nicht sein entscheidendes Wissen. Bei jemand anderem steht es normalerweise eher zur Verfügung. Also müssen wir uns an den Glauben des Bauherrn halten, dass ein Architekt Gebäude liefert, welche besser funktionieren oder besser aussehen. ‚Besser funktionieren‘ ist in erster Linie eine Frage des *räumlichen Aufbaus* des Gebäudes als ein System nutzbarer und miteinander verbundener Räume. ‚Besser aussehen‘ ist eine Frage des *physischen Aufbaus des Gebäudes als ein Objekt*.

Genauer gesagt glaubt der Bauherr, der Architekt verstehe die *möglichen* physischen und räumlichen Formen, welche Gebäude annehmen können, und er könne dieses Verständnis anwenden, um zu einem Vorschlag für eine *tatsächliche* Form zu gelangen. Architektonisches Wissen ist typischerweise eine Art Wissen um formale und räumliche *architektonische Möglichkeiten* und darum, wie dieses Wissen angewendet werden muss, um eine *tatsächliche* Form zu generieren, welche gut aussieht und ihrem Zweck gerecht wird. Das Wesen des architektonischen Entwerfens ist also nicht so sehr ein Prozess der Analyse des Auftrags, gefolgt von der Umsetzung in eine Form, sondern eine Angelegenheit, bei der das *Wissen um mögliche Formen* angesichts des Auftrages zu einem Vorschlag einer *tatsächlichen Form* führt.

### **Nicht-diskursives Wissen**

Das Problem hierbei liegt darin, wie diese Bereiche des Wissens geartet sind. Ich schlage vor, dass beide dieser Bereiche *Beziehungsflechte* zwischen Dingen umfassen – zwischen physischen Elementen auf der einen Seite und individuellen Räumen auf der anderen. Als solche sind sie der Art und Weise ausgesetzt, wie Menschen generell über komplexe Beziehungen nachdenken: namentlich dass wir, wie bei der Grammatik einer Sprache, eher *in* Vorstellungen von Beziehungen denken, als dass wir *über* sie nachdenken. Wir denken *über* Worte nach, aber *innerhalb* der unbewussten Regeln, welche sie zu Sätzen werden lassen.

Ebenso verhält es sich auch mit dem Raum, und komplexe räumliche Beziehungen sind im Allgemeinen *nicht-diskursiv* insofern, als dass wir auf unbewusster Ebene kompetent mit ihnen umgehen können, nicht aber fähig sind, über sie zu reden.

Dies ist, auf den Punkt gebracht, das intellektuelle Problem der Architektur: Ihre wichtigsten Wissensbereiche sind *nicht-diskursiv*: Wir sind kompetent im Umgang mit ihnen, doch es ist ein intuitiver Umgang. Wir wissen nicht, wie wir tun, was wir tun, und wir können es nicht in Worte fassen.

An dieser Stelle wird der Zweck unseres einleitenden Zitats deutlich: *Wie kann das rein Architektonische greifbar gemacht und als Fachkenntnis, Ent-*

*wurfswissen oder Architekturverständnis kartiert oder dargestellt werden? Kann ein solches Fachwissen erklärt werden oder lässt es sich überhaupt nicht in Worte fassen, muss es unausgesprochen – gar verborgen – bleiben?*

Anders ausgedrückt: kann der nicht-diskursive Kontext dieser zwei Wissensbereiche *analytisch* angegangen werden, sodass wir explizit über sie reden können? Es ist schon immer das Ziel klassischer Architekturtheorien gewesen, genau dies zu tun: eine Art *Struktur* in dem einen oder anderen Bereich des architektonischen Wissens zu finden.

In der Tat war es die Absicht der klassischen Architekturtheorien – und selbst des modernen theoretischen Diskurses in der Architektur – *das Nicht-Diskursive diskursiv zu machen*, einen Weg zu finden, über jene Dinge zu reden, über die wir im Allgemeinen nicht reden können.

Doch meiner Ansicht nach gab es immer zwei Probleme mit der Art und Weise, auf welche Architekturtheoretiker die *Analyse des Nicht-Diskursiven* in der Architektur angegangen sind. Erstens zielten die meisten von ihnen auf die *Analytik der körperlichen Form* ab, zum Beispiel durch gewisse Vorstellungen von Proportion und deren Einfluss auf die Wahrnehmung und Erfahrung. Wenige zielten auf die *Analytik des Raumes* und ihren Einfluss auf Funktionsmuster ab, obgleich dies auf den ersten Blick steuerbarer scheint, da sowohl die räumliche Form als auch Funktionsmuster wahrnehmbar sind.

Zweitens ist dies zumeist auf eine zum Teil *normative* Weise statt einer rein *analytischen* Weise geschehen, da es das Anliegen der Theoretiker war, sagen wir, ein bestimmtes System der Proportionen für die Anwendung im Entwurf vorzuschlagen. Das ist für Le Corbusier ebenso zutreffend wie für Alberti. Dieser Ansatz hat per Definition wahrscheinlich nur eine geringe Aussagekraft bezüglich der Proportionalität von Gebäuden im Allgemeinen und seine Auswirkung auf den Entwurfsprozess wäre eher die Einschränkung des Lösungsbereiches zugunsten einer ganz bestimmten Ästhetik, anstatt ihn zu erweitern, wie es bei einer Theorie der Fall sein sollte.

Woran es scheinbar fehlt, ist eine allgemeine *Theorie der Beschreibung* für den Raum, welche in der Lage ist, die Unterschiede zwischen zwei verschiedenen räumlichen Mustern zu beschreiben; und das auf eine Art und Weise, die sowohl *analytisch* ist, in dem Sinne, dass sie alle Arten möglicher Fälle beschreiben kann, als auch *theoretisch*, indem sie auf eine effektive Beschreibung abzielt, die mit so wenigen Begriffen und Konzept auskommt wie möglich.

Eine Beschreibung wäre jedoch nur dann eine wirkliche Theorie der Beschreibung, wenn sie auch überprüfbar wäre. Um überprüfbar zu sein, müssen Beschreibungen präzise sein. Der Grad der Präzision wird durch die Möglichkeit,

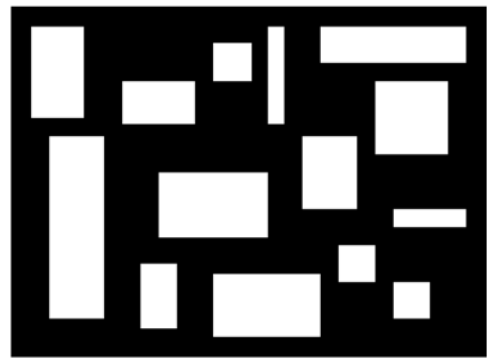
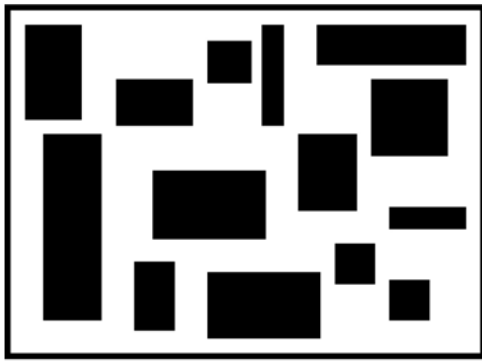


Abb. 1.

mit der Beschreibung zu entwerfen, bestimmt. Woran wäre sie überprüfbar? Offensichtlich an wahrnehmbaren Funktionsmustern.

Aus diesem Projekt wurde die *Space Syntax*: die Suche nach einer *räumlichen Sprache*, um die verhältnismäßigen Eigenschaften räumlicher Muster in Gebäuden und Städten zu beschreiben, also *eine Sprache des räumlich Nicht-Diskursiven*, ausreichend *präzise*, um damit entwerfen zu können und *überprüfbar* durch den Vergleich und die Gegenüberstellung von räumlichen und funktionalen Mustern.

Wie können wir also lernen, *analytisch* über Raum zu sprechen? Wir können mit dem beginnen, was ich für das grundlegende Prinzip der Architektur halte: dass der Raum, wenn wir Objekte in ihm verorten – Wände, Abtrennungen, Objekte, Gebäude, Stadtblöcke – was auch immer –, eine *Gestalt* annimmt.

Auf der linken Seite von Abbildung 1 sehen wir, schwarz dargestellt, Objekte in einem Raum, auf der rechten Seite in schwarz die Gestalt dieses Raumes. Diese Gestalten sind die Räume, die wir benutzen. Wir bewegen uns in ihnen, halten in ihnen inne, interagieren in ihnen, dekorieren sie, gestalten sie, sodass diese Räume irgendwie das beinhalten und widerspiegeln, was uns als soziale Wesen ausmacht, unter all jenen verschiedenartigen Umständen, unter denen wir als soziale Wesen in Erscheinung treten. Es sind das Wesen, die Ursprünge, die Wirkungen und Bedeutungen dieser Gebilde, an denen ich interessiert bin. Um jedoch den nächsten Schritt zu vollziehen, müssen wir zuerst darüber nachdenken, in was für einer Beziehung die Menschen zum Raum stehen. Dafür beginnen wir mit ein wenig Philosophie.

### **Analyse des Raumes**

Durch unsere Ausbildung sind wir daran gewöhnt, Raum als den *Hintergrund* von Objekten zu betrachten. In der Architektur gehen wir gar einen Schritt weiter und verstehen Raum nur mehr als *Hintergrund* für menschliche Aktivitäten. Das ist es, was ich als einen *erlernten Fehler* bezeichne: Er stammt aus einer philosophischen Tradition, die wir bis zu René Descartes zurückverfolgen können. So-

bald wir Raum auf diese Weise zu betrachten beginnen, ist alles verloren. Wir sind dazu verdammt, ihn nicht zu verstehen. Wie also können wir ihn noch auffassen?

Die Antwort lautet, dass der Raum kein bloßer Hintergrund der menschlichen Aktivität ist; er ist ihr *eingeschrieben*. Bewegung zum Beispiel ist im Wesentlichen linear. Interaktion verlangt einen konvexen (jeder kann jeden sehen), zweidimensionalen Raum. Die räumliche Erfahrung besonders in Städten wird von spitzen Figuren mit klar definierten Eigenschaften bestimmt, die wir *Isovisten* nennen. Wenn wir nun Raum gestalten, dann tun wir dies auf eine Art und Weise, die all das widerspiegelt, wodurch der Raum, den wir erzeugen, vermenschlicht ist. Hier finden wir also einen geeigneten Ausgangspunkt, wenn wir den Raum und den Zusammenhang dazu, wie Menschen im Raum agieren, analysieren wollen.

Nachdem wir uns dies vergegenwärtigt haben, können wir uns nun der Analyse räumlicher Muster widmen, welche Objekte im Raum erzeugen. Wenn wir uns zum Beispiel an einem beliebigen Punkt innerhalb des räumlichen Systems befinden, das wir betrachtet haben, so werden wir eine Reihe linearer Wege erkennen, welche durch die Eckpunkte der Blöcke erzeugt werden. Wenn wir nun jedes Paar benachbarter Eckpunkte nehmen, sie durch eine Linie verbinden und anschließend die Linie verlängern, bis sie auf einen anderen Block stößt oder das System verlässt, so gelangen wir zu einer *reinen Linien-Abbildung* – mehr oder weniger der Menge aller möglicher linearer Wege durch das System.

Nun färben wir jede der Linien von Rot bis Blau, je nachdem, wie wenige Linien wir passieren müssen, um von ihr zu *jeder* anderen Linie zu gelangen. Eine rote Linie benötigt dabei wenige und wir sagen deshalb, sie ist in das System *integriert*, während eine blaue Linie viele benötigt und wir sie deshalb als von dem System *segregiert* bezeichnen.

Tatsächlich bringen wir damit ein Muster oder eine *Struktur* der linearen Einbindung in das System ans Licht, welches widerspiegelt, wie einfach oder komplex das System als eine Menge möglicher Wege von jedem einzelnen Punkt aus zu jedem anderen erscheint. *Reine Linien-Abbildungen* haben sich als äußerst leistungsfähig herausgestellt, wenn es darum geht, wirkliche Bewegungsmuster in komplexen Arbeitsumgebungen nachzuweisen.

Im Anschluss können wir einen Eliminationsalgorithmus anwenden, um zu dem zu gelangen, was wir die *minimale Linien-Abbildung* nennen – die geringste Anzahl an Linien, welche durch alle Räume des Systems reichen. Wie wir sehen werden, sind minimale Linien-Abbildungen von Städten tatsächlich sehr wesentliche Strukturen, welche die räumliche Architektur ganzer Städte und Regionen aufdecken können.

Während die reinen und minimalen Linien-Abbildungen die lineare, eindimensionale Struktur des Raumes behandeln, befasst die *visuelle Integrations-Analyse* sich mit Sichtfeldern in zwei Dimensionen. Das Rot in der rechten Abbildung zeigt, wie wenige Pixel verschoben werden müssen, um jedes andere Pixel in dem System sehen zu können. Die roten, visuell integrierten Bereiche tendieren dazu, lineare Blicke in verschiedene Richtungen zu lenken. Diese Arten der Analyse nennen wir *konfigurativ*, da sie räumlichen Elementen Werte zuordnen, die von dem Verhältnis dieses Elementes zu jedem anderen Element innerhalb des Systems abhängig sind.

*Space Syntax* als eine Reihe von Techniken befasst sich also mit

- der Anwendung *konfigurativer Analysen* auf verschiedene *Darstellungen* des Raumes: Räume, konvexe Räume, Linien, Straßenabschnitte, Isovisten – selbst Punkten im Raum;
- der auf dieser Analyse beruhenden Ermittlung von *Strukturen* innerhalb der räumlichen Muster;
- und der Suche nach wahrnehmbaren funktionalen Entsprechungen zu diesen räumlichen Mustern.

Diese Techniken kommen, wie mein Titel es andeutet, von einem auf den Raum bezogenen Standpunkt aus betrachtet einer Art *Denkmaschine* der Architektur gleich. Mit ihnen können wir

- *kulturelle* Muster ermitteln,
- dem architektonischen Raum zugrunde liegende *Tiefenstrukturen* ans Licht bringen,
- klare *Struktur-Funktions-Zusammenhänge* aufzeigen,
- mit theoretischen Ideen *experimentieren*,
- Entwürfe *simulieren*, um zu sehen, wie sie in einem bestimmten Kontext funktionieren würden – und sogar
- *räumliche Gesetze* für den Zusammenhang zwischen der Gestalt und der Verortung von Objekten und der daraus resultierenden Gestalt des Raumes ermitteln.

Beispielsweise können wir kulturelle Muster im häuslichen Raum nachweisen. Indem wir den Raum dahingehend definieren, wie alle anderen Räume sich zu ihm verhalten und wie jeder Raum sich zu allen anderen verhält, und indem wir diese Beziehungen durch Beispiele erforschen, können wir eine klare und kulturell variable *räumliche Bedeutung* der Idee der *Funktion* erkennen. Ein *Form-Funktions-Zusammenhang* besteht, weil die Funktion durch ihre Platzierung innerhalb der Anlage als ein Ganzes *räumlich umgesetzt* worden ist. Damit

kann *Space Syntax* selbst in einfachen Fällen aufzeigen, wie den Vorstellungen der Funktion eine *räumliche Bedeutung* innerhalb der kulturellen Baupraxis zukommt.

Oder nehmen wir einen anderen Fall. Links in Abbildung 2 sind die Bewegungsspuren von 100 Menschen dargestellt, welche die Tate Britain Galerie betreten und sich dort zehn Minuten lang bewegen. Die rechte Seite zeigt eine *visuelle Integrations-Analyse*. Es ist unschwer zu erkennen, dass die beiden Muster einander stark ähneln. Dieser Zusammenhang ist statistisch einfach nachzuweisen, indem den Bereichen mit einem Bewegungsfluss räumliche Werte zugewiesen werden. Dabei entsteht eine Übereinstimmung von etwa 70%. Die Besucher nutzen den räumlichen Aufbau als ihre wichtigste Orientierungshilfe.

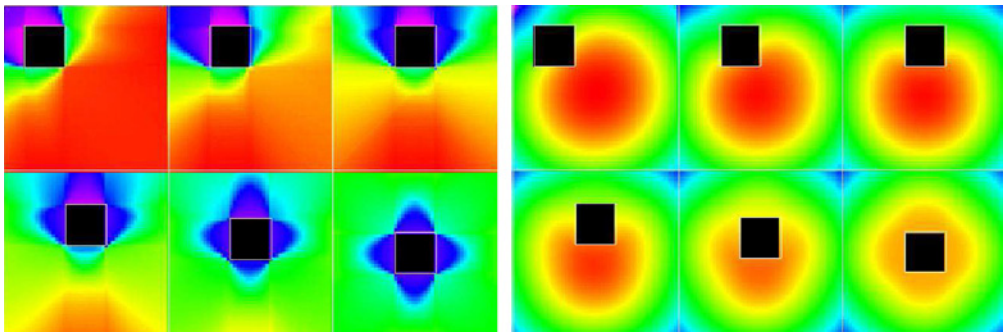
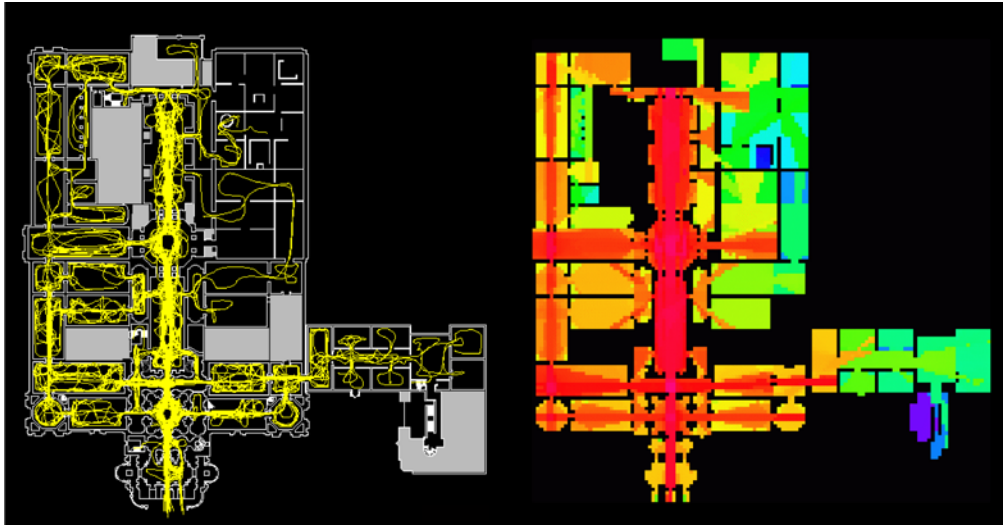
Mit einer solchen Analyse eröffnet sich uns ein leistungsfähiges Entwurfswerkzeug, da wir die Analyse nun benutzen können, um die Auswirkungen von Veränderungen zu untersuchen, indem wir lediglich zu zeichnen und neu zu analysieren brauchen. Diese Studie war Teil des Umbaus der Galerie, die in den späten Neunzigern durchgeführt wurde und wird nun benutzt, um eine zusätzliche Erweiterung zu planen.

Diese beiden Beispiele zeigen zwei deutliche Potenziale für den Zusammenhang zwischen der Raumkonfiguration und der Funktionalität in der Architektur auf. Wir können den Raum benutzen, um soziale Muster zu *reflektieren* und sie so aufrechtzuerhalten – dies nennen wir den *konservativen* Gebrauch von Raum. Wir konnten ihn an dem Haus beobachten, in dem der komplexe Raum benutzt wurde, um innerhalb des Raumes ein Bild von existierenden kulturellen Mustern wiederzugeben.

Oder wir können den Raum nutzen, um *neue* soziale Potenziale zu *erzeugen* – was wir den *generativen* Gebrauch von Raum nennen. Dies konnten wir an dem Fall der Galerie beobachten, in dem die Gestalt des komplexen Raumes neue, unerwartete Muster des Mitvorhandenseins im Raum erzeugte. Beide sind, wie wir sehen werden, entscheidend für die räumliche Architektur von Städten.

### **Die Gesetze räumlicher Muster**

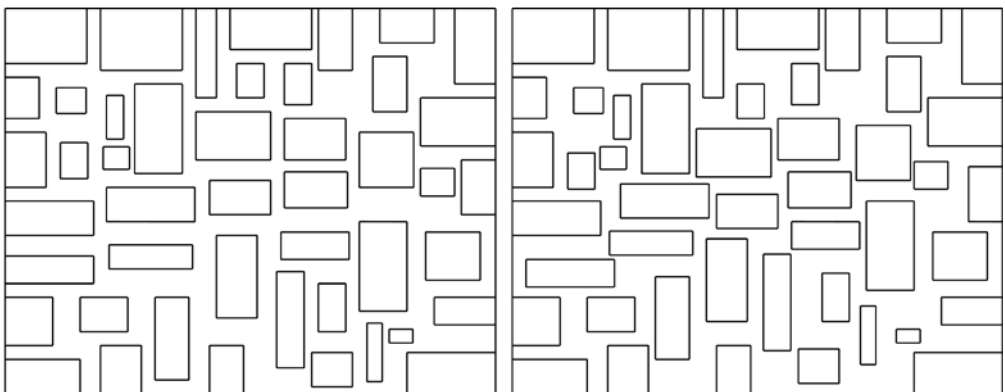
Bevor wir uns jedoch damit befassen, wie wir Städte als komplexe räumliche Objekte analysieren können, müssen wir die wahrscheinlich *grundlegende Behauptung* der *Space Syntax* nachweisen, diejenige, auf welche alle anderen sich gewissermaßen stützen. Sie lautet, dass *die Entstehung räumlicher Muster durch die Positionierung und Gestaltung von Objekten einfachen Gesetzen unterworfen ist*. Dies sind keine Gesetze, welche den Menschen in irgendeiner Hinsicht vorschreiben, was sie tun sollen, sondern sie nehmen die Form an: *Wenn*



*Oben: Abb. 2.*

*Mitte: Abb. 3.*

*Unten: Abb. 4.*





*wir die Objekte auf diese Art und Weise behandeln, dann geht daraus jenes es umgebende räumliche Muster hervor.* Diese einfachen, aber alles durchdringenden räumlichen Gesetze können nur aufgedeckt werden, indem wir in Erfahrung bringen, wie der Raum sich konfiguratив analysieren lässt; das heißt, indem die Beziehungen aller wie auch immer definierter räumlichen Elemente zueinander und zu allen anderen betrachtet werden.

Wir stellen zum Beispiel fest, dass eine ungestörte Sichtbeziehung innerhalb eines Raumes nicht dasselbe ist wie seine geometrische Grundfläche. Wenn wir eine Abtrennung in einer Reihe von Zellen aus der Mitte hinaus zum Rand hin verschieben, so erhöhen sich zwar die *Sichtbeziehungen* von jeder Zelle zu allen anderen, die Gesamtfläche jedoch bleibt natürlich dieselbe. Beide Ergebnisse gehen aus der einfachen Tatsache hervor, dass wir die Anzahl der Punkte zu jeder Seite der Blockierung *quadrieren* müssen, um die Sicht- oder Erreichbarkeitsbeziehungen zu messen.

Dieses ‚Gesetz der zweiten Potenz‘ bringt entscheidende architektonische Auswirkungen mit sich. Wenn wir beispielsweise ein Objekt aus der Ecke in die Mittelachse und anschließend in das Zentrum eines umfassten Raumes bewegen, dann *nimmt die visuelle Integration* (links in Abbildung 3), welche sich dadurch definiert, mit wie wenigen Schritten wir alle Punkte mit allen anderen visuell verbinden können (rot bedeutet wenige Schritte), *ab*. Ein Objekt in der Mitte eines Raumes versperrt die Sichtbeziehungen von allen Punkten zu allen anderen *stärker* als ein Objekt, das in einer Ecke platziert wird.

Dasselbe gilt für die *metrische Integration* (rechts in Abbildung 3), definiert durch die Summe der kürzesten Wege zwischen allen Punktpaaren innerhalb des umgebenden Raumes, welche zunimmt, wenn wir das Hindernis aus der Ecke in die Mitte bewegen. Um von allen Punkten zu allen anderen zu gelangen, müssen wir uns im Durchschnitt weiter bewegen, wenn ein Objekt sich in der Mitte befindet, als wenn es am Rand oder in der Ecke platziert wäre.

Für die Gestalt trifft dasselbe zu: Je weiter wir sie in die Länge ziehen und dabei die Grundfläche konstant halten, desto stärker verringern wir die Sichtbeziehungen und vergrößern gleichzeitig die Länge der Wege innerhalb des umgebenden Raumes. Die Auswirkungen eines Hindernisses mit einer langen und einer kurzen Seite sind größere Störungen der Sicht- und Erreichbarkeitsbeziehungen innerhalb des Systems aus dem einfachen Grund, dass, bei gleicher Grundfläche, die Summe der Quadrate der langen und der kurzen Seite größer ist als die der beiden Quadrate der Kantenlänge eines gleichseitigen Hindernisses. Das Gesetz der zweiten Potenz spielt eine wesentliche Rolle dabei, wie Stadtblöcke den städtischen Raum strukturieren.

Eine jedoch noch entscheidendere Eigenschaft des Stadtraumes ist die *Linearität*. Dies lässt sich verdeutlichen, indem wir *Space Syntax* als experimentelles Werkzeug verwenden, um eine einfache Frage zu beantworten: Welche Art der Anordnung und Gestalt von Blöcken lässt einen Raum urban erscheinen?

Links in Abbildung 4 stellen wir Gebäudeblöcke zu einem mehr oder weniger urbanen Gefüge zusammen, mit linearen Verbindungen zwischen den Räumen, sodass wir sehen können, wohin wir gehen und wo wir uns befinden. Rechts behalten wir dieselben Blöcke bei, verrücken sie dabei jedoch leicht, um die linearen Verbindungen zwischen den Räumen zu unterbrechen. Das linke Bild weckt den Eindruck, als könnten wir uns in ihm zurechtfinden, während das rechte labyrinthischer aussieht, und das, obwohl die Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Anordnungen relativ gering sind.

Wenn wir anschließend die *visuelle Integration* analysieren – die visuelle Entfernung zwischen jedem Punkt und allen anderen – und die Werte von rot bis blau dabei wie zuvor verteilen, dann sehen wir, dass der linke Fall eine Art Hauptstraße mit Seiten- und Nebenstraßen bezeichnet, dass also eine Struktur des urbanen Typs entstanden ist. Der rechte Fall jedoch hat sowohl an *Struktur* als auch am *Grad* der Sichtbeziehungen verloren. Obwohl die Veränderungen geringfügig sind, fühlt es sich wie ein Labyrinth an. Wir können zwar sehen, wo wir uns gerade befinden, nicht jedoch, wo das sein könnte.

Das Ergebnis von elektronischen Agenten, die sich innerhalb des Systems frei bewegen, ist eindrucksvoll, wenngleich naheliegend. In Abbildung 5 lassen wir 10 000 elektronische Agenten mit Frontalblick sich frei im Raum bewegen. Dabei benutzen wir eine von Alasdair Turner entwickelte Software. Die Agenten suchen sich ein zufälliges Ziel innerhalb ihres Blickfeldes, bewegen sich 3 Pixel in dessen Richtung, halten dann an und wiederholen den Vorgang.

Links ‚finden‘ die Bewegungsspuren der Agenten die Struktur der visuellen Integration. Rechts wandern sie überall entlang und neigen dazu, in breiteren Räumen hängenzubleiben. Dieses Ergebnis resultiert allein aus dem Aufbau, da alles andere identisch ist. Doch wie verhält es sich mit den Menschen?

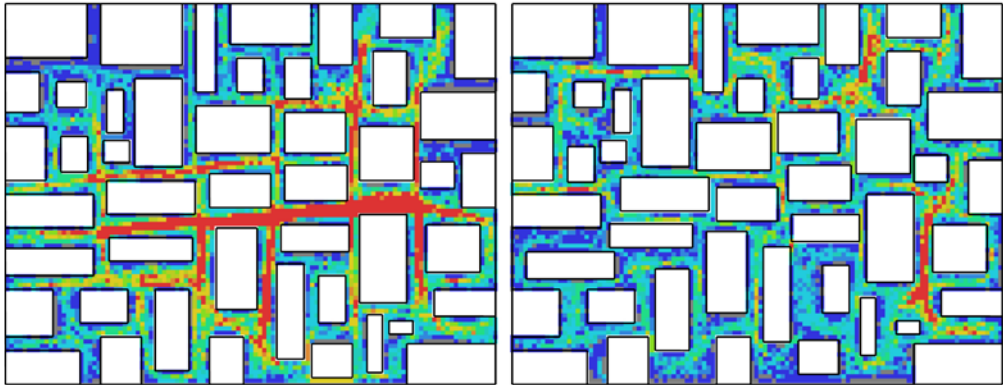
Auf diesen Zusammenhang beschränkt, beruht die *Verständlichkeit* eines räumlichen Netzwerkes *beinahe gänzlich* auf dessen *linearer* Struktur. Sowohl Feldstudien (Hillier et al 1987) als auch Experimente (Conroy-Dalton 2001) deuten darauf hin, dass dies auch auf Menschen zutrifft. So verwendete Conroy-Dalton beispielsweise ein linearisiertes Netzwerk des urbanen Typs (links oben) und bat Probanden, innerhalb einer immersiven 3D-Welt vom linken Rand aus auf den ‚Stadtplatz‘ zuzusteuern und dann wieder ihren Weg zurück zu finden. Wie ihre Bewegungsspuren zeigen, gelang es ihnen, vernünftige Wege zu finden. Anschlie-

ßend jedoch verrückte sie die (identischen) Blöcke etwas, um die lineare Struktur zu brechen und die Verständlichkeit zu reduzieren (rechts oben) und wiederholte das Experiment. Die Probanden empfanden den veränderten Aufbau als labyrinthisch und viele von ihnen wanderten bei ihrem Versuch, dieselbe Aufgabe zu wiederholen, quer durch das gesamte System.

Wenden wir uns also der Linearität von städtischen Netzwerken zu. Wenn wir einen Ausschnitt von Tokyo betrachten, dann ist das erste, was uns ins Auge sticht, die *Durchgängigkeit der Linien*, das soll heißen von Linien, die sich durch nahezu gerade Verbindungen ergänzen. Wenn wir uns an einer von ihnen entlangbewegen, dann werden wir sehr wahrscheinlich an ihrem Ende auf eine andere stoßen und dann auf eine wieder andere. Dies passiert in allen Maßstabsebenen, doch in jedem Maßstab sind die hiesigen Linien länger als solche, denen diese Art der Eckverbindung fehlt. Von der Wahrscheinlichkeit her können wir sagen, je länger eine Linie ist, desto sicherer ist es, dass sie in einer nahezu geraden Verbindung zu einer anderen Linie enden wird.

Wir sehen ebenfalls eine große Anzahl kleinerer Linien mit beinahe rechtwinkligen Verbindungen, die ein örtlicheres, rasterartiges Muster erzeugen. Findet man eine von ihnen, dann ist es wiederum sehr wahrscheinlich, dass mehrere andere sich in der unmittelbaren Umgebung befinden. Ebenso können wir sagen, je kürzer die Linie, desto wahrscheinlicher ist es, dass sie in einem rechten oder nahezu rechten Winkel endet. Dies sind die genau entgegengesetzten Eigenschaften wie wir sie in streng formalen Städten wie Brasilia oder dem vor-kolumbianischen Teotihuacana finden würden, in denen die längsten Linien in rechten Winkeln vor den bedeutsamsten Gebäuden enden. Organische Netze besitzen die umgekehrten Eigenschaften.

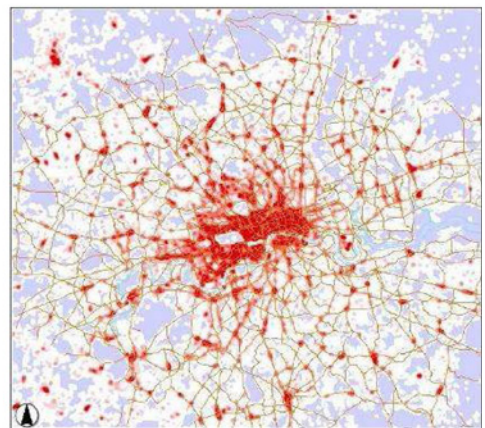
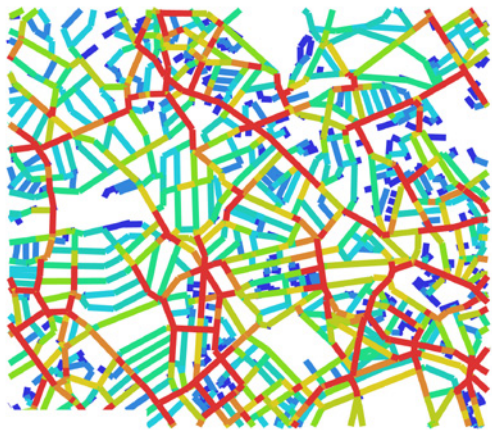
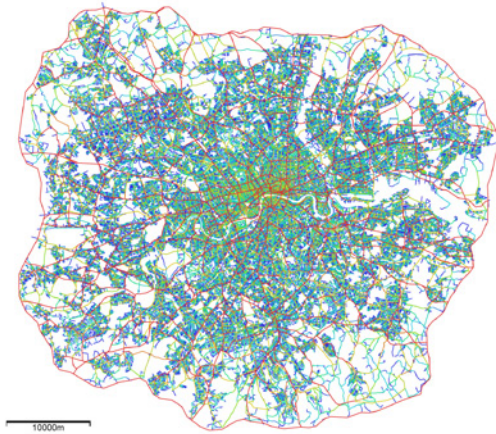
Trotz der historischen und funktionalen Unterschiede können für London genau die gleichen beiden Aussagen getroffen werden. Generell halten wir es für geometrische wie auch organische Städte für zutreffend. Wir können sagen, dass es ihre *Geometrie* ist, durch die Städte zur einer *dualen* Struktur von dominanten *vordergründigen Netzwerken* gelangen, welche durch eine lineare Durchgängigkeit (und als Resultat daraus einer *Durchgängigkeit der Wege*) gekennzeichnet ist; und einem *hintergründigen Netzwerk*, dessen eher lokaler Charakter von kürzeren Linien und einer geringeren linearen Durchgängigkeit geprägt ist. Dies ist die allgemeine Form der Stadt. Und das ist der Grund, weshalb wir feststellen können, dass Städte in jedem Maßstab, vom lokalen Gebiet bis hin zur gesamten Stadt, aus einer sehr geringen Anzahl langer Linien und einer sehr großen Anzahl kurzer Linien aufgebaut sind, was dazu geführt hat, dass man im Rahmen der minimalen Linien-Darstellung von einer *maßstabslosen* Eigenschaft



Oben: Abb. 5.

Mitte: Abb. 6.

Unten: Abb. 7.



von Städten spricht (Hillier 2002, Carvalho & Oenn 2004). Das bedeutet, dass, wo auch immer wir uns aufhalten mögen, wir nie allzu weit von einer Linie entfernt sind, die um einiges länger ist als diejenige, auf der wir uns gerade befinden.

### **Urbane Modelle**

Wie also funktioniert *Space Syntax* auf der urbanen Ebene? Städte sind eine große Ansammlung von Gebäuden, die durch ein räumliches Netzwerk zusammengehalten werden: dem Straßennetz. Dieses Netzwerk ist das Grundgerüst der Stadt. Es ist das, was das Ganze zusammenhält. Es besitzt eine *Architektur*, das heißt eine gewisse *Geometrie* und eine Art *Topologie* bzw. ein bestimmtes Muster der Verbindungen.

In der Vergangenheit wurde diesem Netzwerk weder durch die Theorie noch durch Untersuchungen besondere Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet, weil niemand wusste, wie dies anzugehen sei. Urbanistische Modelle beispielsweise haben eine planerische Perspektive eingenommen und teilten die Stadt in Bereiche ein, um sie zu analysieren. Solche Modelle haben zwar ihre Berechtigung, aber sie werden *der architektonischen Betrachtungsebene nicht gerecht*, auf der die Entscheidungen für realistische Projekte getroffen werden. Und sie führten auch dazu, dass Verkehrsplaner glaubten und wir uns davon überzeugen ließen, dass *Bewegung vom Ort unabhängig sei* – was wahrscheinlich der Hauptfehler des C20 gewesen ist.

*Space Syntax* betrachtet *zuerst* die Architektur des Straßennetzes. Es beginnt auf der Ebene der einzelnen *Straßenabschnitte* zwischen den Verkehrskreuzungen und bedient sich einfacher Mathematik, um deren *Geometrie* und *Typologie* zu analysieren. Daraus versucht es dann abzuleiten, welche *Bewegung* im jeweiligen Abschnitt stattfinden würde, wenn die Menschen sich von allen Teilen des Netzes aus zu allen anderen bewegen würden.

Es misst das *Bewegungspotenzial* auf unterschiedlichen *Maßstäben der Bewegung*, von der lokalen zur globalen, und stellt dabei unterschiedliche Mutmaßungen darüber an, wie die Menschen *Entfernungen* einschätzen, wenn sie ihre Wege und Ziele festlegen. Auf diese Weise liefert es uns eine ergiebige Matrix an Messwerten, mit der wir die *Struktur* und die *Funktion* des Netzwerkes erforschen können. Die Analyse unterscheidet zwischen verschiedenen Arten von *Strukturen* innerhalb des Netzwerkes, globalen und lokalen, und lässt diese sichtbar werden, indem Abschnitten mit einem hohen Bewegungspotenzial ein *roter* und jenen mit einem geringeren ein *blauer* Farbton zugewiesen wird.

Links in Abbildung 6 sehen wir die Bewegungspotenziale jedes einzelnen der 285 000 Abschnitte Londons innerhalb des M25-Rings, auf die *großmaßstäbliche*

*Bewegung* bezogen. Darin werden die tatsächlichen Hauptverkehrsadern vorhergesagt. Rechts sehen wir in einem wesentlich feinerem Maßstab die Struktur des *lokalen Bewegungspotenzials* für bis zu 750 Meter. Das rote Muster, das zu erkennen ist, stellt sozusagen Londons ‚urbane Dörfer‘ und die Verbindungen zwischen diesen dar.

### **Netzwerk und Bewegung**

Dieser ‚Das-Netzwerk-zuerst‘-Ansatz hat zu einer entscheidenden Einsicht in die Funktionsweise der Städte geführt: Das Netzwerk selbst bestimmt in der ihm eigenen Architektur die Bewegungsflüsse der Stadt. Untersuchungen zeigen, dass zwischen 60% und 80% aller Bewegungsflüsse auf den Straßen durch die Struktur des Netzwerkes bedingt sind, das heißt durch das mathematisch ermittelte Bewegungspotenzial. Dies bedeutet *nicht*, dass der Raum individuelle Bewegungen determiniert. Es bedeutet lediglich, dass wenn Menschen unter freiem Willen sich von überall her überall hin bewegen, einige Orte stärker frequentiert werden als andere.

Indem wir jedoch tatsächliche Bewegungsmuster in Städten untersuchten, konnten wir nachweisen, dass die Menschen sich fortbewegen, indem sie sich anhand der Geometrie der Winkel innerhalb des Netzwerkes orientieren und nicht anhand der metrischen Entfernungen. Das bedeutet, dass wir das Bewegungspotenzial annähernd aus der Architektur eines Netzwerk ableiten können – natürlich auch für neue Entwürfe, die in dieses Netzwerk eingefügt werden. Entscheidender jedoch ist, dass dieses Netz, sobald sein Einfluss auf die Bewegung einmal verstanden ist, den Weg zu einem neuen theoretischen Verständnis der Stadt bahnt, zu einer Stadt als ein sich selbst organisierendes System, und zwar durch das, was wir einen Stadt-generierenden Prozess nennen. Rechts in Abbildung 7 sehen wir die 168 größten Zentren Londons innerhalb der M25. Die linke Struktur erzeugt die rechte.

Weil die Struktur des Netzwerkes Flüsse generiert, bestimmt es gleichzeitig auch die Gestalt der Grundnutzungsmuster, da Nutzungen, die nach einer Bewegung verlangen, zu jenen Gebieten streben, die aufgrund des Netzes bereits durch eine starke Bewegung gekennzeichnet sind, während andere Nutzungen, darunter oft das Wohnen, in bewegungsärmere Bereiche des Netzwerkes abwandern. Zusammen mit Rückkopplungs- und Multiplikatoreffekten – sobald ein Geschäft auftaucht, folgen weitere – ergibt dies den grundlegenden ‚Stadt-generierenden Prozess‘, aus dem Städte hervorgehen, von einfachen Gebäudeansammlungen bis hin zu lebendigen Großstädten mit geschäftigen und gemäßigten Bereichen, häufig in einem dichten Nebeneinander und mit Abstufungen der Gebiete entsprechend der Tiefe, mit der sie in das großmaßstäbliche Netz der Stadt eingebunden sind.

Dies führt uns zu einer neuen Definition der räumlichen Form von Städten. Städte im Allgemeinen – und nicht bloß ‚organische‘ – entwickeln sich eigenständig in ein vordergründiges Netzwerk miteinander verknüpfter Zentren, auf allen Maßstabsebenen, von ein paar Geschäften und einem Café bis hin zu ganzen Teilstädten, die wiederum eingebettet sind in ein hintergründiges Netzwerk, das zum Großteil aus Wohngebieten besteht. Gute Städte, so behaupten wir, besitzen eine sie durchdringende Zentralität, indem diese Zentralität sich diffus durch das gesamte Netzwerk zieht. Dieses Muster ist dabei viel komplexer, als es in Theorien der *Polyzentralität* angenommen wird. Die durchdringende Zentralität ist räumlich nachhaltig, weil sie impliziert, dass man sich immer in der Nähe eines kleinen Zentrums und nicht allzu weit von einem deutlich größeren entfernt befindet, wo auch immer man sich gerade aufhält.

### **Anwendungen**

Lassen Sie mich Ihnen zeigen, wie wir diese Methoden, immer in der begleitenden Theorie eingebettet, auf reale Entwurfsprojekte anwenden. Zuerst erarbeiten wir ein Modell des städtischen Kontextes für eine vorgeschlagene Entwicklung – heutzutage oft ein komplettes Stadtmodell oder gar das einer ganzen Region; mittlerweile hat sich ein ziemlich großer Bestand an Städten angesammelt.

Anschließend prüfen wir das Modell mittels existierender Bewegungs- und Flächennutzungsmuster, oft indem wir die Daten dafür selbst erheben. Anhand des überprüften Modells können wir dann mit den Planern in skizzenhaften Entwurfsversuchen zusammenarbeiten – dabei tun wir so dies und das. Wir übertragen die räumliche Struktur des vorgeschlagenen Entwurfes buchstäblich in das Modell und berechnen es dann neu. Durch diesen Prozess entstehen übrigens beinahe immer auch neue Ideen, welche aus der syntaktischen Analyse hervorgehen und die zu Beginn des Projektes noch nicht bedacht worden waren.

Diesen Prozess des Einbringens direkt wahrgenommener Informationen in das Modell nennen wir *ortsspezifische Untersuchung*. Das bedeutet, dass der Entwurf sich auf ein tatsächliches Verständnis dessen stützt, was momentan am Standort oder in dessen näheren Umgebung vor sich geht. Dies ist eine weitere Neuerung eines auf Nachweisen beruhenden Entwerfens, von dem wir denken, dass es zunehmend an Bedeutung gewinnen wird.

Ich werde mich nun kurz dem Beitrag zuwenden, den *Space Syntax* zu realen Projekten beisteuern kann. Um die Breite der Maßstäblichkeit zu verdeutlichen, in welcher *Space Syntax* heute angewendet wird, werde ich mich an drei Schlagwörter halten: Räume erzeugen, urbane Verknüpfungen herstellen und Städte generieren.

Die Klärung der räumlichen Fragen in einem schon frühen Stadium ist sehr oft der Kernbeitrag, den *Space Syntax* zu einem Projekt beisteuern kann. Unter dem Stichwort *Räume erzeugen* ist es das, was für so überaus erfolgreiche Projekte der *räumlichen Neustrukturierung* wie dem Trafalgar Square in London geleistet worden ist. Die Änderungen des Entwurfes kamen durch die *Space-Syntax*-Analyse zustande, die nachweisen konnte, welche Änderungen jenen großen Unterschied ausmachen würden, der dann tatsächlich in den beiden Plätzen zutage trat.

Das Hauptproblem des Trafalgar Square war, dass der Platz lediglich einen Freiraum als Ziel darbot, keinen Durchgangsraum. Die kleinmaßstäbliche Komplexität der Wege, bedingt durch die äußere Anlage des Platzes, bedeutete, dass es keine natürliche Bewegung gab, die den Freiraum des Platzes mit einbezog, obgleich unzählige Menschen sich in dessen unmittelbaren Umgebung aufhielten. Das Ergebnis war ein steriler Ort. Der Schlüssel zur Antwort bestand darin, die beiden Ebenen des Platzes in eine durchgehende Fußgängerzone zu verwandeln, verbunden durch eine breite, zentrale Treppe, die gleichzeitig eine diagonale Bewegung über den Platz anregen würde. Die Veränderung, die diese recht einfachen Veränderungen für die Funktionsweise des Platzes mit sich brachten, war unglaublich. Darin wird deutlich, dass bereits einfache räumliche Unstrukturierungen aufgehen können.

Unter dem Stichwort *Verknüpfungen herstellen* steht das Projekt der Millennium Brücke in London, abermals ein Foster-Projekt. Hier lautete die Kernfrage, *ob die Menschen die Brücke benutzen würden* (die Raumplaner waren überzeugt, dass sie es nicht tun würden). Dabei ging es nicht bloß um die Touristen, die zwischen der St. Pauls Kathedrale und der Tate Modern hin und her pendeln würden, sondern darum, ob diese Verbindung *von Stadtteil zu Stadtteil* eine wirtschaftliche Entwicklung zu beiden Seiten des Flusses mit sich bringen würde. *Space Syntax* konnte nachweisen, was für einen Unterschied die Verbindung zwischen den beiden Stadtteilen ausmachen würde und somit abermals, dass einfache räumliche Unstrukturierungen aufgehen.

Unter dem Stichwort *Städte generieren* werden komplexe Muster urbaner Sachverhalte auf der Grundlage einer intelligenten funktionalen Analyse räumlicher Netzwerke zusammengeführt. Zu diesem Zweck wird *Space Syntax* zunehmend als Werkzeug der Masterplanung eingesetzt, und das nicht nur auf der Ebene eines Stadtgebietes in seinem breiteren Kontext, wie es für das Elephant and Castle der Fall gewesen ist, sondern auch auf der Ebene der Stadt und ihrem Umland.

Zum Beispiel war *Space Syntax Ltd.* Projektleiter für die Erstellung eines neuen Masterplans für Jeddah in Saudi-Arabien. Das Hauptproblem für die exis-



tierende Stadt war ein zweigeteiltes: das Wachstum dichter und armer, ungeplanter Gebiete, losgelöst von der urbanen Grundstruktur, und der fortschreitende Verfall des historischen Zentrums, zum Teil als Ergebnis aus dem ungesteuerten Siedlungswachstum in der Peripherie.

Hierbei handelt es sich um eine neue Art der Masterplanung, welche die Fähigkeiten der durch *Space Syntax* erstellten urbanen Modelle unter Beweis stellt:

- das sehr präzise Zusammenführen aller möglicher Arten urbaner Informationen – Bewegung, Flächennutzung, Dichte, und so weiter – auf der Grundlage einer funktionell intelligenten Raumanalyse des Straßennetzes und deren Anwendung in einer neuen Form eines *auf Nachweisen beruhenden Entwerfens*,
- die Möglichkeit, *durch alle urbanen Maßstäbe hindurch* mit demselben Grad an Präzision sowohl auf der Mikro- als auch der Makroebene zu arbeiten,
- die Wissenschaftlichkeit in den Entwurf mit einzubeziehen, und zwar auf eine Art und Weise, die dem Entwerfenden nicht vorschreibt, was er zu tun hat, ihm jedoch verstehen hilft, was er tut,
- und Theorien zu entwickeln, die den Lösungsbereich nicht einschränken, sondern ihn vielmehr zu neuen Überlegungen über Entwurfs- und Planungsprobleme hin aufweiten.



## **Michael Speaks**

### University of Kentucky

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*Als Lehrer, Forscher und Herausgeber hat Speaks in zahlreichen Institutionen innerhalb der Vereinigten Staaten wie auch im Ausland mitgewirkt, darunter*

*die Technische Universität Delft, die Yale School of Arts, die Harvard University, die Columbia University, die University of Michigan, das Berlage Institut in Rotterdam und die University of California, Los Angeles.*

*Außerhalb des Hörsaals hat der in Los Angeles lebende Schriftsteller und Kritiker sich in Vorträgen und Veröffentlichungen zur Kunst, Architektur, der Stadt- und Szenarienplanung geäußert. In jüngeren Diskussionen um die Rolle von Innovation und Prototypenentwicklung für das Design nimmt er eine zentrale Position ein und hat eine Vielzahl einflussreicher Aufsätze geschrieben, welche auf die Bedeutung dessen verweisen, was er eine „Design Intelligence“ nennt.*

# NEUE WERTE EINES NEUEN DESIGNS

Von den fatalen Auswirkungen der Wirtschaftskrise blieben auch das Entwerfen, die kreative Branche und ganz besonders die Architektur nicht verschont. In den vergangenen Jahren sahen sich große wie auch kleine Architekturbüros dazu gezwungen, ihre Kapazitäten zu verringern und ihre Geschäfts- und Arbeitsstrategien zu überdenken. Weniger glückliche Büros, selbst solche, die auf eine lange Vergangenheit zurückblicken konnten, mussten ihre Türen gar gänzlich schließen. Aber auch die Architektur- und Design-Ausbildung hatte unter der Situation zu leiden. Sowohl öffentliche als auch private Universitäten fanden und finden sich auch heute noch mit Etatkürzungen, Einstellungsstopps und reduzierten Zuschüssen konfrontiert, während die Politik damit beschäftigt ist, die staatlichen und kommunalen Haushalte wieder ins Gleichgewicht zu bringen. Eine der entscheidendsten Konsequenzen der Wirtschaftskrise jedoch ist, dass in der Debatte um den Wert von Design und Architektur immer seltener der auserlesene, stilprägende Design-Gegenstand im Mittelpunkt steht und stattdessen nun häufiger der wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Beitrag, den das Design und die Architektur zu leisten imstande sind, in den Vordergrund rückt. Und das liegt genau daran, dass beinahe jeder – besonders die Architekten – einzusehen beginnen, dass wir in diesen Zeiten neue Werte innerhalb des Designs weit dringender benötigen als neue Design-Beiträge.

Die in dieser Hinsicht wahrscheinlich vielversprechendste Entwicklung, und zwar eine, welche die Praxis und die Ausbildung gleichermaßen betrifft, ist die aufkeimende Erkenntnis, dass Design nicht nur ein bloßes Produkt ist – ein Tisch, ein Gebäude, ein Stadtplan oder eine Landschaft – sondern dass es sich dabei ebenso sehr um einen kreativen Prozess handelt, der zugleich einen mächtigen Antrieb für die Entwicklung darstellt. Dies könnte der sprichwörtliche Silberstreif

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am Horizont sein, die Gelegenheit, eine Krise in eine Möglichkeit zu verwandeln. Dieser Wandel kann jedoch nur dann eintreten, wenn die Auszubildenden und die Ausübenden fähig sind, den gesellschaftlichen Aspekt dieses neuen Beitrags des Designs auch in die Praxis umzusetzen. In der Ausbildung – meinem eigenen Geschäfts- und Arbeitsfeld – waren die führenden Einrichtungen kurioserweise nicht die Design-Schulen, sondern vielmehr Schulen wie die *Rotman School of Management* in Toronto, Kanada, die *School of Advanced Military Studies* in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, und das *Hasso Plattner Institute of Design* der *School of Engineering* an der *Stanford University* in Palo Alto, CA. In all diesen Schulen ist das „entwurfsorientierte Denken“ zu einem festen Bestandteil des Lehrplans geworden, ein Ansatz, bei dem die spekulative Entwicklung von Prototypen angewendet wird, um sich auf kreative Weise mit komplexen Problemen aus den Bereichen der Wirtschaft, des Militärs und des Ingenieurbaus auseinanderzusetzen.

Dieser Ansatz ist deshalb für eine solch große Bandbreite verschiedenster Schulen entscheidend geworden, weil er ihnen eine strukturierte Möglichkeit zur Entwicklung von Neuerungen ermöglicht. Die Lösungen, welche dieses entwurfsorientierte Denken hervorbringt, lassen sich besser einschätzen, wenn man sie in Zusammenhang mit einer Unterscheidung setzt, die der Wirtschaftsexperte Peter Drucker vornimmt – der Unterscheidung zwischen einer Problemlösung, die eine Antwort auf ein Problem liefert, ohne es dabei infrage zu stellen und die somit auch keinen Neuwert beiträgt; und einer Innovation, die das eigentliche Problem untersucht und umformuliert und auf diesem Wege einen neuen Beitrag liefert – indem es neues Wissen und neue Ergebnisse hervorbringt, die aus dem ursprünglichen Problem nicht vorauszuahnen gewesen sind. Die Problemlösung formt das Bekannte, während die Innovation dem Unbekannten eine Existenz entlockt. Dementsprechend ist das entwurfsorientierte Denken ein „thinking by doing“, ein Denken-durch-Handeln, bei dem plausible Lösungen zu einem gegebenen Problem entwickelt, untersucht und umgeformt werden, sodass ein ständiger Prozess der Rückkoppelung entsteht, in dem das Problem die Lösung und die Lösung das Problem formt, bis schließlich das richtige Problem und die richtige Lösung aus

**Lösungen sind nicht immer endgültige Lösungen und häufig sind sie wichtiger, wenn es darum geht, uns zu einer klareren Definition des Problems zu verhelfen als zu einem Entwurf selbst.**

ihm hervorgehen. Diese Prototypen sind jedoch keine Mutmaßung, die aus der perfekten Idee des Entwerfenden bezüglich dessen, was der endgültige Entwurf *sein könnte* extrapoliert werden; es sind vielmehr „was-wäre-wenn“-Gedanken, welche der Entwerfende anwendet, um den Innovationsprozess selbst voranzutreiben. Er benutzt diese Prototypen, um so viele Faktoren wie möglich – Material, Kosten, Herstellung – zu „durchdenken“ und entsprechend anzupassen. Dabei werden nicht nur die Annahmen, welche während der Problemstellung getroffen werden, abgewandelt, sondern es wird auch mit jedem Prototypen ein neues Entwurfswissen, ein neues Verständnis des Entwurfes entwickelt, welches dann wiederum helfen kann, zukünftige Entwurfsaufgaben zu lösen.

Die wahrscheinlich beste Darstellung hierzu findet sich in Peter Rices wunderbarem, posthum veröffentlichten Buch *An Engineer Imagines* (1994), in dem er folgendes über die Entwicklung von Innovationen schreibt:

*Probably every solution put forward by an engineer has some unusual element, some feature that could be called innovative, but is not recognized because it is buried in an otherwise conventional solution. And if we examine the nature of these otherwise innovative or inventive elements, we will find that it is just the result of the engineer being intelligent or sensible about the way some detail has always been, and in so reassessing the problem from another point of view.<sup>1</sup>*

In diesem kurzen Abschnitt enthüllt Rice den Schlüssel zum Verständnis des Entwurfsprozesses eines Ingenieurs. Anstatt lediglich alternative Lösungen zu der

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1 Etwa: Wahrscheinlich jede Lösung, die von einem Ingenieur entwickelt wird, birgt das ein oder andere ungewöhnliche Element in sich, ein Charakteristikum, das innovativ genannt werden könnte, das jedoch nicht erkannt wird, weil es eingebettet ist in eine in jeder anderen Hinsicht konventionellen Lösung. Und wenn wir die Natur dieser innovativen oder erfinderischen Elemente untersuchen, so werden wir feststellen, dass es sich dabei lediglich um das Ergebnis eines Ingenieurs handelt, der klug oder vernünftig mit der Art und Weise umgeht, in der irgendein Detail seit jeher ausgeführt worden ist, und von dort ausgehend das Problem nun von einem anderen Blickpunkt aus überdenkt.

gegebenen Aufgabe zu entwickeln, überdenkt und überarbeitet der Ingenieur das Problem von einem gänzlich „anderen Blickpunkt aus“. Technische Probleme, sagt er, werden durch objektive Parameter geformt, sodass es zu jedem Problem nur eine Lösung gibt. Aus diesem Grund muss das Problem mit einem Verständnis angegangen werden, das aus der Kenntnis des Problems und der Art und Weise hervorgeht, wie es „seit jeher ausgeführt worden ist“, ebenso wie die Kenntnis und das Verständnis verschiedenster Lösungen zu einer Anzahl ähnlicher Probleme und der objektiven Parameter, welche diese formen, nötig sind.

Technische Innovationen entstehen nicht, weil Ingenieure sich auf die Suche nach innovativen Lösungen begeben, sagt Rice. Vielmehr ergeben sie sich aus der Formulierung und Umformulierung des Problems, welche der Ingenieur betreibt. Lösungen sind nicht immer endgültige Lösungen und häufig sind sie wichtiger, wenn es darum geht, dem Ingenieur zu einer klareren Definition des Problems zu verhelfen, als zu einem Entwurf selbst. Tatsächlich ist es genau dieser vernunftorientierte Ansatz, welcher die Einstellung eines Ingenieurs gegenüber einem Problem erst ausmacht. So wie jedes Problem von objektiven Parametern bestimmt wird, so sind auch diese Parameter durch einen jeweiligen Blickpunkt bestimmt. Und es sind eben diese Blickpunkte, welche der Ingenieur mit jeder vorgeschlagenen Lösung bedenkt und überdenkt, bis schließlich *das richtige Problem* daraus hervorgeht. Uns auf den Titel von Rices Buch berufend, könnten wir sagen, dass der Ingenieur sich alternative Lösungen „vorstellt“, welche aufdecken, was die Entwurfslösung in Abhängigkeit von den bei der Problemstellung berücksichtigten Parametern *sein könnte*. Indem er mit dem „Was-ist“ bricht zugunsten eines „Was-wäre-wenns“, benutzt der Ingenieur *den Entwurf*, um Probleme zu durchdenken und zu lösen. Mit jedem Problem, das der Ingenieur formuliert und löst, wird sein Wissen, mit welchen Parametern – mit welchen „Was-wäre-wenns“ – er auf welche Weise zu arbeiten hat, weiterentwickelt und ausgebaut, ganz gleich, ob es dabei zu einer Innovation kommt oder nicht. Selbst innerhalb des Bezugssystems eines einzigen Entwurfsproblems lassen jede Änderung der Parameter und die sich daraus ergebende Fragestellung und ihre Lösung das Wissen des Ingenieurs oder sein Verständnis eines Materials, einer Konstruktion oder eines Prozesses anwachsen. Auf diesem Wege schließlich reichen die Ergebnisse der Innovation über das unmittelbar vorliegende Problem hinaus und werden zu Werkzeugen eines neuen Entwurfsverständnisses, welche die Fähigkeit des Ingenieurs, innovative Lösungen zu entwickeln, weiter vorantreiben.

Rice bahnt uns den Weg zu der überraschenden Schlussfolgerung, dass es vielmehr der Entwurf ist, welcher die Innovation vorantreibt, als andersherum. Und es ist diese unglaublich beeindruckende Einsicht, welche den Schlüssel

**Design- und Architekturschulen haben die einzigartige Gelegenheit, die neuen Beiträge des Designs in einem neuen Handeln umzusetzen, das ebenso im Dienste ihrer Einrichtungen und Zielgruppen steht wie es auch den weiter gefassten wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Grundsätzen und Verantwortungen einer professionellen Entwurfspraxis gerecht wird.**

zur Entwicklung neuer Beiträge eines neuen Designs in sich birgt, besonders in Hinsicht auf die Entwurfsausbildung. Da staatliche und kommunale Etats infolge der Wirtschaftskrise immer knapper werden, müssen die Bildungseinrichtungen, speziell die öffentlich geförderten, wettbewerbsfähiger, innovativer und verantwortungsbewusster werden zugunsten jener Bürgerschaft, der zu dienen sie sich ursprünglich verpflichtet hatten. Design- und Architekturschulen haben die einzigartige Gelegenheit, diese neuen Beiträge des Designs in einem neuen Handeln umzusetzen, das ebenso im Dienste ihrer Einrichtungen und Zielgruppen steht wie es auch den weiter gefassten wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Grundsätzen und Verantwortungen einer professionellen Entwurfspraxis gerecht wird. Dieses Handeln zum Ausdruck zu bringen und weiterzuentwickeln, ob an einem Design Institut in Los Angeles, einem privaten College einer *Ivy League* Universität oder in einer öffentlich finanzierten staatlichen Einrichtung, zählt zu den größten Verantwortungen der Auszubildenden.

Wenn das Entwurfsergebnis nicht zwangsläufig als eine endgültige Lösung, nicht einmal notwendigerweise als eine Innovation für sich verstanden und stattdessen lediglich als konkretisierter und übergreifender Vorschlag in einer langen Reihen von Vorschlägen gesehen wird, die in ihrer unterschiedlichen Ausformulierung dazu beitragen, das eigentliche Problem näher zu umreißen, dann könnten beispielsweise auch einfachste Entwurfsprojekte unter der Obhut einer öffentlichen Universität zu einem entscheidenden Werkzeug der Problemanalyse heranwachsen, die schließlich innovativen und umfassenderen Projekten als Grundlage dienen kann. In diesem Zusammenhang können gänzlich unheroische und scheinbar triviale Entwürfe als Hinweis darauf gedeutet werden, wie diese neuen Beiträge eines neuen Designs aussehen könnten. Billig, schnell und anpassungsfähig, sodass Hunderte von Vorschlägen entwickelt, bewertet und verworfen werden können. Groß, grobschlächtig und banal, sodass Kunden, Akteure, ja selbst andere Architekten sich an einer transparenten, produktiven Diskussion beteiligen können, welche zu besseren Problemen und zu besseren Lösungen führen kann. Und schließlich: angemessen, nicht perfekt, sodass der Entwurf mit

einem Minimum an Aufwand und Kosten den sich wandelnden Bedingungen angepasst werden kann. Wenn die Architektur während und auch nach der wirtschaftlichen Krise erfolgreich sein will, so wird sie sich diesen und anderen Wertstellungen der „Gut-genug“-Revolution unterordnen müssen, in der das Schnellebige und Schmutzige das Langsame und Polierte in den Schatten stellt und in der das Billige und Einfache das Teure und Komplizierte von der Bildfläche verdrängt. Es verwundert nicht, dass in solchen Zeiten Wirtschaftsschulen, das Militär und Ingenieursschulen sich des entwurfsorientierten Denkens angenommen haben. Offen bleibt jedoch die Frage, ob die Architekturschulen sich ihnen anschließen werden oder so weitermachen wie vor der Krise. Was sich jedoch mit einiger Sicherheit sagen lässt, ist, dass Architekturbüros und Architekturschulen, die unwillig oder unfähig sind, sich den Neuerungen zu stellen, zu kommunizieren und sich anzupassen, bald ins Hintertreffen geraten werden, wo ihnen als einziger Trost die Erinnerung an jene Dinge bleiben wird, die uns in ihrer aufwendigen, unergründlichen und perfekten Ausarbeitung vor nicht allzu langer Zeit noch alle faszinierten.







## **Philipp Oswalt**

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# PRÄ- UND POST-ARCHITEKTUR

Was ist der Beruf des Architekten? Die klassische Berufspraxis des Architekten geht davon aus, dass es einen Bauherren gibt, der für eine Nutzung ein neues Gebäude benötigt. Dafür hat er Geld und beauftragt einen Architekten, dieses zu planen. Das ist aber nicht immer der Fall. Ich möchte hierzu kurz ein Projekt schildern, an dem ich selbst beteiligt war. Es gab ein Gebäude, es gab keinen Bauherren und kein Geld, aber Nutzungsideen. Die wichtigste Aufgabe war es, den Bauherren zu entwerfen und zu konstruieren, das Programm zu kuratieren und eine Finanzierung zu finden. Das Gebäude – es handelt sich um den Palast der Republik in Berlin – war das einzig Gegebene und der zunächst auch unveränderbare Fixpunkt.

Im Jahr 2001, als mit der Asbestsanierung der Palast der Republik weitgehend entkernt war, meldeten sich mehrere Kulturschaffende, die unterschiedliche Projekte in dem Gebäude realisieren wollten, was sowohl technisch als auch politisch gesehen aber zunächst nicht realisierbar war. In dieser Zeit bearbeiteten Klaus Overmeyer, Philipp Misselwitz und ich das Projekt ‚*Urban Catalyst*‘, ein europäisches Forschungsprojekt zum Thema der Zwischennutzung. Wir kontaktierten die Nutzungsinteressenten, den Eigentümer, die Genehmigungsbehörden und maßgebliche Kulturpolitiker mit dem Angebot, ein Realisierungskonzept zu entwickeln, aufbauend auf unseren gemachten Erfahrungen mit Zwischennutzungen. Wir verabredeten dann eine Arbeitsgruppe mit den Nutzungsinteressenten und arbeiteten daran ein halbes Jahr, um herauszufinden, was diese wollen und was ist der vielleicht kleinste gemeinsame Nenner. Dann versuchten wir, mit dem Eigentümer ins Gespräch zu kommen, was unmöglich war. Es folgte eine Phase der ‚Wunschproduktion‘, nämlich an die Öffentlichkeit zu gehen und eine Vorstellung von dem zu vermitteln, was dort sein könnte, und dafür ein öffentliches



Interesse zu wecken. Das war ganz wichtig, denn die gute öffentliche Resonanz war im Grunde der Schlüssel zu allem. Es folgte ein zäher zweijähriger Kampf, um schließlich 2004/2005 das Projekt *Volkspalast* realisieren zu können. Auf dem Weg dahin gründeten wir einen Verein, betrieben viel Networking, realisierten viele Aktionen im Stillen und im Öffentlichen und entwickelten Konzepte.

Das Beispiel der Zwischenpalastnutzung mag als skurriler Einzelfall erscheinen, aber ich denke es ist symptomatisch für unsere heutige Zeit. Als Architekten und Urbanisten sind wir zunehmend mit Aufgaben konfrontiert, die nicht mehr nach der Erstellung von Architektur verlangen, sondern mit der Bearbeitung von Fragen, die vor oder nach der Architektur liegen, also Prä- und Post-Architektur. Beides ist zunächst eng mit der Architektur verbunden, liegt aber jenseits von ihr. Bei dem Projekt der Zwischen-Palastnutzung hat man es mit Prä- und Post-Architektur zu tun. Beide sind eng mit der Architekturproduktion verbunden, aber liegen jenseits davon.

### **Post-Architektur**

Post-Architektur umfasst die Aufgaben, die sich stellen, wenn die Architektur, das Gebaute, schon vorhanden ist. Das Ergebnis einer herkömmlichen architektonischen Praxis ist hier der Ausgangspunkt. Dabei geht es darum, wie das Gegebene wahrgenommen, genutzt, verändert oder entfernt werden kann. Solche Projekte und Arbeitsweisen sind bis heute marginalisiert, obgleich sie in den letzten vier Jahrzehnten zu einer umfänglichen Praxis geworden sind. Ich möchte an einigen Beispielen skizzieren, was ich unter Post-Architektur verstehe.

Ein frühes, konzeptuell sehr starkes Projekt ist *Potteries Thinkbelt* von Cedric Price aus den 1960er-Jahren, wo er Überlegungen anstellt, wie eine einstige, niedergegangene Industrieregion zu einer Wissenslandschaft umgestaltet werden kann. Price war mit diesem Projekt ein Pionier der Idee des Wechsels von einer Industriegesellschaft zur Wissensgesellschaft. Das Projekt war eine Selbstbeauftragung, die natürlich unrealisiert blieb, später aber einen wichtigen Impuls für viele Dinge lieferte. Die Idee ist eine regional organisierte Hochschule als



Bildungs- und Wissensstruktur. Das bestehende Schienennetz dient einer mobilen Arbeitsweise, womit auch die Orte vernetzt werden: Die Industrieinfrastruktur wird für eine Bildungsstruktur umgenutzt. Das neu Geschaffene ist nicht so sehr das Gebaute als vielmehr eine Nutzungskonzeption und eine neue Wahrnehmung.

Ein anderes Beispiel ist vom japanischen Architekten Hidetoshi Ohno, der mit *Fiber-City* ein provozierendes Projekt formuliert hat: Tokio 2050 als schrumpfende Stadt. Er schreibt dort in einem sehr interessanten Text, dass es darum gehen müsste, Stadt zu editieren. Stadtplanung sei eigentlich ein Editions-Prozess – und damit sind wir natürlich dabei, dass er im Wesentlichen mit dem Bestehenden operiert und das Bestehende editieren will. Bei ihm ist die Faser (Fiber-City: die Faser-Stadt) als lineares Element die Grundidee, die er in vier verschiedenen Typologien entwickelt, und alles, was jenseits der Infrastrukturfasern liegt, baut er zurück, um grüne Räume in Tokio zu gewährleisten und auf der anderen Seite eine optimierte Möglichkeit des Transportes zu gewinnen.

Neben solchen städtebaulichen Konzepten gibt es unzählige, oft auch realisierte architektonische Projekte. Im Kontext der Debatte um den Konflikt um den Abriss des Berliner Palastes der Republik unterbreiteten wir 2006 nochmals einen Vorschlag, der allein durch Substraktion, also durch gezielten Teilrückbau des Kellergeschosses, einen völlig neuen, attraktiven Raum für kulturelle Nutzungen schaffen konnte.

### **Prä-Architektur**

Im Gegensatz zur Post-Architektur befasst sich Prä-Architektur mit jenen Dingen, die einer architektonischen Praxis vorausgehen, die sie überhaupt erst ermöglichen. Dazu gehört zunächst die Wunschproduktion, die Vorstellung von möglichen neuen Baulichkeiten und dem Erwecken des Interesses, diese zu realisieren. Pragmatisch gesprochen gehören zur Prä-Architektur die Formierung von Nutzung, Bauherren und Finanzierung.

Es herrscht ein seltsames Schweigen der Architekten über diesen Sachverhalt. Es gibt ein Zitat von Koolhaas: Der Architekt ist eine Geisel, der man die Pistole

an den Kopf hält und der zu Hause anruft und sagt, es ist alles in Ordnung. Das zeichnet in drastischer Weise das Bild eines Abhängigkeitsverhältnisses. Das ist sicherlich nicht ganz unzutreffend. Aber unzutreffend an diesem Bild ist, dass es den Architekten als Opfer darstellt. Man muss auch von der Maskerade der Architekten sprechen, die eine andere Geschichte erzählen als jene, die wirklich passiert. Das ist eine Praxis, die ausgesprochen verbreitet ist – ich glaube, wir kennen sie alle bestens – und die in ganz unterschiedlichen Sphären unseres Berufes vorhanden ist. Ich war schon sehr erstaunt über der Selbstdarstellung des brasilianischen Architekten Jorge Mario Jáuregui im Kontext der Documenta 12. Er realisiert durchaus gut gestaltete Bauvorhaben in den Favellas von Rio. Aber das eigentlich Innovative an den Projekten ist weniger die Gestaltung als die soziale und gesellschaftliche Programmatik der Projekte. Bei seinem Ausstellungsbeitrag auf der Documenta sowie bei seinen Vorträgen präsentiert Jáuregui seine Arbeit als die des wunderbaren heroischen Architekten. Was er nicht erzählt, ist, dass die eigentliche Innovation dieser Dinge, bei denen es um eine Qualifizierung der Favellas geht, ein politisches Programm ist, nämlich das Engagement der Stadt bzw. Provinz von Rio, diese Favellas nicht mehr abzureißen, sondern sie als Teil der Stadt anzuerkennen, Geld zu investieren und Architekten zu beauftragen, öffentliche Plätze zu gestalten, Sporteinrichtungen zu bauen usw. Das Programm nennt sich *Favela-Bairro* und ist zunächst eine politische Innovation, und Jáuregui als Architekt gibt dem durchaus eine ganz vernünftige Gestaltung. Aber der Architekt suggeriert, er sei der Held, der diese Dinge erschafft. Die wesentlichen Voraussetzungen für sein gestalterisches Schaffen werden verschwiegen.

Ein anderes Beispiel: Rem Koolhaas hat eine gewisse Vorliebe für Sonderwirtschaftszonen. Wenn man sich anschaut, zu welchen Städten er Studien macht, wo sich eine Faszination über eine Art ‚*vitalen Urbanismus*‘ entzündet, so sind dies meistens Steueroasen: Dubai, Singapur, Hongkong, Shenzhen usw. Solche Steueroasen funktionieren als finanzwirtschaftliche Parasiten und sind damit recht fragwürdige Gebilde, was spätestens mit der Finanzmarktkrise der Öffentlichkeit deutlich geworden ist. Der „erstaunliche Urbanismus“ in diesen Zonen ist nicht einer besonders kreativen, fantastischen Politik und Wirtschaftsweise zu verdanken, sondern dem extrem parasitären Status dieser Dinge. Wenn ein Architekt wie Koolhaas sich so intensiv damit beschäftigt, dann stellt sich die Frage, warum das nicht auch zu einem wichtigen Thema dieser Studien wird, schließlich ist es eigentlich die Voraussetzung dessen, was dort passiert.

Aber Architekten schweigen lieber über solche prä-architektonischen Fragen. Ich denke, das ist fatal. Wir sind hier Teilnehmer eines Bauhaus-Kolloquiums und ich bin kürzlich berufen worden, mich als Direktor der Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau

diesem Bauhauserbe zu widmen. Es ist sehr interessant, wie sich unser Verständnis vom Erbe der Moderne verändert hat. Wenn man sich ansieht, was in den 1920er-Jahren passiert ist, sieht man, dass es eben kein reines Architektur- und Städtebauprogramm war, sondern eben auch sehr explizit ein politisches Programm. Es ist daher problematisch, wenn wir die Bauten, die damals geschaffen wurden, als ästhetische, architekturgeschichtliche Phänomene betrachten und von ihrem politischen Hintergrund vollständig abstrahieren. Architektur und Städtebau der klassischen Moderne wären ohne ihr politisches Programm gar nicht möglich gewesen. Es bedurfte eines ganzen Satzes von neuen Instrumenten, um die Architektur der klassischen Moderne auf den Weg zu bringen. Es wurden neue Bauherren geschaffen. Genossenschaften und Kommunen als Bauherren gab es vorher nicht – die Gründerzeit war von privaten Spekulanten charakterisiert – das ist eine der wichtigen Grundbedingungen. Es werden neue Formen der Finanzierungen geschaffen, wie Hauszinssteuer und dergleichen. Es werden Forschungsinstitutionen geschaffen, Förderprogramme, publizistische Foren wie z. B. die *Wohnungswirtschaftliche Zeitung* von Martin Wagner. Es gibt also ein ganzes Arsenal von Instrumenten, das dazugehört, damit dieses Programm überhaupt realisiert werden kann. Es ist ein großes Defizit unserer heutigen Architekturbauten, dass solche Fragen gar nicht diskutiert werden.

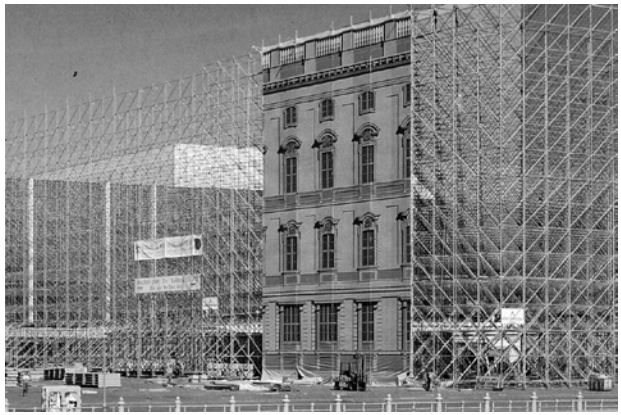
Es gibt heute durchaus interessante Ansätze, wie zum Beispiel die Praktiken der Baugruppen, die in den letzten Jahren boomen: Das ist eine Form, in der Architekten in kleinem Maßstab neue Bauherren konstruieren.

Ein weiteres wichtiges Feld der Vorbedingung der Architektur sind politisch-administrative Spielregeln. Wenn wir im städtebaulichen und raumplanerischen Feld diskutieren, dann ist z. B. die Frage der räumlichen Organisation der staatlichen Strukturen wesentlich. Es macht einen riesigen Unterschied, ob es viele konkurrierende Kommunen, eine kommunale Korporation oder eine raumfassende Großkommune gibt. Im Kontext der Debatte von schrumpfenden Städten spielt dieses Thema eine wichtige Rolle, wie es sich z. B. bei einem prämierten Wettbewerbsbeitrag des Projektes *Schrumpfende Städte* gezeigt hat. Dabei wurden unterschiedliche räumliche Strukturen für die politische Administration des Detroit-Raumes als Möglichkeiten vorgestellt und ihre Implikationen auf die Stadtentwicklung diskutiert. In Detroit ist die kommunale Zersplitterung noch viel extremer als bei uns, es gibt z. B. keine Möglichkeit, aus der Stadt in die Vorstädte mit demselben öffentlichen Transportmittel zu fahren: Man fährt bis zur Stadtgrenze und steigt dann um – abgesehen davon, dass die öffentlichen Transportmittel nicht funktionieren. Eine stadtplanerische Koordination zwischen der Stadt und den Umlandgemeinden fehlt völlig.

Im Kontext des Projektes *Schrumpfende Städte* (das ich geleitet hatte), wurde deutlich, dass einer der zentralen Schlüssel, um überhaupt gestalterisch in diese Stadtentwicklungen eingreifen zu können, das Bodeneigentum und die mit diesem einhergehenden Rechte und Regeln sind. Ohne die Frage des Bodeneigentums zu adressieren, brauchen wir über die Gestaltung von schrumpfenden Städten nicht zu diskutieren. Obwohl das von manchem als altmarxistische Haltung missverstanden werden kann, haben so konservative Kräfte wie der Stadtplaner Albert Speer plus Vertreter des Bundesbauministeriums in den letzten Jahren geäußert, dass dies eine wichtige Frage wäre. In der digitalen Welt z. B. sind neue Eigentumskonzepte wie *creative commons* oder *open source* Software entwickelt worden, wo es sinnvoll wäre, zu prüfen, was deren Übertragung auf die physische Welt und die Frage des Bodens bedeuten könnte. In anderen Ländern gibt es schon heute ganz unterschiedliche Formen, Eigentum zu regulieren. In Brasilien sind etwa gewisse Formen der Landnahme legal, in den Niederlanden das Besetzen von Häusern nach einem Jahr Leerstand usw. Ich will das hier nicht vertiefen, aber wenn wir über Stadtentwicklung sprechen, ist die Frage, wie Eigentum organisiert ist, ein zentrales Phänomen.

Ein dritter wichtiger Bereich der Vorbedingungen von Architektur, der prä-architektonischen Fragen, ist die Wunschproduktion. Ich hatte ja schon ausgeführt, dass bei dem Projekt der Zwischennutzung des Palastes der Republik es auf dem Weg zur Realisierung entscheidend war, ein öffentliches Interesse und einen öffentlichen Wunsch nach dem Projekt zu erzeugen. Dies hat letztendlich die Politik und die Verwaltung dazu veranlasst, ja nahezu gezwungen, dies (wenn auch widerwillig) zuzulassen. Das Gegenprojekt, der sogenannte Wiederaufbau des Berliner Schlosses, ist ja auch aus einem Prozess einer 20-jährigen Wunschproduktion hervorgegangen, die sehr geschickt und erfolgreich mit dieser trpmorär aufgebauten Fassade überhaupt erst dieses Projekt zum Rollen gebracht hat. Vieles, was wir als Architekten machen, wie z. B. Renderings, ist Teil der Wunschproduktion, auch wenn wir uns dies oft nicht so bewusst machen. Man müsste allerdings manchmal mehr überlegen, welche Wünsche man denn eigentlich produzieren will. Wir produzieren heute meistens die Wünsche, die der Auftraggeber verlangt. Es ist aber auch ein gesellschaftlicher Prozess und deshalb nicht egal, welche Wünsche wir produzieren, und man sollte sich überlegen, ob man nicht andere Formen von Wünschen und Bedürfnissen hervorrufen will als solche, die wirtschaftlich oder politisch gewünscht sind. Ein Beispiel für eine etwas abweichende Praxis ist das Projekt „*Park Fiction*“ in Hamburg. Es gab einen Konflikt zwischen der Stadt Hamburg, die eine innerstädtische Grünfläche an einen Investor zur Bebauung verkaufen wollte, und den Anwohnern, einer Bürgerinitiative.





Dieser Initiative gelang es in einem recht beharrlichen Kampf, das Vorhaben der Stadt zu verhindern, und realisierte dort einen kleinen Stadtteilpark. Das Projekt war begleitet von den Künstlern Christoph Schäfer und Magarete Czerny, die versuchten, etwas, was normalerweise eher verbal läuft, in eine visuelle Produktion zu bringen. Sie führten ein ganzes Arsenal von Werkzeugen – von Knete bis zu einem Übersee-Container als Archiv – ein, um diesen Prozess zu organisieren und zu gestalten. Damit gelang es ihnen, den gestalterischen Laien Mittel an die Hand zu geben, sich auch visuell und gestalterisch zu artikulieren.

Ein ähnliches Beispiel, aber nicht so sehr im Konflikt angelegt, war das Projekt „100 qm Dietzenbach“ im Kontext eines etwas verunglückten Nachkriegsstädtebau mit einer leeren Mitte in der Stadt Dietzenbach im Rhein-Main Gebiet. Im Rahmen des Bundesförderprogramms *Stadt 2030* hat man dort versucht, einen Prozess zu entwickeln, in dem der Vorgang der Raum- und Flächeaneignung durch die Anwohner an Haptik und Visualität gewinnt, wie zum Beispiel anhand von Postkartenaktionen oder das Abstecken von *claims* mit Holzpflocken.

### **Schlussbemerkungen**

Nach der Veranschaulichung der Idee von Prä- und Postarchitektur mit einigen Beispielen möchte ich zum Abschluss noch mal auf Grundsätzliches zurückkommen. Meines Erachtens haben wir in den letzten Jahren und Jahrzehnten eine unglaubliche Explosion der Anzahl von Entwürfen erlebt. Mir jedenfalls fällt es schwer, alles, was als architektonische Produktion in den Zeitschriften kursiert, zu verfolgen oder zu beurteilen. Das hat einerseits damit zu tun, dass die Bildungsinstitutionen zusehends mehr Architekten ausbilden, zum anderen damit, dass es durch Computerprogramme immer leichter wird, scheinbar fertige Entwürfe zu produzieren und in den medialen Raum zu bringen. Mit dieser, zumindest von mir subjektiv empfundenen Explosion der Anzahl von Entwürfen geht eine zunehmende Irrelevanz dieser Entwürfe einher, weil sie doch meistens nur im medialen Raum verhalten und wenig praktische Umsetzung erfahren. Wenn diese Beobachtung richtig ist, stellt sich die Frage: Wie kommt man wieder dazu,



dass ein Entwurf eine starke Relevanz entwickelt? Dann ist man an einem Punkt, an dem die Profession gefragt ist zu überlegen: Wie komme ich zur Realisierung meines Entwurfes? Damit wären wir wieder bei den prä-architektonischen Fragen. Es ist eine Notwendigkeit für einen Architekten, der bestimmte Ziele hat, sich auch zu fragen: Wie kann ich, wenn ich mich nicht mit dem Bespielen des medialen Raumes zufrieden geben möchte – was natürlich auch eine Praxis sein kann – diese Dinge umsetzen? Wenn ich aber den Anspruch habe, bestimmte bauliche Veränderungen auch umzusetzen, dann muss ich mich fragen: Wie kann ich da hinkommen? Das Problem, das meines Erachtens den heutigen Diskurs betrifft, ist, dass es eine Art Selbstamputation des Berufes gegeben hat. Die ausufernden politischen Debatten der 1960er- und -70er-Jahre haben in der Postmoderne zu einer Gegenbewegung geführt, die die Autonomie der Profession ausgerufen und alle politischen Diskurse abgeschnitten hat. Die Parole war, sich auf die Disziplin im engeren Sinne zu begrenzen und die anderen Fragen außen vor zu lassen. Damit wurde praktisch das Erbe der Moderne der 1920er-Jahre abgeschnitten. Es gab durchaus auch eine Notwendigkeit der Kritik an der Überpolitisierung der 1960er- und -70er-Jahre, doch das Gegenbild dessen, nämlich alle Fragen auszublenden und damit selbstverschuldet sich in eine Situation der Irrelevanz zu manövrieren, halte ich für wenig ersterbenswert. Meines Erachtens – und vor diesem Hintergrund – denke ich, dass wir uns wieder stärker politischen Fragen zuwenden müssen: Wer baut mit welchen Mitteln wofür?

Während die Defizite in dieser Hinsicht einer Selbstamputation geschuldet sind, ist die Postarchitektur in der Geschichte der Disziplin ein seit jeher unterentwickeltes Feld. Bauen wird bislang vorwiegend verstanden als Akt der Kolonisierung: der Erschließung und Überbauung neuer Gebiete. Jährlich wird weit mehr gebaut als abgerissen wird. Es ist offensichtlich, dass so etwas nicht endlos weitergehen kann, denn man kann ja nicht endlos Bauten akkumulieren, sondern muss sie ja auch betreiben usw. Nicht nur aus meiner Perspektive des involviert Seins mit Fragen der Schrumpfung – wir sind bei den entwickelten Industrieländern an einem Punkt angekommen, an dem die Mehrzahl des Gebauten

bereits existiert. Nachdem die Industrieländer quasi vollständig urbanisiert sind und ihre Bewohnerschaft stagniert oder schrumpft, hat die Idee der Kolonisation ihre Legitimation verloren. Im „postkolonialen Zeitalter“ geht es eher darum, sich dem über einen langen Zeitraum akkumulierten Gebauten zuzuwenden. Es ist, wie gesagt, die Umkehrung des Blicks: Das Gebaute ist nicht Ziel, sondern Ausgangspunkt.



# Hermann Czech

## Wien

*Hermann Czech studierte Architektur an der Technischen Hochschule und in der Meisterschule von Ernst Plischke an der Akademie der bildenden Künste in Wien. 1958 und 1959 war er Seminarteilnehmer bei Konrad Wachsmann an der Sommerakademie in Salzburg. An der Akademie für angewandte Kunst in Wien war er von 1974 bis 1980 Assistent bei Hans Hollein und Johannes Spalt, 1985/86 Gastprofessor an derselben Hochschule. 1988/89 und 1993/94 war er Gastprofessor an der Harvard University in Cambridge/USA, 2004-07 Gastprofessor an der ETH Zürich. Sein ungleichartiges architektonisches Werk umfasst Planungen, Wohn-, Schul- und Hotelbauten ebenso wie Interventionen in kleinem Maßstab und Ausstellungs-gestaltungen. Seine Projekte haben starken Bezug zum Kontext und beinhalten be-*

*wusst die vorhandenen Widersprüche. Ab den 1970er Jahren («Architektur ist Hintergrund») wurde Hermann Czech zum Protagonisten einer neuen, »stillen« Architektur, die »nur spricht, wenn sie gefragt wird«.*

*Er ist Autor zahlreicher kritischer und theoretischer Publikationen zur Architektur. In seiner Theorie spielen die Begriffe Umbau und Manierismus eine zentrale Rolle.*

*Veröffentlichungen (Auswahl): Zur Abwechslung. Ausgewählte Schriften zur Architektur. Wien, Wien 1996, Das Looshaus, Wien 1976 (mit Wolfgang Mistelbauer), „Komfort – ein Gegenstand der Architekturtheorie?“, in: werk,bauen+wohnen, Zürich, 3/2003, S. 10-15.*

# KANN ARCHITEKTUR VON DER KONSUMTION HER GEDACHT WERDEN?

## **Vorbemerkung**

*Architektur war weithin eine Rechtfertigungskunst: Warum haben Sie das so gemacht, Herr Architekt; was haben Sie sich dabei gedacht? Eingeschlossen in diese Frage ist die Vorstellung, dass dem Entwurf eine autonome Entscheidungsreihe zugrunde liegt, auch wo er äußeren Bedingungen, profanen Zwecken folgt.*

*Einerseits nun erscheint die Rechtfertigungsfrage immer weniger angebracht; das „Warum?“ wird immer öfter mit „Warum nicht?“ beantwortet. Andererseits genießt die architektonische Leistung immer weniger Respekt und wird zu einem Mittel für andere Ziele.*

*Der News-Wert der Stararchitektur als Qualitätskriterium einerseits, das Aufspalten der Bauplanung in Consulting-Dienstleistungen andererseits - Strategien wie Theming/Branding/Imagineering, überhaupt der Eintritt der Architektur in die Kulturindustrie, all die damit verbundene Blödmacherei - schließlich die theoretischen Begründungen von Ornament, von Atmosphäre:*

*Ein gemeinsames Kennzeichen vieler dieser Erscheinungen dürfte in der Versuchung liegen, Architektur nicht von der Produktion, sondern von der Konsumtion her zu denken - und es erhebt sich die Frage, ob das, ohne den Konsumenten und sich selbst zu belügen, möglich ist.*

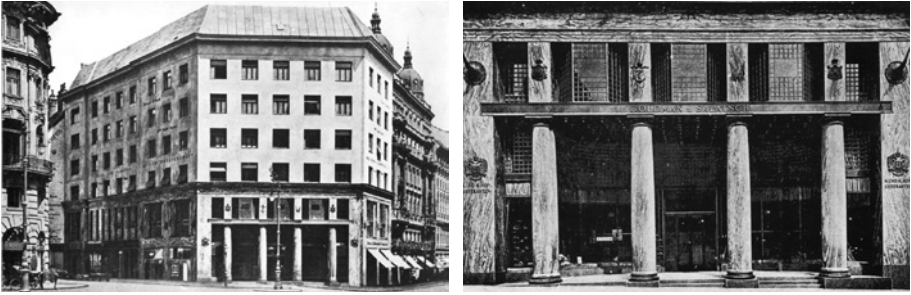


Abb. 1-2 Erschließt sich Architektur aus dem Verständnis ihrer Produktion oder aus dem Erlebnis ihrer Konsumtion? Eine Formulierung dieses Gegensatzes findet sich 1910 bei Karl Kraus. Zu Adolf Loos' nahezu fertiggestelltem Haus am Michaelerplatz in Wien, dem „Looshaus“, schreibt er: „Er hat ihnen dort einen Gedanken hingebaut. Sie aber fühlen sich nur vor den architektonischen Stimmungen wohl.“<sup>1</sup>

Was ist mit „Gedanke“ gemeint? Zur Analyse dieser komplexen und widersprüchlichen Fassade hier nur einige Ansätze: Die Achsen des additiven Oberteils und des ganzheitlichen Unterteils stimmen nicht überein – oder vielmehr die beiden äußersten doch. Der auf den Säulen liegende Architrav ist viel zu schmal, scheint eher ein seitlich eingespannter Träger zu sein. Darüber stehen Postamente, die klassischerweise unter die Säulen gehörten. Diese scheinen entspannt im System zu schweben – sie tragen tatsächlich nicht. Die Stufen zum geneigten Platz sind nicht den Säulen vorgelegt, sondern zur intensiveren Verbindung dazwischen angeordnet; jeweils die unterste Stufe nimmt die Schräge auf.

Seine eigentliche Begründung findet dieser *produktive* Umgang mit dem historischen Formenkanon im gesellschaftlichen Kontext und im „Raumplan“ des Inneren.<sup>2</sup>

Abb. 3-4 Hier findet keine Gedanken-Produktion statt. Es ist eine Dekoration vor der Volksabstimmung 1938 zum Anschluss Österreichs an Hitler-Deutschland. Hier wird mittels einer „Verschönerung“ von Loos' Portal zu einem „Altar unserer Zeit“ eine Stimmung erzeugt, deren wesentlicher Teil Einschüchterung ist. Der Teppich im rechten Bild geht sich kläglich nicht aus; wir wissen, warum.

1 *Die Fackel*, Nr. 313/314, 31. Dezember 1910, S. 5

2 Für die vollständige Analyse s. Hermann Czech, Wolfgang Mistelbauer: *Das Looshaus*, Wien 1976, 3. Aufl. 1984, S. 90–115



In welchem Verhältnis kann ein Werk zum Publikum stehen? – Der Schriftsteller wendet sich laut Jean-Paul Sartre „an die Freiheit des Lesers, auf dass diese sich an dem Hervorbringen seines Werks beteilige“; Literatur kann sich „also keineswegs an seine Passivität wenden, d. h. versuchen, *ihn zu rühren* und ihm Regungen der Furcht, des Verlangens oder des Zorns zu vermitteln. Zweifellos gibt es Autoren, die einzig darauf aus sind, solche Regungen hervorzurufen, weil diese Regungen berechenbar und lenkbar sind und weil diese Schriftsteller über erprobte Mittel verfügen, um sie todsicher hervorzurufen“ (Hervorhebung im Original).<sup>3</sup>



Abb. 5-7 Der Produktion architektonischer Gedanken möchte man zunächst die autonomen Mittel der Architektur zuordnen, also Mittel, wie sie Stanford Anderson gestern als *selbstreferenziell* bezeichnet hat. Antonio Gaudí hat Gewölbeformen in ihrer Umkehrung durch Hängemodelle erforscht (er war keineswegs ein Irrationalist). Adolf Loos schuf in seiner American Bar von 1908 ein Raumgitter, das durch Einbeziehung von Spiegelbildern entsteht; das Auge wird nicht bloß getäuscht, sondern kann sich tatsächlich auf die gespiegelte größere Entfernung einstellen, so dass es in dem kleinen Raum nicht so rasch ermüdet.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre: *Was ist Literatur?* Hamburg 1958, S. 30, 31 (verfasst 1947).

Mein „Kleines Café“ von 1974 ist ebenfalls durch gespiegelte Räume „erweitert“; hier ergänzt sich jeweils einer und ein halber Pfeiler zu dreien, statt wie in der Loos-Bar ein halber zu einem ganzen. Diese Steigerung ist nicht belanglos; denn hier sind die Spiegel in Augenhöhe und deshalb ist die Illusionswirkung beeinträchtigt; die scheinbar durchbrochene Wand wird jedoch mehrschichtig und dadurch die Lage des Spiegels verunklärt.

Wir schreiten hier also von den bloßen autonomen Bauteilen über ihre durch Täuschung hergestellte Wahrnehmung zur Konterkarierung einer Raumillusion durch die Wahrnehmung des eigenen Spiegelbildes. Wir nähern uns immer dichter dem Befinden des Benutzers, ohne den Weg produktiver Entwurfsentscheidungen zu verlassen. Ich möchte dafür, auch wenn es eine Erweiterung zu sein scheint, den Begriff „selbstreferenziell“ beanspruchen: für alles, was von der Architektur in ihren gedanklichen Zusammenhang hereingenommen wird.

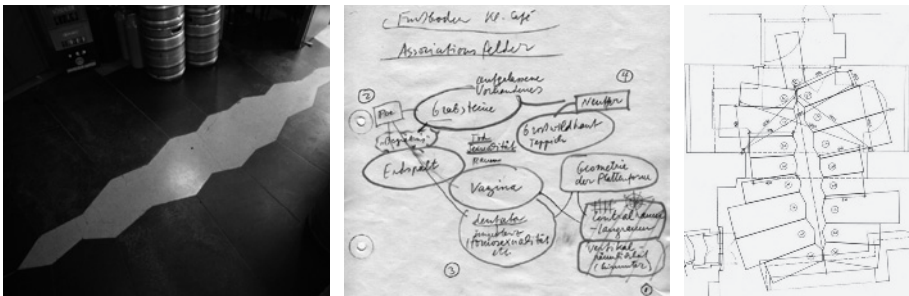


Abb. 8-10 Im selben „Kleinen Café“, im unteren Raum von 1970, wurde 1977 der Fußboden mit Natursteinplatten erneuert, die aus etwa 100 Jahre älteren Grabsteinen geschnitten waren. Die Idee, Grabsteine aus den Lagerstellen der Gemeinde Wien zu verwenden, stammte von dem Bildhauer Karl Prantl, der die Fußgängerzone Stephansplatz damit pflastern wollte. Als Folge der klassischen Grabsteinform ergeben die Platten keine geschlossene Fläche, sondern ein zwingendes bogenförmiges Muster, das in dieser gedrängten Anordnung eine Kluft im Boden, einen Erdspalt und damit eine vertikale Dimension suggeriert, zum Thema des Todes hinlenkend, selbst wenn die Herkunft der Platten noch gar nicht bewusst sein sollte.

Ich habe damals gerade Edgar Allan Poe – einen deklarierten Methodiker der Produktion – gelesen und bin auf Marie Bonaparte gestoßen. Marie Bonaparte, eine Schülerin von Sigmund Freud, hat eine dreibändige Studie über Edgar Poe, wie es bei ihr heißt, verfasst, in der sie Poes Leben und Werk aus psychoanalyti-



scher Sicht untersucht.<sup>4</sup> Sie liefert keine Erklärung – schon Freud hat sich deziert gegen eine psychoanalytische Erklärung von Genie verwehrt und schreibt das auch in seinem Vorwort zu diesem Buch.

Vor dem Hintergrund dieser Untersuchung tauchen jedenfalls weitere Bezugfelder zur Geometrie des Bodens auf; die Assoziation der Vagina mag vielen schon in den Sinn gekommen sein, für andere blieb sie vielleicht bis jetzt unbewusst, doch auch unbewusst ist sie unweigerlich wirksam. Diese Assoziation ist hier noch mit einem anderen psychoanalytischen Topos kombiniert: den Zähnen (ihrerseits, zum Beispiel als Trauminhalt, ein bedeutsames Motiv in der Psychoanalyse), die Vorstellung einer „vagina dentata“ evozierend, einer Vagina mit Zähnen, die Furcht einflößt und in Zusammenhang mit sexuellen Ängsten und Impotenz stehen kann.

Ich kann diese Studie hier nicht kompetent referieren, aber es leuchtet ein: Wenn es eine Beziehung zwischen Architektur und Sprache gibt, kann uns diese in alle Gebiete führen, die sich der Sprache bedienen.

Eine weitere Assoziation geht auf den früh verstorbenen Co-Inhaber des Kleinen Cafés, Hans Neuffer, zurück, einen Geschäftsmann und Maler, der wiederholt in Afrika war und gelegentlich auch dort gejagt hat. Der Verlegeplan könnte an eine Großwildhaut erinnern. Den Architekten erinnert das gleichermaßen konzentrische wie längsgerichtete Muster auch an ein räumliches Thema des christlichen Kirchenbaus: nämlich an den Konflikt zwischen Längs- und Zentralraum – und schließlich an die Synthese der beiden, etwa den hochbarocken Ovalraum. – Wie man übrigens sieht, wäre eine flächendeckende Pflasterung aus dieser Grabsteinform nicht ohne totalen Gestaltverlust möglich.

Diese Bedeutungsschichten sind nicht kausal für den Entwurf; es sind nicht Bilder, die man sich *vorher* zurechtlegt. Der Vorgang ist viel maßgeblicher umgekehrt: Zwar sind die Grabsteinplatten ein gewähltes inhaltsreiches Motiv; aus deren Zuschnitt entsteht die modulare geometrische Figur. Erst danach werden die Implikationen nach allen Richtungen verfolgt – und nun stellen sich die Fragen, welche Wirkungen akzeptiert, verstärkt oder vermieden werden sollen. (Vermieden wird beispielsweise, die Inschriften der jeweils vordersten Grabsteinanschnitte zu zeigen, was eine Frivolität ohne kritischen Gehalt wäre.)

Mit einem Café haben die Inhalte nur als konkreter Sonderfall zu tun. Sie verleihen dem Fußboden seine „Informationsdichte“. (So kommt ein Begriff Max Benses wieder zu Ehren.) Eine „Stimmung“ ist hier jedoch nicht vorausgesetzt; das Befinden des Benutzers bleibt in Freiheit.

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4 Marie Bonaparte: *Edgar Poe. Eine psychoanalytische Studie*; Wien 1934, 3 Bde.



Abb. 11-13 Was ist es, das das linke Bild fesselnd macht? Jetzt wird der Begriff „selbstreferenziell“ hilfreich: Dieses Vorhaben ist es nicht. Es beruht auf einem Kalkül, wie etwas fesselnd sein könnte.

Der Plan ist zunächst durchaus rational; auch die großen Kurven lassen ein gutes Straßen- und Uferbild erwarten (wie ja überhaupt niemals ein konkretes Entwurfselement als verwerflich bezeichnet werden kann: Immer wäre ein Meisterwerk denkbar, das genau dieses Element aufwiese). Aber auf welcher Seite liegt die Motivation dieses Vorhabens: bei Sartres „Wendung an eine Freiheit“ oder bei der „Wendung an eine Passivität“ mit dem Versuch, sie „zu rühren“? Natürlich ist das ein Qualitätsurteil: der Konsument ist aufgefordert, seine Rolle im Spiel zu erkennen.

Auch gegen den mittleren Lageplan ist kaum etwas Einzelnes einzuwenden; aber im Ganzen bezieht er sich auf die vorausgesetzten Qualitäten einer Gründerzeit-Bebauung.

Dagegen der Lageplan von Adolf Krischanitz für eine Mehrwohnungshaus-Siedlung verschiedener internationaler Architekten: Der Plan ist sperrig, verstößt sogar gegen rationale Konventionen des Siedlungsbaus. Gebäude und Freiraum haben eine ambivalente Mehrdeutigkeit, die erst angeeignet werden muss – vielleicht darf man den Ausdruck „cool“ verwenden.

Abb. 14-15 Im linken Bild also die ausgeführte Siedlung auf dem Lageplan Krischanitz – von links die Häuser von Meili & Peter, Tesar, Krischanitz, Czech, Dudler, Diener.

Was wir im rechten Bild beobachten, ist der Eintritt der Architektur in die Kulturindustrie. Ich spreche von der Konsum-Umwelt, wie sie sich im amerikanischen „New Urbanism“ darstellt. Was ist New Urbanism? Kurz gefasst, ist es die planmäßige Produktion von Siedlungen, die eine heile Welt repräsentieren (der Film *Truman Show* wurde in *Seaside*, Florida, einer ausgeführten Siedlung dieser Art, gedreht).



Den Begriff der Kulturindustrie haben Adorno und Horkheimer vor Jahrzehnten gefasst und analysiert. Deren Produkte sprechen nicht mehr zum Rezipienten, indem sie sich an seine Freiheit wenden, wollen ihn weder bewegen noch überzeugen, sondern sie betrügen ihn, nehmen ihn als bloßes Mittel, um an sein Geld zu kommen, das er möglicherweise auf gleiche Art erlangt hat – oder auch an seine politische Zustimmung. Es ist kein einfacher Betrug: „Nicht nur fallen die Menschen, wie man so sagt, auf Schwindel herein ... sie wollen bereits einen Betrug, den sie selbst durchschauen ... Uneingestanden ahnen sie, ihr Leben werde ihnen vollends unerträglich, sobald sie sich nicht länger an Befriedigungen klammern, die gar keine sind.“<sup>5</sup>



Abb. 16– 17 Links ein Beispiel aus Arizona. Die „Produzenten“ der architektonischen Kulturindustrie sind ja nicht uninformiert: Sie wissen, dass Robert Venturi 1970 Häuser wie diese im rechten Bild gebaut hat. Ich weiß, dass es, vor allem von Laien, viel verlangt ist, den Unterschied zu erkennen, dass es sich beim rechten Bild um ein analytisches, kritisches Herangehen an diesen Haustyp handelt, beim linken dagegen 30 Jahre später um schlaue Weiterverwertung vorhandener Qualität, die nichts Irritierendes, aber auch nichts Anregendes mehr hat.

<sup>5</sup> Theodor W. Adorno: *Gesammelte Schriften*; Frankfurt/Main 1997, Bd. 10.1, S. 342.

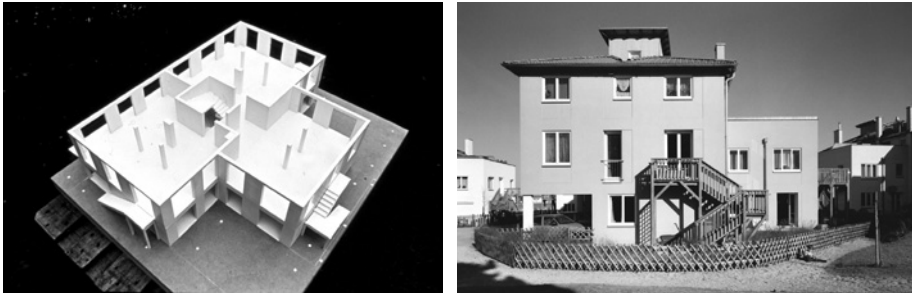


Abb. 18-19 Dieses 15 Jahre alte Projekt von mir geht von den ästhetischen Baubestimmungen einer konservativen Gemeinde aus. Aber da der Entwurf nicht an diese Regeln glaubt, interpretiert er sie in einer rationalen und rationellen Weise. Mieter konnten nicht nur den Grundriss ändern; sie konnten auch jedes Fenster jeweils innerhalb einer größeren konstruktiven Öffnung wählen. Eine informelle Erscheinung entsteht aufgrund rationaler Entscheidungen. Das Projekt unterwirft sich der Ästhetik der lokalen Bauordnung, tritt aber gewissermaßen zur Seite und lässt sie gegenüber den rationalen Vorteilen ins Leere laufen. Ich möchte das als *critical kitsch* bezeichnen.

Die kritische Substanz ist aus den Vorschriften gewonnen, die zum Ziel haben, was Sartre „berechenbare Regungen“ nennt. Bauweise, Gebäudehöhe, Dachform, Zulässigkeit von Gauben etc. sind ja nicht mehr Ergebnisse der rationalen Entscheidungen, aus denen sie historisch entstanden sind, sondern Motive, die eine vorausgesetzte Stimmung erzeugen sollen. Wenn sie nun wertfrei oder sogar demonstrativ übernommen, analysiert und vielfach gegensätzlich rationalisiert werden, entsteht nicht so sehr eine Doppelkodierung, die dem verlogenen Gemüt trotzdem eine Heile-Welt-Stimmung erlaubt. Vielmehr irritiert die produktive Verwendung der Motive ihre Konsumtion und schafft eine Identifikation auf neuer Ebene.



*Abb. 20-22* Wenn es wahr ist, dass wir zu den Idealen der modernen Architektur ein differenzierteres Verhältnis haben als die Zeitgenossen ihrer Entstehung, dann ist alle heutige Arbeit „postmodern“, der sogenannte Dekonstruktivismus schon überhaupt.

Aber gehen wir über die Moderne hinaus oder vor die Moderne zurück? Sollen wir gerade am Wege einer sensibilisierten Erweiterung des architektonischen Materials gegenüber der „heroischen“ Moderne uns von Begriffen verabschieden und gewonnene Einsichten fallen lassen? Was bedeutet es, wenn uns in den letzten Jahrzehnten wieder empfohlen wird, Ornamente anzubringen, dann ginge es uns wieder gut?

An der Fassade meines Messehotels von 2005 in Wien ist blankes Aluminium als verwitterungsfähiges Material eingesetzt. Kenner warnen davor, dass diese Oberflächen auch „unansehnlich“ verwittern können. Deshalb wechseln die blanken Flächen mit anthrazitfarbenen beschichteten Flächen ab, sind dadurch unterbrochen und „gefasst“. Auch wenn nun einzelne Stellen ästhetisch unbefriedigend verwittern sollten, sind sie durch die bewusste Darstellung der Absicht in ein Gesamtbild eingebunden. Dass diese der Wandstruktur entsprechende Schichtung bei Loos – und bei älteren historischen Beispielen – vorkommt, spricht nicht dagegen. Die Breite der horizontalen Streifen ist durch die Breite der Bahnen bestimmt. Diese Maße überlagern sich mit der Geschoßhöhe (ca. 5:7) und verunklären dadurch die Geschosshöhe.

Aber es gibt noch ein anderes Muster am Gebäude, das keine technischen Gründe hat. Von der Wiener Messe führt ein Weg an einer Straßenfront des Hotels vorbei, die eigentlich die Hinterseite bildet und Serviceräume enthält. Eine mögliche Strategie, der Leblosigkeit und Inferiorität dieses platzbildenden Wandstreifens zu entgehen und ihn durch visuelle Information aufzuwerten, wäre eine Plakatfläche gewesen; das war jedoch für den Betreiber nicht vorstellbar.

Das gewählte Weiß/Schwarz-Muster ist ein Entwurf Leo von Klenzes um 1825 (für den nicht ausgeführten Fußboden eines Saals der Münchner Glyptothek). Es ist mir bereits Jahrzehnte vorher aufgefallen und wegen seiner fesselnden Erscheinung in Erinnerung geblieben. Klenze ist wohl eher zufällig auf diese irritierende Wirkung gekommen; wodurch diese trotz der einfachen Geometrie eigentlich entsteht, ist wahrnehmungspsychologisch schwer erklärbar (deshalb scheint es auch kaum möglich, diese Wirkung zu steigern).

Ich weigere mich nun, diese Entscheidungen als Ornamentierung zu verstehen. Es handelt sich in Wahrheit um *Muster* mit bestimmten Rollen in der Konzeption bestimmter Wahrnehmungszusammenhänge. Ist das ein unnötiger Streit um Worte?

Man muss daran erinnern, dass das Ornament ja nicht zufällig verloren ging, sondern bekämpft wurde – nicht nur wegen verlorener Arbeitszeit, sondern aus kulturellen Gründen. Sind die nicht mehr gültig? Hören wir wieder Karl Kraus: „Der Verschweigung des praktischen Lebens durch das Ornament, wie sie Adolf Loos nachgewiesen hat, entspricht jene Durchsetzung des Journalismus mit Geistelementen, die zu einer katastrophalen Verwirrung führt. Die Phrase ist das Ornament des Geistes“ und: „Die Phrase wird nicht abgeschafft, sondern in den Wiener Werkstätten des Geistes modernisiert.“<sup>6</sup> Würden wir mit der gleichen Unbefangenheit die *Phrase* wieder einführen wollen (wenn sie einmal verschwunden wäre)?

Nach wie vor ist Ornament das, was man weglassen kann. Es bringt nichts, diesen Loos'schen Ansatz anzuzweifeln. Wir sind nicht in einer historischen Situation, in der wir von der „Wiedereinführung des Ornaments“ etwas gewinnen könnten. Das wäre ein anti-analytischer, theoretisch inferiorer Versuch, Symptome mit einem Medikament zu behandeln, Erkenntnis durch Zutaten zu ersetzen.

Freilich ist schon Loos' Standpunkt komplexer, als er weithin verstanden wurde. Sein Kampf gegen das Ornament ist nicht ein Kampf für die glatte Fläche, sondern gegen jede Form, die nicht Gedanke ist – und sei es eine glatte Fläche.

Die Zurückweisung des Ornaments bedeutet nicht den Glauben an die simple Lösung. Die simple Lösung gibt es nicht, wenn die Komplexität der konkreten Situation erfasst und aufgearbeitet wird. Ornament im Sinn von Form, die nicht Gedanke ist, bleibt dann nicht übrig.



Abb. 23-25 Das nächste Beispiel ist vielleicht an der Grenze, als nostalgisches Stilinterieur missverstanden werden zu können. Aber dann ist der Konsument mit Sicherheit zumindest unbewusst nicht ganz zufrieden.

<sup>6</sup> *Die Fackel*, Nr. 279–280, 13. Mai 1909, S. 8

Gerade heute – da er zerstört wird – könnte man diesen Umbau des *Palais Schwarzenberg* von 1982–84 im Kontext amerikanischer bzw. weltweiter Konsumarchitektur sehen. Eben was in diesem Wiener Objekt *von der Produktion her* gedacht ist, aber als Ergebnis in den Zusammenhang von Anmutung, von „Atmosphäre“ reicht, steht jetzt – von dem Philosophen Gernot Böhme bis zu dem Konsumwelten-Planer Jon Jerde – im Zentrum von Betrachtungen und Zielsetzungen, die Erlebnis- und Verkaufsarchitektur *von der Konsumtion her* denken wollen.

Tatsächlich handelt es sich gerade bei diesem Objekt um methodisches Denken von der Entwurfsproduktion her; lassen Sie mich das an dem verdächtigsten Detail zeigen, nämlich an der Kristalleuchte.

Ein Kristalluster ist ein Klischee von „Eleganz“, aber zugleich ist er eine von zwei klassischen Lösungen für das Problem der Blendung, das besonders bei niedrig im Raum positionierten Leuchten akut wird. Die Kristallkörper verringern die Blendung, indem sie die Lichtpunkte vervielfachen. (Die andere Lösung ist die Mattglaskugel, die die Leuchtfläche vergrößert und damit ihre Leuchtdichte reduziert.)

Wachskerzen konnten an einem Kristalluster nur außen angeordnet werden, weil sie angezündet, „geschnäuzt“ (die Dochte geschnitten) und ersetzt werden mussten, und weil sie rußten. Der klassizistische Typ des Kettenusters (links) wurde mit dem Auftreten von Gas- und elektrischem Licht modifiziert, die Lichtpunkte ins Innere des Leuchtenkörpers versetzt. Mit dem barocken Typ wurde dieser Versuch nicht gemacht (Mitte). Die Kristalleuchte im Schwarzenberg (rechts) – abgesehen davon, dass sie als Kandelaber am Boden steht – versetzt die Glühlampen nach innen, obwohl sie den barocken Typ paraphrasiert. Die Kristallkörperformen stammen aus verschiedenen Zeiten und werden von der Industrie nach wie vor erzeugt.

Das Ergebnis entsteht also aus einer Reihe schlüssiger Überlegungen, nicht aus der Übernahme von Motiven. Die produktive Reihe von Entwurfsentscheidungen bleibt innerhalb der Architektur und ist füglich als autonom, sogar – ich bestehe darauf – als selbstreferenziell zu bezeichnen.

Im Gefolge von Gernot Böhme könnte man nun vermuten, es sei möglich, die Methodik umzukehren, sich einer Stimmung, Empfindung bewusst zu werden, sich einer „Atmosphäre“ hinzugeben, kurz: Architektur statt von der Produktion *von der Konsumtion her* zu denken.

Aber diese Möglichkeit ist nur scheinbar. Denn in Wahrheit kehrt sich – bewusst oder unbewusst – in der Realisierung jeweils diese Fragestellung um: Vom naiven Ansatz *Welche atmosphärische Anmutung schwebt mir vor?* komme ich erst recht zur praktischen Produktionsfrage *Wie kann ich diese beabsich-*

tigte Wirkung erreichen? Oder vielmehr: Welche Mittel und welche von deren Wirkungen stehen mir zur Verfügung? Die Betrachtung aus der Gegenrichtung verändert rückkoppelnd die Ausgangsfragen.

### **Schlussbemerkung**

Auch die sensibelsten architektonischen Wirkungen unterliegen also selbstreferenziellen Entscheidungen, die verzweigtesten Entwurfsmotivationen sind solche der Produktion – es sei denn, wir entschlossen uns zu einer anderen Vorgangsweise. Wie könnte die begrifflich gefasst werden?

Nur als Verzicht auf genuine Kommunikation überhaupt. Den Konsumenten als Mittel betrachten heißt ihn auf niedrigeres Niveau stellen – es entsteht jenes Halbbewusstsein, das sich von der eigenen Produktion distanziert, die ja nur „für den Verkauf“ gemeint ist, sich ihr im Grunde überlegen und daher nicht verantwortlich fühlt. Mehr noch: Da jedermann irgendetwas „managt“, beurteilt er eine Sache nicht unmittelbar, sondern „fachmännisch“, ob der Bauernfang „gut gemacht“ ist.

Kann Architektur diesem Adornoschen „Verblendungszusammenhang“ entkommen, ihn durchbrechen? Das ist meine Frage: Lässt sich mit dem theoretischen Rüstzeug der differenzierten Moderne auch aus den unter *Branding*, *Theming*, *Imagineering* firmierenden Strategien ein kritisches Entwurfspotential gewinnen? Ist es selbst in solchem Zusammenhang möglich, den Rezipienten nicht als bloßes Mittel, sondern als Adressaten einer Wahrhaftigkeit, und sei es einer zynischen, zu setzen?

Wenn das eine moralische Frage ist, dann eine zentralere als die, ob wir in China bauen sollen oder nicht.

Vielleicht hilft auch Humor.







## **MAD Architects**

### Beijing

*MAD is a Beijing-based architectural design studio. In their work, they are examining and developing a unique concept of futurism through current theoretical practice in architectural design, landscape design, and urban planning.*

*In 2006, MAD was awarded the Architectural League Young Architects Forum Award. In the same year, MAD was shown at the 'MAD in China' exhibition in Venice during the Architecture Biennale, and the 'MAD Under Construction' exhibition at the Tokyo Gallery in Beijing. MAD's conceptual proposal, Super Star - A mobile China Town was exhibited in the Uneternal City of the 11th Architecture Biennale in Venice.*

*Ma Yansong received his Master of Architecture from the Yale University School of Architecture in 2002. Prior to founding MAD in 2004, Mr. Ma worked as a project designer with Zaha Hadid Architects and Eisenman Architects. He also taught architecture at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. In 2008, one of his built works, Hongluo Clubhouse, was nominated as one of the 100 designs by the London Design Museum. He was also nominated as one of the 20 most influential young architects today by ICON.*

# DESIGNING THE REALIZABLE UTOPIA

## *Ma Yansong in interview*

*David Bauer: Having founded your office in 2003, you were already invited to the Venice Biennale in 2009. Right now you are building all over China and other locations, such as Canada. How would you explain your rapid success?*

Ma Yansong: Actually we started in 2005 in China, but right after my graduation in 2003 I got registered in the United States. At that time I didn't have my own office and was still working for other people. After two years we decided to work as an office. During the first two years we were doing competitions just like every other newcomer. You had nothing built yet and no commissions. We weren't successful, I have to admit, until we won the competition for the Absolute Towers in Toronto. That was the first competition out of one hundred that was successful within these two years. The good news was that with this entry we became the first Chinese architects who actually won a major project outside of China. By that time—this was in 2006—the whole country was preparing for the Beijing Olympics 2008, but all of the important design commissions were given to foreign architects. This practice was criticized by many Chinese architects who claimed they were ready to handle important projects in China themselves. So, our victory in this Absolute Tower Competition suggested the opposite and gave rise to a lot of discussion within the Chinese media as well as internationally. People from outside saw in this incident a perfect example that Chinese offices can do something on an international stage.

Quickly after that, the government as well as private investors invited us to different competitions and with that offered us the chances to prove ourselves. That notion changed our situation dramatically. I think we were lucky, because it was a very unique period in the modern history of China. At that time the whole



*Fig. 1: The Absolute Towers.*

country basically changed. People earned more money and everybody demanded more exciting projects but couldn't find a Chinese architect to do that. It was a big opportunity. We proposed a lot of buildings from then on and some of them became real projects. On the international scene a lot of people pay attention to the Chinese development now, and not only in view of politics. That is mainly where this attention comes from.

*DB: Pictures of your work are spread over many different architectural blogs in the net. Do you think that the new media such as the Internet have accelerated the growth of your reputation?*

MY: Yeah, I became aware of this growing importance of architectural images. The big advantage of the Internet is that it can be updated very quickly and frequently, so one is able to come up with new images way faster than in the usual print media. With that on the other hand, there comes a growing demand for fresh pictures day by day.

Many young architects who are aware of this either tend to show their daily work and their process or they begin to produce work especially for the Internet.

*DB: Since you marked a turning point by winning the Absolute Tower competition, what is there for other young Chinese offices to expect?*

MY: Right now, more and more young architects go abroad to study with the intention of returning and running small offices here. So I think it will be more.

*DB: At the end of the International Bauhaus Colloquium Kari Jormakka argued that what matters is not architecture as an abstract entity but the actions of architects. With view on moral and social responsibility, how would you see your work and how would you define the role of the architect?*

MY: China is full of opportunities and challenges and after I graduated and decided to come back I wanted to take them on. Challenge means that you have a problem and as an architect you have the chance to propose what you think is best

*Fig. 2: Beijing 2050. Floating Island over the central business district.*



or at least better. Architecture for me is just a language to express my inner interests and give my opinion. If I weren't an architect I would still have my opinion and an urge to say what I think about society.

Especially in China, young architects have a lot of responsibility because we actually have a lot of power, more power than architects in other countries, because many politicians or decision-makers in China give orders to architects and expect architects to be their tools. If we have a group of mature architects who are able to strongly express their own opinion and negotiate differences within ideologies, politicians might listen to them. If we reach that point, we can on the one hand help to make a decision and also use our power critically.

Young architects, however, are always looking for opportunities, because they are not old enough to be that mature.

To sum this up, I think we are aware of our responsibility and trying to find our way to transfer this into our practice to make our ideal society happen.

*DB: That is a good point. You call your Beijing 2050 Project in your publication Mad Dinner, a "realizable Utopia". Do you see this just as a platonic proposal, or do you regard this as an upcoming building project? Could you describe how you propose a solution for different social agendas with these examples?*

MY: We did this Beijing 2050 Project in 2006 without any commission. It was just an expression of the daily problems we were facing. In the project we proposed a new Tianen Square, covered with a forest, as well as a Floating Island above the dense city center. At last we designed bubbles in the old historical, the Hutong quarter. I have been talking about those concepts in many interviews with the local media before, because we tried to transfer our thinking into images, so that more people in the public could easily understand it. Then we showed it in Venice, to gain attention for the different problems at an international level. At that time everyone was focusing on the Olympic buildings and the massive urban change in China. To be clear, I didn't think of realizing these big changes. The bubbles, one could say,



*Fig. 3: Beijing 2050. Bubble occupying a historical courtyard.*

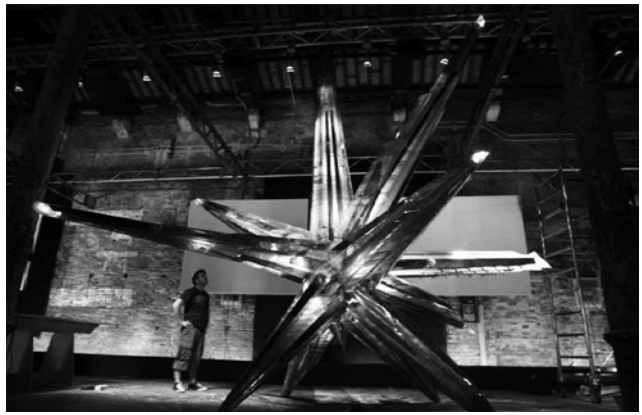
might have been a realistic issue but were only there to point out the problem of the dilapidation of the quarter. It was mainly to raise awareness and I was happy enough after that proposal got so much media attention. When I finish my drawing and can show it to people, it is already perfect to me, because others can see the new possibilities and from that point they can discuss it as an issue.

The interesting thing was that after we showed it, more and more people wanted to help us realize these things. One man who owned a courtyard wanted to build one of those bubbles, and told us, “Why do we have to wait until 2050? We can do it right now!” I was also asked by some officials to show Tianen Square Forest to the congress. My way of thinking is, that if you show your proposal and if it is the better thing for the city, more people will help you to get it through.

*DB: Another projects of yours, the Superstar, was shown at the Biennale. Does it also illustrate a utopian ideal?*

MY: I would call Superstar an artwork. It is not an architectural proposal. In 2006 the Chinese pavilion showed this strange installation with a very historical topic. At that point I thought that this had nothing to do with the real contemporary China and its actual issues. At the same year the Danish pavilion won the Golden Lion award. The funny thing is that the whole exhibition was dealing with urban issues in modern China. In 2008 we wanted to make an explosion in a literal way. The star was our explosion. It is also called a modern Chinatown, because in many ways it feels like contemporary China. The power and the boom we have are very massive. Basically it was a design out of context, in a physical as well as a historical and cultural sense, something we could put it in everywhere we wanted. This was our impression of the real China, which is why I would call it an artwork rather than an architectural project. Of course, it looks very much like a city, which is probably why some people refer to utopian ideas from the 60s. It has nothing to do with a city though; more with the issue we want to raise out of the context. That might be a bit unclear.

*Fig. 4: The Superstar on display at the 11<sup>th</sup> Venice Architecture Biennale.*



DB: *Would you consider yourself a Chinese architect or rather a global one?*

MY: I talked with the German architect Jürgen Mayer H. He said that there are no jobs for him in Germany and so he is mainly building internationally. For me it is similar. Of course, like I earlier said, I try to pick up as many jobs as possible in China, but I would like to build more projects around the world. The project in Toronto was the first one, but we did proposals for Dubai and Malaysia as well. They almost became real, but eventually did not go through. Next month I will be in Belgium where we were offered a very small project. But to be honest, Europe or America is full of good architects. Nobody has ever heard of Chinese architects and few would call a Chinese office with a job offer. So you have to work quite hard to build up an international reputation. With China, it is the opposite: the Chinese want to give their jobs to foreign offices.

DB: *Was that the reason why you decided to go to Yale for your education? After all it is one of the most prestigious universities in the world. Could you say a little more about your reasons for studying in the States and how it may have contributed to your career?*

MY: When I graduated from college, there were no private offices in China. All architectural offices at that time were huge companies owned by the government. As a young graduate you had two chances: Either you work for them or you go to a graduate school. So the only choice I saw, in order to gain a good education, was to go to another country. I didn't actually care which school. On my graduation day, the Dean of Yale, Robert Stern, drew a really impressive conclusion. He said that from this day on each and everyone of us students has to forget what we have learned in this school. I try to make this clear. What he meant was that in school there are so many good teachers and masters, which are all fully aware of their skills and attitudes. So they argue and fight each other all of the time. In order to get through all of this, you have to establish your own judgments from this environment. The year before I worked with Zaha Hadid. She is a very independent and strong character and she likes to transport this attitude to her students. She



*Fig. 5: The Superstar as a contemporary, mobile Chinatown*

was the first person, which introduced me to contemporary art. So apart from all architectural education, that was a big step. Furthermore, as one probably knows, in China you always get told that the individual shouldn't be so special and different. But from my present point of view I would say that architecture is about the expression of you personal point of view and of your beliefs. Without that there will be no good architecture.

*DB: If you look back at your work, what does it tell you about yourself and your beliefs?*

MY: I have to say I haven't defined them yet, but I am improving. I still have a lot of different interests, such as nature and many other things. I think I am quite lucky that at my age I have not yet finalized myself.







*GRAFT is an architectural firm located in Los Angeles, Berlin, and Beijing. Their collective professional experience encompasses a wide array of building types including Fine Arts, Educational, Institutional, Commercial and Residential facilities. The firm has won numerous awards in Europe as well as in the United States. GRAFT was established in 1998 in Los Angeles by Lars Krückeberg, Wolfram Putz and Thomas Willemeit and opened an office in Berlin in 2001. In 2003 GRAFT opened an office in Beijing with Gregor Hoheisel as partner for the asian market. In 2007 Alejandra Lillo became Partner for the office in Los Angeles. GRAFT was conceived as a 'Label' for Architecture, Urban Planning, Design, Music, and the "pursuit of happiness". Since*

## **GRAFT**

Los Angeles, Berlin, Beijing

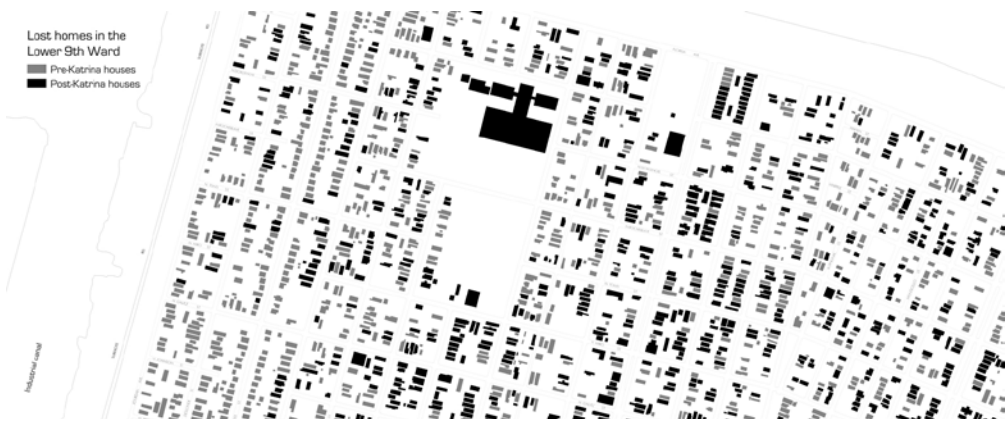
*the firm was established, it has been commissioned to design and manage a wide range of projects in multiple disciplines and locations. With the core of the firm's enterprises gravitating around the field of architecture and the built environment, GRAFT has always maintained an interest in crossing the boundaries between disciplines and "grafting" the creative potentials and methodologies of different realities. This is reflected in the firm's expansion into the fields of exhibition design and product design, art installations, academic projects and "events" as well as in the variety of project locations in Germany, China, UAE, Russia, Georgia, in the U.S. and Mexico, to name a few.*

# ARCHITECTURE IN TIMES OF NEED

The humanitarian challenges we currently face as a global community are vast in quantity, geographic scope, and in regard to their respective complexities. Pollution and global warming, the spread of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, the lack of potable water, adequate nutritional supplies, proper sanitation, and shelter in many parts of the world compose the most readily noticeable issues. There are also the matters of armed conflict and the lack of education, both of which often exacerbate existing problems. The daunting task of determining which issues to focus upon and how to provide solutions leaves many nonplussed. Ultimately, neglecting any of these issues will compromise the stability of human life on this planet. It is up to each one of us to contribute to the eradication of the great dangers that are present within so many people's lives and to come to the aid of those in harm's way when catastrophe occurs.

The Make It Right project sought to identify a center of attention and action, a pressure point within the urban fabric of New Orleans, which will trigger the redevelopment of larger areas within the city, and potentially identify techniques for providing shelter to those in need around the globe. The Lower Ninth Ward was chosen as the epicenter for this change. The most devastated neighborhood in New Orleans, the Lower Ninth Ward is predominantly occupied by low-income families, whose available monetary means for rebuilding are limited, if not nonexistent. However, this neighborhood composes one of the richest cultural communities in the country and was, until Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, a comprehensive vibrant crossroad of families, music, and social interaction in New Orleans.

With any given challenge, developing a robust solution requires proper identification of all of the factors in play, all the needs that could be met. The more

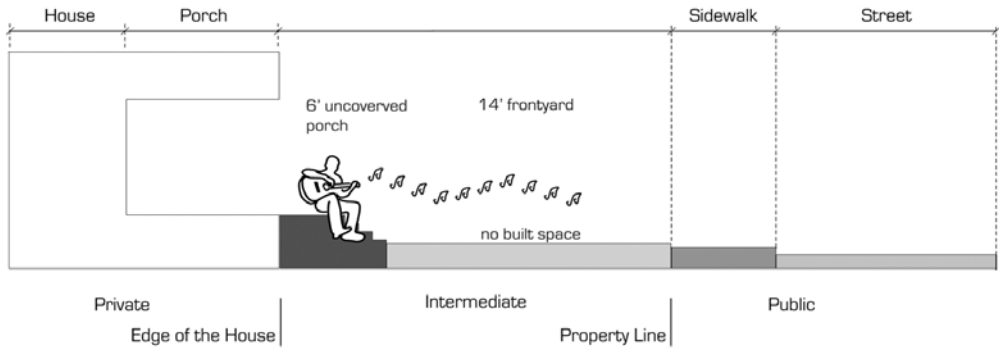


comprehensive and specifically those factors are defined and the more accurately they are evaluated insofar as to how one factor relates to another, the more likely an ideal solution becomes. Within the discipline of architecture, the base necessities that a building must service have historically been too thin. Due to the knowledge accumulated over the hundreds of years of design and the increasingly effective and powerful technologies, buildings can now do more for less. Providing built solutions that account solely for proper sanitation and shelter from adverse environmental conditions stands as merely adequate.

We must acknowledge the immense value of retaining cultural capital and preserving the world's ethnosphere as well as its biosphere. We must remember that built architecture ideally serves entities other than itself, that buildings are to be used as tools not only for survival but also for harnessing the vast imaginative and creative energies so unique to our species.

As Albert Einstein so astutely stated, "Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted." And so it is that all of which was lost to the Lower Ninth Ward's residents cannot be summed up through the enumeration of physical requirements. Many of the complex needs left in the wake of Katrina are difficult to define in a positivist manner, yet these needs are so powerful that they become tangible. The majority of the homes were passed down through the decades, holding the memories of many generations, as well as providing families with grounding and identity. These homes formed a cornerstone of the once vibrant New Orleans community.

Cultural considerations for rebuilding this community are every bit as crucial as finding proper resolution for the functional, safety, and sustainability needs. As a culture rich in history, music, as well as community interaction, the uniqueness of the Lower Ninth Ward can be reinvigorated, cherished, understood, and physically expressed as such. The psychological resonance the building has with its occupant, the sense of well-being it provides, and the ability to create a platform from which the residents can meaningfully and creatively interact with the world around themselves is fundamentally the heart of design.

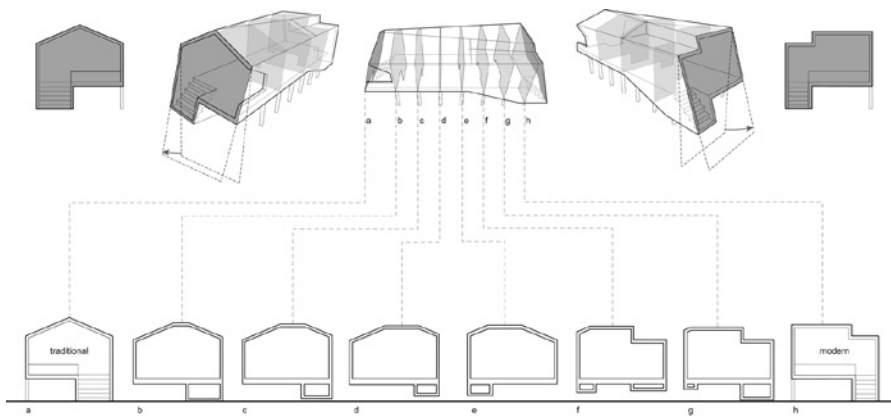


When faced with the vast undertaking of rebuilding the Lower Ninth Ward, the sense of urgency becomes almost overwhelming, calling for an immediate solution: Shelter for those who have lost their homes, provided without hesitation as efficiently and affordably as possible. However, it is at this moment when, as architects and planners, it is most critical to comprehend the distinction between providing shelter and providing a home.

Although globalization has led to new and sweeping opportunities, it has also brought about the endangerment of diversity, “the erosion of humanity’s cultural and intellectual legacy.” Public housing projects, while rapidly providing affordable shelter solutions, imperil diversity, suppress the human spirit, and obfuscate the means to establishing dynamic communities. Projects have never existed within the Lower Ninth Ward, which is not hard to believe upon realizing that the area has an exceptionally high percentage of owner-occupied housing. The suburban project, although markedly more generous of an environment than public housing, typically provides little variation and often neglects to incorporate local cultural conditions.

Ideally, architecture reinforces the capabilities, drives, and ambitions of each individual, as well as the local, regional, and global communities within which each individual belongs. The more positive reinforcement architecture provides, the more a house becomes a home, subsequently espousing uniqueness, the empowerment of individuals, families, and communities. As architects and planners we must foment the opportunities for maintaining or potentially even increasing positive diversity as a core pursuit. In order to understand and contextualize the spirit of the problems needing resolution in New Orleans more intimately, MIR collaborates with a large group of local associations throughout the rebuilding initiative. The Lower Ninth Ward Stakeholders Coalition is an active part of the Make it Right Project, working on site to develop the housing initiative in cooperation with the residents of the Lower Ninth Ward from the onset of the process.

The residents have been generous with their time, participating in lengthy and candid discussions regarding their lifestyles, fears, the values they hold dear, the



beautiful and profound meaning of community specific to the Lower Ninth Ward, the optimism and belief in the revitalization of New Orleans, and the heartfelt hope to finally come home. Landownership is a fundamental core belief that forms part of the American Dream; it is the belief in this dream, the belief in their family and extended family of community that fuels what could best be described as a grassroots movement, MIR. These dialogues have provided remarkable insights to a dignified people whose perseverance is exemplary.

Helplessness echoes vehemently as an underlying sentiment of the victims of Katrina: initiated during the storm, carried into the subsequent diaspora, and reinforced by ineffectual government assistance. Community residents had no other choice than to abandon their homes, their lives, and seek shelter across the country. One of the strongest countermeasures that can be provided to the individual is the power of choice. The process of selecting their house design provides an outlet for control to be returned to the landowner; it offers the expression of individuality, pride, and difference. Empowerment of the individual provides a platform for personal and family growth, from which a powerful sense of community can emerge.

Despite recent efforts to provide affordable modular housing to an ever-depleting middle class, the outcomes ultimately fail to hit a middle-income target audience. Architecture over the last fifty years has increasingly become a discipline which services the upper and upper-middle class, generating the perception that it is an elitist pursuit. Ideally, however, architecture can and should provide solutions for all social strata. The ultimate goal for architecture is to better the quality of life for mankind. Design is a necessary tool to change surroundings, to create a sense of well-being. A product and vehicle for progress, design is capable of improving living conditions at all scales of civilization. Architecture lays a groundwork onto which community can be created. Primarily a product of technological advancement and experience gained from our collective history, mankind's ability to communicate is progressively becoming more intricate in range, specificity, and means. As communication directly folds into community forma-



tion and evolution, we have found ourselves as members of communities that are wider in geographic scope, more robust in content, and intertwined through more infrastructural systems. Additionally, as inter-community communication has grown so have interdependence and the formation of the world as an ever-tightening, increasingly detailed web of information and influence. Identified as a pressure point within present-day civilization, the community of the Lower Ninth Ward, through its rebuilding and the sharing of the rebuilding process, is capable of positively affecting the condition of the communities of designers, donors, New Orleans, the United States, and the remainder of the world. It is about the positive growth of our species and consequently cannot be exclusive to certain social classes. We are a single community, a community that must take the time to rebuild trust and to bolster the growth of one another.



## **Jane Rendell**

### University College London

*Professor Jane Rendell is Director of Architectural Research at the Bartlett, UCL. An architectural designer and historian, art critic and writer, her work has explored various interdisciplinary intersections: feminist theory and architectural history, fine art and architectural design, autobiographical writing and criticism. She is author of Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism (2010), Art and Architecture (2006), The Pursuit of Pleasure (2002) and co-editor of Pattern (2007), Critical Architecture (2007), Spatial Imagination*

*(2005), The Unknown City (2001), Intersections (2000), Gender Space Architecture (1999) and Strangely Familiar (1995). Her talks and texts have been commissioned by artists such as Daniel Arsham and Bik Van Der Pol, and galleries, as the Baltic, the Hayward, Kunstmuseum Thon, the Serpentine, the Tate and the Whitechapel. She is on the Editorial Board for ARQ (Architectural Research Quarterly), Haececity, The Happy Hypocrite, The Issues and the Journal of Visual Culture in Britain.*



# TRAFALGAR SQUARE: *DÉTOURNEMENTS*

## *A Site-Writing*

In this paper I would like to argue that it is still possible to adopt a critical position with respect to architecture and urban space, and to exemplify this through a presentation of part of my recent project of site-writing. The paper is composed of three sections: first a discussion of how new possibilities for critical architecture require rethinking the relationship between criticism and design in terms of critical spatial practice, second a discussion of how Jean Laplanche's understanding of Copernican and Ptolemaic movement might inform an understanding of the tension between decentering and recentering in criticism – between the critic's objective, as Ptolemaic subject, to position the work according to his/her own agenda, situating it around the centre s/he occupies, and the potential Copernican revolution provoked by a work and its setting, which sends the critic off on new trajectories, and finally the presentation of 'Trafalgar Square: *Détournements* (A Site-Writing)'.<sup>1</sup>

### **Critical Architecture**

The 'Critical Architecture' conference which I co-organised with collaborators Jonathan Hill, Mark Dorrian and Murray Fraser questioned the assumed division between design and criticism and proposed instead that as forms of architectural

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1 Sections of this paper have been taken from Jane Rendell: "Critical Architecture: Between Criticism and Design." In: Jane Rendell, Jonathan Hill, Murray Fraser and Mark Dorrian (eds.): *Critical Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1–8 and Jane Rendell, *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*, (London: IB Tauris, 2010). Many thanks to Routledge and IB Tauris for permission to reproduce these sections.

critical practice operating within an interdisciplinary context their relationship could be rethought.

Given the recent appropriation of the term interdisciplinarity in much of the literature concerning research in academe and higher education, where the word is now used in place of multidisciplinary, it seems important to briefly outline how an interdisciplinary approach can be distinguished from a multidisciplinary one. Long before its adoption and redefinition as part of recent research assessment and funding council terminology in the United Kingdom, the term interdisciplinary had been theorised and practiced in critical discourse.<sup>2</sup> As a term associated with a desire to produce political critique, interdisciplinary research calls into question the ideological apparatus that structures the terms and methods of specific disciplinary practices.<sup>3</sup> The writings of Julia Kristeva and Homi K. Bhabha among many others make this point clear.<sup>4</sup> The aim of such work is to question dominant processes that seek to control intellectual and creative production, and instead generate new resistant forms and modes of knowledge and understanding. It seems to me that the need for interdisciplinary research, as I have defined it, is crucial. It does not, I argue, reflect a desire to work to existing standards, rather it is the kind of transformative activity that intellectual and creative life requires to critique and question such ‘norms’.

When Jonathan Hill and I first talked about our ambitions for the conference, we both wished to hold an event that would stimulate a discussion concerning the relationship between criticism and design in architecture and related disciplines.

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2 I would like to refute the position put forward by Peter Carl that: ‘The term “interdisciplinary” comes from trying to find respect in research-driven universities [...]’ and argue that an interdisciplinary drive comes from the desire to critique the ideological operations at work in many disciplinary conventions, and that it is the language of academic bureaucracy that is appropriating and attempting to de-politicize interdisciplinarity. See Peter Carl: “Practical Wisdom and Disciplinary Knowledge”, *Architecture Research Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2005, pp. 5–8, p. 5.

3 This is a response to Felipe Hernández’s provocation that ‘interdisciplinary research’ might only be ‘the reserve of the wealthier schools of architecture in larger urban centres’. See Felipe Hernández: “The Scope of Critical Architecture.” In: see note 2, pp. 8–9, p. 9. I argue that since the practice of interdisciplinary activity is a political necessity not a material luxury, it does not make sense to align interdisciplinary research with affluence, rather it should be understood to emerge from the desire for political critique.

4 See for example Julia Kristeva: “Institutional Interdisciplinarity in Theory and Practice: An Interview.” In: Alex Coles and Alexia Defert (eds.): *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity, De-, Dis-, Ex*, v. 2, London: Black Dog Publishing, 1997, pp. 3–21. Homi K. Bhabha has described the moment of encounter between disciplines as an ‘ambivalent movement between pedagogical and performative address’. See Homi K. Bhabha: *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 163.

The term 'Critical Architecture' emerged as a short-hand for critical architectural practice and as a simple way of marking a place between criticism and design in architecture. In tracking back through the key turns in this debate, it became apparent that this had been, to date, an almost entirely North American conversation. And that the time had come to find out how critical architecture was understood throughout the world.

Let's track back though for a few moments on the key turns in the debate up to 2004.

In his 1984 paper 'Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form' K. Michael Hays argues that critical architecture is possible and operates between two poles, resisting cultural determinism on the one hand and recognising that autonomy is required for engagement on the other; the work of Mies van der Rohe is cited as an example.<sup>5</sup> At the end of his article, he states this aspiration:

*If critical architectural design is resistant and oppositional, then architectural criticism—as activity and knowledge—should be openly critical as well.*<sup>6</sup>

In 2002 in the paper 'Notes around the Doppler Effect and other Moods of Modernism',<sup>7</sup> Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting's advocate an architecture linked to 'the diagrammatic, the atmospheric and cool performance' as an alternative to the critical project which they describe as indexical, dialectical and as 'hot representation'.<sup>8</sup> Their approach is grounded in a rejection of a disciplinarity that is autonomous and a dialectic that is oppositional, as represented by the work of Hays and, also, Peter Eisenman.

The special issue of *Perspecta* in which Somol and Whiting's paper was published also contained articles in support of the critical architecture project. Diane Ghirardo, for example, argued from a historical perspective that as well as believing that architectural resistance to capitalism was impossible, architectural critic and historian Manfredo Tafuri had also noted that there was 'an architecture which attempted to redistribute the capitalist division of labour' and that this was evident in the work of Raymond Unwin, Ernst May and Hannes Meyer among

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5 K. Michael Hays: "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form", *Perspecta*, vol. 21, 1981, pp. 14–29.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

7 Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting: "Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism." In: Michael Osman, Adam Ruedig, Matthew Seidel, and Lisa Tilney (eds.): *Mining Autonomy*, a special issue of *Perspecta*, 33, 2002, pp. 72–7.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

others.<sup>9</sup> While a number of articles have been published subsequently, in the *Harvard Design Review* and elsewhere, which take up various positions around the post-critical, from those who are somewhat disbelieving of the post-critical, to those who support the call by a younger generation to engage with market forces and reject theory.<sup>10</sup>

Like many of the contributors to *Critical Architecture* I find myself in favour of some of the features attributed to a post-critical architecture by Somol and Whiting, namely that we should move from architecture as discipline to performance or practice, and regard the participation of users as integral to architectural production. However, contra Somol and Whiting, I strongly believe that the social and the cultural are highly relevant aspects of architectural practice. Given the disastrous changes to the earth's climate caused by carbon dioxide emissions, along with the intensification of imperialist aggression by oil dependant nations as demand outstrips supply, for me it is not possible to go along with corporate capitalism in a pragmatic mode, without critique—to do so would be to support without question the inequalities that are integral aspects of this economic system.

In an interview with the editors of the 'Mining Autonomy' issue of *Perspecta*, Hays asserted that for him the term critical derived from critical theory and could be summed up as: 'the constant imagination, search for, and construction of alternatives [...]' so claiming creativity and productivity for the critical and effectively neutralising the post-critical position.<sup>11</sup> My own position strongly resonates with this.

If, following Raymond Geuss (in turn following Marx), critical theory can be defined in terms of self-reflectivity and the desire to change the world,<sup>12</sup> then when any activity takes on the task of self-reflection and evidence a desire for so-

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9 Diane Y. Ghirardo: "Manfredo Tafuri and Architectural Theory in the U.S., 1970–2000." In: Michael Osman, Adam Ruedig, Matthew Seidel, and Lisa Tilney (eds.): *Mining Autonomy*, a special issue of *Perspecta*, 33, 2002, pp. 38–47, p. 40.

10 For a discussion that examines the relationship between critical and post-critical in terms of an intellectual genealogy see George Baird: "'Criticality' and its Discontents", *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 21, Fall 2004/Winter 2005. For a paper that rejects the post-critical position, see Reinhold Martin: "Critical of What? Toward a Utopian Realis," *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 22, Spring/Summer 2005, pp. 104–109; and for one which supports it, see for example, Michael Speaks: *Architectural Record*, June 2005, pp. 73–5.

11 K. Michael Hays, Lauren Kogod and the Editors: "Twenty Projects at the Boundaries of the Architectural Discipline examined in relation to the Historical and Contemporary Debates over Autonomy." In: Michael Osman, Adam Ruedig, Matthew Seidel, and Lisa Tilney (eds.): *Mining Autonomy*, a special issue of *Perspecta*, 33, 2002., pp. 54–71, p. 58.

12 Raymond Geuss: *The Idea of Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 2.

cial change it can be described as critical. It is not clear to me then why the contemporary condition of late and almost collapsed capitalism would disallow this position. By placing architecture in an interdisciplinary context and considering its various activities as forms of critical practice that operate through buildings, drawings, texts and actions, it is possible to think of criticism and design as forms of critical practice, and examine the relationship between them.

In my recent book *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* I coin the term ‘critical spatial practice’ to define modes of self-reflective public art which seek to question the social conditions of the sites into which they intervene.<sup>13</sup> Through the process of writing this book I came to understand that my own position between art, architecture and theory was constantly changing and influenced my interpretative accounts. I concluded *Art and Architecture* by arguing that criticism is a form of situated practice in its own right, one that is critical and spatial.<sup>14</sup>

My current work explores the position of the author, not only in relation to theoretical ideas, art objects, and architectural spaces, but also to the site of writing itself. This interest has evolved into a practice that I call ‘site-writing’, an activity that investigates the often-changing positions we occupy as critics materially, conceptually, emotionally and ideologically. ‘Site-Writing’ is what happens when discussions concerning site-specificity extend to investigate the sites of relation between two subjects—the writer (the critic/theorist/historian) and his/her subject matter—here the design of the structure of the text and the spatial qualities of the writing become as important in making an argument as the content.<sup>15</sup>

This paper takes the spatial structure of a *détournement* of the public art of London’s Trafalgar Square, so I want to move now and consider the spatial form of the *détournement*, in terms of decentring.

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13 Jane Rendell: *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London: IB Tauris, 2006).

14 The key instigator for my site-writing project was my 1998 essay entitled ‘Doing it, (Un)Doing it, (Over)Doing it Yourself: Rhetorics of Architectural Abuse’, Jonathan Hill (ed.): *Occupying Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 229–46. I then developed it as a pedagogic tool through site-specific writing courses at the Bartlett from 2001, and as a mode of spatializing art-writing through a series of texts and works, usually written in response to invitations brought together in Jane Rendell: *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism* (London: IB Tauris, 2010). Elsewhere I have called this form of criticism—‘architecture-writing’. See, for example, Jane Rendell: “Architecture-writing.” In: Jane Rendell (ed.): *Critical Architecture, Special Issue of The Journal of Architecture*, June, vol. 10, no. 3 (2005) pp. 255–64.

15 On art and site-specificity see for example, Alex Coles (ed.): *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*, London: Black Dog Publishing, 2000; Nick Kaye: *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place And Documentation*, London: Routledge, 2000; and Miwon Kwon: *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002.

### Jean Laplanche's 'Copernican Revolution'

If criticism can be defined by the purpose of providing a commentary (for some a judgement, for others a discriminating point of view, for others yet a response or perhaps even a point of departure) on a cultural work—art, literature, film and architecture—then criticism always has an other in mind. If so, the central task of criticism might be considered as: how does one make a relationship with an other? It is this question, which is at the heart of psychoanalysis. As Jessica Benjamin writes:

*An intersubjective theory of the self is one that poses the question of how and whether the self can actually achieve a relationship to an outside other without, through identification, assimilating or being assimilated by it.*<sup>16</sup>

In thinking more carefully about the position of the other in criticism and psychoanalysis, the work of Jean Laplanche is illuminating. For Laplanche, it is the embedding of the alterity of the mother in the child, which places an other in the subject. This other is also an other to the mother—as it comes from her unconscious. Thus the message imparted to the subject by the other (for Laplanche the mother or concrete other) is an enigma both to the receiver but also to the sender of the message: the 'messages are enigmatic because [...] [they] are strange to themselves.'<sup>17</sup>

In Laplanche's view, some aspects of the adult's enigmatic message are translated, while others are excluded and repressed, becoming unconscious.<sup>18</sup> In his account repression—the negative side of the translation of the enigmatic message—produces dislocation.<sup>19</sup> During the process of repression the initial Copernican relationship, where the centre of gravity is located in the other, radically alters to become a Ptolemaic one, centered on the self. According to Laplanche, once the ego is constituted as an agency, the psychic system shuts in on itself, and the external otherness of *der Andere* (the other person) undergoes primary repression to become the internal otherness of *das Andere* (the other thing).<sup>20</sup>

16 Jessica Benjamin: *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 80.

17 Cathy Caruth: *An Interview with Jean Laplanche*, © 2001 Cathy Caruth. See <http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/text-only/issue.101/11.2caruth.txt> (accessed 3 May 2006).

18 Jean Laplanche: "A Short Treatise on the Unconscious" [1993] translated by Luke Thurston, *Essays on Otherness*, pp. 84–116, p. 97.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

20 Jean Laplanche: "The Aims of the Psychoanalytic Process," translated by Joan Tambureno, *Journal of European Psychoanalysis*, v. 5 (Spring–Fall 1997) pp. 69–79, p. 75.

Laplanche argues that analysis is a return to the originary situation, which finds its ‘immediate centre of gravity in the other’,<sup>21</sup> and that it is sometimes able to maintain an ‘opening-up’, which can be ‘transferred into other fields of otherness’. Laplanche calls this ‘the transference of the transference ... the transference of the relation to the enigma as such’.<sup>22</sup>

To explain the ‘cyclical character of the dynamics of transference’, Laplanche uses a spiral, more precisely a helix, to represent the process of analysis. He distinguishes between a movement around the centre of a circle, which passes repeatedly through the same points on the circumference, and a journey, which, by moving forward along the axis of a helix, passes through the same points but in different elaborations.<sup>23</sup> Laplanche compares the choosing of the moment for the end of analysis to the astronaut’s option of possible ‘windows’ for take-off, where to miss a window is to be pulled back into the earth’s gravity for one more turn.<sup>24</sup> The parameters at stake in analysis he says are no less complex, indeed even more conjectural and aleatory than interstellar navigation. The end of analysis involves not only internal dynamics (turns and windows) but also the external situation, which includes the provocation of the other.<sup>25</sup>

Laplanche’s ‘conclusion’ concerning the Copernican or ‘decentering revolution’ is as follows:

*Internal alien-ness maintained, held in place by external alien-ness; external alien-ness, in turn, held in place by the enigmatic relation of the other to his own internal alien ...*<sup>26</sup>

In order to explore how Laplanche’s understanding of Copernican and Ptolemaic movement informs art and culture, this configuration explores site-writing’s key structuring mechanism—the tension between decenterings and recenterings—between the critic’s objective, as Ptolemaic subject, to position the work according to

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21 Jean Laplanche: “The Unfinished Copernican Revolution” [1992] translated by Luke Thurston, *Essays on Otherness*, edited by John Fletcher (London: Routledge, 1999) pp. 52–83, p. 83.

Fletcher explains that Laplanche’s neologism *étrangereté* has been translated as ‘alien-ness’ rather than ‘strangeness’ in order to denote the irreducible strangeness of the alien’s external origin, as opposed to the subjective and more relative term ‘strange’. See p. 62, footnote 21.

22 Jean Laplanche: “Sublimation and/or Inspiration,” translated by Luke Thurston and John Fletcher, *New Formations* v. 48 (2002) pp. 30–50, p. 50.

23 Jean Laplanche: “Transference: its Provocation by the Analyst” [1992] translated by Luke Thurston, *Essays on Otherness*, edited by John Fletcher (London: Routledge, 1999) pp. 214–233, p. 231.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 231–232, see figures 1 and 2.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

26 Laplanche, see note 21, p. 80.

his/her own agenda, situating it around the centre s/he occupies, and the potential Copernican revolution provoked by a work and its setting, which sends the critic off on new trajectories. Through a series of *détournements* the sculptures at the heart of London's Trafalgar Square are decentered, relocating the critical gaze first to the 'other' within—the repressed acts of resistance which have taken place in this public square, then to the 'other' without—the sites of battle in colonial India to which a number of the sculptures refer, and finally to aspects of contemporary oil wars which are persistently being overlooked (the other without's other within)—sites of destruction in Iraq.

The paper was originally written in June 2007 for a talk commissioned by the National Gallery, London. As part of Architecture Week they invited a number of architectural historians to talk about the architecture depicted in various paintings in the gallery, because of my work on public art they suggested that I might discuss the sculptures in front of the gallery, in Trafalgar Square.<sup>27</sup>

### **Trafalgar Square: *Détournements* (A Site-Writing)**

The term *détournement* used by the Situationists, refers to a particular critical strategy, where images produced by the spectacle, are altered or subverted so that their meaning opposes rather than supports the status quo. In the following *détournement* of the public sculptures of Trafalgar Square, I take the reader on a tour interrupted by three detours. Each detour, informed by the critical spatial practice adopted by a specific artwork, is in itself a *détournement*.<sup>28</sup> These detours interrupt and subvert the dominant operations of power in this urban place, working through site-writing to decentre the sculptures from their position in a square, which aims to maintain itself at the centre of empire.

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With the Palace of Westminster to the South, Whitehall to the East and Buckingham Palace to the west, Trafalgar Square is situated at the symbolic seat of pow-

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<sup>27</sup> This text was originally written as a talk commissioned by the National Gallery, London and delivered on 6 June 2007. As part of Architecture Week a number of architectural historians were invited to talk about the architecture depicted in various paintings in the gallery, because of my work on public art it was suggested that I might discuss the sculptures in front of the gallery in Trafalgar Square. This contextual detail is important because it locates the site of the delivery of the talk—the National Gallery overlooking Trafalgar Square. A new version of the talk was later delivered as a paper at *Power and Space*, University of Cambridge, 5–7 December 2007 and has been further developed here.

<sup>28</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these works and my understanding of how public art can operate as a 'critical spatial practice' see note 13.



er and the centre of government. It is enclosed by structures of religious, imperial and cultural capital: on the north side, the National Gallery; on the east side, the church of St Martin's-in-the-Fields and South Africa House; and on the west side, Canada House.

Trafalgar Square was built based on the architect Charles Barry's designs of 1840 for the site of the King's News.<sup>29</sup> A 5.5 metre statue of Admiral Nelson stands at its centre on top of a 46 metre granite column. The sandstone statue at the top, sculpted by E. H. Baily, a member of the Royal Academy, faces south towards the Palace of Westminster. The monument was designed by architect William Railton in 1838 and constructed by the firm Peto & Grissell between 1840 and 1843. The top of the Corinthian column (based on the Temple of Mars Ultor in Rome) is embellished with bronze acanthus leaves cast from British cannons. Four bronze panels, made from captured French guns, decorate the square pedestal and depict Nelson's four great battle victories: to the west, The Battle of St Vincent (1797); to the north, The Battle of The Nile (1798); to the east, The Battle of Copenhagen (1801); and to the south, The Battle of Trafalgar (1805) where the British Navy defeated the French and Spanish to establish British Naval supremacy, and in which Nelson lost his life.



*Fig. 1: John Edward Carew, The Battle of Trafalgar (1805) (1838) Trafalgar Square, London.*

<sup>29</sup> All details of the history of the art and architecture of Trafalgar Square are taken from Rodney Mace: *Trafalgar Square: Emblem of Empire* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2005).

### **Detour 1: The Battle of Orgreave**

Artist Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (17 June 2001) commissioned by Art Angel was a restaging of one of the most violent confrontations of the miners' strike that took place on 18 June 1984 in the town of Orgreave outside Sheffield in the United Kingdom.<sup>30</sup> Orgreave marked a turning point in the strike and the first use of military strategies by the police for settling resistance. Deller's apparent concern was with an accurate restaging of the events as they had occurred. He involved a battle enactment society to restage the battle: some miners chose to play themselves and some sons played their fathers, though only one policeman played himself.

By appearing to fall in line with the principles of re-enactment and the society's dogged desire for so-called historical accuracy in replaying the battle scenes, Deller's approach revealed a certain irony in pointing to its own obsession with historical facts. The presence of cameras filming the battle for broadcast as a documentary film directed for television by Mike Figgis enhanced the role-playing aspect of the event, prioritizing a consideration of the 'facts' not as they had occurred in the past but as they were being constructed in the present. In attempting to recreate a political struggle that took place at a specific moment, *The Battle of Orgreave* shows how an act of remembering the past can reconfigure a particular place as a critical space in the present. In so doing, it demonstrates the revolutionary impetus offered by a specific historical moment and the importance repetition can offer in recognizing this potential and keeping it alive.

Trafalgar Square has been the site of rebellion since its construction. In 1848, 100,000 Chartists occupied Trafalgar Square arguing for Universal suffrage for all men over the age of 21, equal-sized electoral districts, voting by secret ballot, an end to the need for a property qualification for Parliament, pay for members of Parliament and the annual election of Parliament. The most violent demonstration in Trafalgar Square I can remember took place in 1990 against Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's new policies for extracting a poll tax, an unjust form of tax, which demanded a uniform fixed amount per individual regardless of income.

On 9 June 2007, the weekend after I delivered the first version of this text as a talk in the National Gallery overlooking Trafalgar Square, I was part of *Enough*, a protest against the occupation of Palestine. It took place in Trafalgar Square,

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30 See Gerrie van Noord (ed.): *Off Limits, 40 Artangel Projects* (London: Artangel, 2002) pp. 190–195 and Jeremy Deller: *The Battle of Orgreave* (London: Artangel, 2002). See also Dave Beech, review of Jeremy Deller: "The Battle of Orgreave," *Art Monthly* (July–August 2001) pp. 38–39 and Rendell, note 13, pp. 61–63.

a public space at the heart of the capital city of a democratic country, but one at war, with military strikes perpetrated by the British army, along with its allies namely the United States and Israel, not just in Palestine but also Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon. On that day, a message was delivered via video link-up from Ismail Haniya, a senior political leader of Hamas, and at that time, the democratically elected Prime Minister of the Palestine National Authority. Less than a week later, on 14 June 2007, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, member of the Fatah party, dismissed him from office. Haniya has refused to acknowledge this dismissal and continues to exercise *de facto* authority in the Gaza Strip.<sup>31</sup> His party Hamas is classified as a terrorist organisation by the United States and European Union, but the government of the United Kingdom only place its military arm, Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassem Brigades, in this category.<sup>32</sup>

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Let us continue our tour of Trafalgar Square and take a look at some of the statues. Along the base of the National Gallery are three busts. First there is David Beatty who took part in actions during World War I. He was appointed Admiral of the Fleet and served as First Sea Lord until 1927 when he was created 1st Earl Beatty, Viscount Borodale and Baron Beatty of the North Sea and Brooksby. Next there is John Jellicoe who was in command of the British fleet at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. He was made a Viscount in 1918 and became Governor-General of New Zealand from September 1920 to November 1924. On his return to England in 1925, he was made an Earl. And finally there is Andrew Cunningham who was Admiral of the Fleet in World War II.

There are also a number of freestanding statues. To the south there is Charles I, put in place in 1676 before the square itself was built, removed by Cromwell and reinstated by Charles II. At the corners of the square are four plinths, three of which hold statues: to the north east, there is George IV from the 1840s; to the south east, Major General Sir Henry Havelock, made by William Behnes in 1861; and to the south west, General Sir Charles James Napier, made by George Cannon Adams in 1855.

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31 See for example [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ismail\\_Haniyeh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ismail_Haniyeh) (accessed 8 June 2008).

32 See <http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/legislation/current-legislation/terrorism-act-2000/proscribed-terrorist-groups?version=1> (accessed 8 June 2008). See also <http://tna.europarchive.org/20100419081706/http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorist-threat/proscribed-terrorist-orgs/proscribed-terrorist-groups/> (accessed 14 July 2010).



*Fig. 2: George Cannon Adams, General Sir Charles James Napier (1855).*

### **Detour 2: Better Scenery**

In 1965–1966 Robert Smithson worked as a consultant artist for an architectural firm called TAMS on designs for Dallas Forth Worth Airport. The project prompted his consideration of how artworks might be viewed from the air but also how to communicate aspects of these exterior artworks to passengers in the terminal building. This latter aspect he termed the ‘non-site’,<sup>33</sup> and his interest in the ‘dialogue between the indoor and the outdoor’ led him to develop ‘a method or a dialectic that involved ... site and non-site’.<sup>34</sup>

Smithson’s radical gesture, which located the site of the work outside the territory of the gallery and the gallery itself as the non-site where the work is documented, has been recuperated today. The contemporary commissioning process has established a new terminology that reverses Smithson’s dialectic. Many pub

<sup>33</sup> Robert Smithson: “Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site” [1967] Jack Flam (ed.): *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996) pp. 52–60. See also Suzaan Boettger: *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002) pp. 55–58.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Smithson: “*Earth Symposium at White Museum, Cornell University*” [1969], Flam, *Robert Smithson*, pp. 177–187, p. 178.

lic art galleries term those works they commission for sites outside the gallery, 'off-site', reclaiming the gallery position as the site of central importance to art.<sup>35</sup>

As part of a two-year 'off-site' programme the Camden Arts Centre invited Adam Chodsko to make a new work.<sup>36</sup> His intervention, *Better Scenery* (2000) consisted of two signs, one located in the Arizona Desert and the other in the car park of a new shopping centre, the O2 Centre, in Camden.<sup>37</sup> The plain yellow lettering on the black face of each sign gives clear directions of how to get to the other sign. Both sets of directions end with the phrase: 'Situated here, in this place, is a sign which describes the location of this sign you have just finished reading.'<sup>38</sup>

The two signs make no attempt to point to their immediate context, only to each other. Their relationship is self-referential. In speaking about where they are not, *Better Scenery*, described by Chodsko as 'an escapist proposition', critiques the ethos of site-specificity and accessibility behind many off-site programmes.

I'd like to return to General Sir Charles James Napier for a moment. Here is a short extract concerning a key moment in his life from Rodney Mace's *Trafalgar Square: Emblem of Empire*:

*The two armies met at a dry river bed near the small town of Miari just south of the capital. The battle was fierce, but the Amir's force, armed only with sword and musket, were no match, despite their superior numbers, for the bayonet and cannon. At the end of the day, the battle was over. The Amir surrendered; 5,000 of their men were killed. The British casualties were 256. Undoubtedly Napier felt it had been a good day (he received £70,000 bounty for his success) and that history would be on his side. Was it not a law of nature 'that barbarous peoples should be absorbed by their civilized neighbours?' Within a few months the few remaining Amirs were crushed. By the middle of August 1843 Sind was formally annexed to the rest of British India. Napier was soon promoted to the post of Governor of the new territory,*

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35 See Rendell, note 13, pp. 23–40.

36 This programme included Anna Best: *MECCA*, State Mecca Bingo Hall; Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (America) (1994–95)*; Maurice O'Connell: *On Finchley Road*; and Orla Barry: *Across an Open Space*. Other artists worked with participants at Swiss Cottage library and the Royal Free NHS Trust.

37 See Adam Chodsko: *Plans and Spells* (London: Film & Video Umbrella, 2002) pp. 40–41 and Adam Chodsko: "Out of Place," In: John Carson and Susannah Silver (eds.): *Out of the Bubble, Approaches to Contextual Practice within Fine Art Education* (London: London Institute, 2000) pp. 31–36.

38 Chodsko, *Plans and Spells*, see note 37, pp. 40–41.

which he ruled in 'rude and vigorous manner' for four years. In 1847 he returned to England, and after one more brief visit to India in 1849–1850 he settled down on a small estate at Oaklands near Portsmouth.<sup>39</sup>

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Now let us continue our tour to the once-empty fourth plinth in the northwest corner of the square. This was intended to hold a statue of William IV, but to insufficient funds it initially remained empty and later agreement could not be reached over which monarch or military hero to place there. In 1999, the Royal Society of Arts conceived the idea of the *Fourth Plinth Project*, which temporarily occupied the plinth with a succession of works commissioned from three contemporary artists Mark Wallinger, Bill Woodrow and Rachel Whiteread. After several years in which the plinth stood empty, the new Greater London Authority assumed responsibility and started its own series of temporary exhibitions starting with Marc Quinn's *Alison Lapper Pregnant* (15 September 2005).<sup>40</sup> Sculpted by an artist known at the time for his controversial self-portrait, *Self* (1991), a refrigerated cast of his own head made with nine pints of his own blood, his statue for the fourth plinth, was a 3.6 metre white marble torso-bust of Alison Lapper. Lapper is also an artist, born with no arms and shortened legs due to a condition called phocomelia, the visible effects of which are indistinguishable from those of individuals born to women who were given thalidomide during their pregnancies.

Lapper is the only female statue in Trafalgar Square; she is also the only non-military figure, with the exception of the mermaids, dolphins and lions, and of course the square's fleshy inhabitants. We might consider her an ordinary person, a civilian, but as a woman who is disabled but also pregnant she is also extraordinary. Indeed we are encouraged to think of her inclusion in this square of monarchs, generals and admirals as a remarkable act, one that highlights the democratic nature of the government of the United Kingdom, its interest in culture and the promotion of equality. We might compare her disfigurement to Nelson's lost arm,<sup>41</sup> and note, as the artist himself does, how her perfect rendering and composure refigures the idea of beauty in contemporary art.<sup>42</sup> But I want to draw out another *figure* here and end with a final detour:

39 See note 29, pp. 115–6. Mace quotes from T. R. E. Holmes: *Four Famous Soldiers* (London: 1889) p. 28.

40 See <http://www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/> (accessed 20 June 2008).

41 See [http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/nwh\\_gfx\\_en/ART30597.html](http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/nwh_gfx_en/ART30597.html) (accessed 8 June 2008).

42 Charles Darwent: "The Battle of Trafalgar," *The Independent on Sunday* (4 September 2005). See [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qn4159/is\\_20050904/ai\\_n15331791/pg\\_1?tag=artBody;col1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4159/is_20050904/ai_n15331791/pg_1?tag=artBody;col1) (accessed 8 June 2008).

*Fig. 3: Marc Quinn, Alison Lapper Pregnant (2005).*



### **Detour 3: The Siege of Fallujah**

On 2 June 2007, the weekend before my talk at the National Gallery, after taking photographs in Trafalgar Square, I walked down the Mall to the Institute of Contemporary Art to see an exhibition called *Memorial to Iraq* (2007).<sup>43</sup> This included a work called *Fallujah*, designed by Studio Orta, written and directed by Jonathan Holmes. *Fallujah* is a piece of documentary theatre in which professional actors performed the events of the siege among the audience and the artefacts comprising the set in a disused brewery in London's Brick Lane. The publication of the script also includes material drawn from interviews carried out by the playwright Holmes, drawings of the set by Studio Orta, an essay by triple Nobel Prize nominee Scilla Elworthy, and testimony from those at the heart of the siege: Iraqi civilians, clerics, the United States military, politicians, journalists, medics, aid workers and the British Army.<sup>44</sup>

The sieges of Fallujah in April and November 2004 are one of the most extensive human rights violations of recent times. Breaching over 70 articles of the Geneva conventions, United States forces bombed schools and hospitals, sniped civilians (including children) holding white flags, cut off water and medical supplies. Journalists were actively prevented from entering the city. There is

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<sup>43</sup> *Memorial to Iraq* (23 May–27 June 2007) Institute of Contemporary Art, London. See for example <http://www.ica.org.uk/Memorial%20to%20the%20Iraq%20War+13499.twl> (accessed 8 June 2008).

<sup>44</sup> See Jonathan Holmes (ed.): *Fallujah: Eyewitness Testimony from Iraq's Besieged City* (London: Constable and Robinson Ltd., 2007).

evidence to show that chemical weapons, classified as weapons of mass destruction by the United Nations, whose production and stockpiling was outlawed by the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, were used in these attacks including white phosphorus, napalm and depleted uranium.<sup>45</sup> Regarding their use in Fallujah, journalist, activist and writer George Monbiot reports:

*Did US troops use chemical weapons in Fallujah? The answer is yes. The proof is not to be found in the documentary broadcast on Italian TV last week, which has generated gigabytes of hype on the Internet. It's a turkey, whose evidence that white phosphorous was fired at Iraqi troops is flimsy and circumstantial. But the bloggers debating it found the smoking gun.*

*The first account they unearthed comes from a magazine published by the US Army. In the March 2005 edition of Field Artillery, officers from the 2nd Infantry's Fire Support Element boast about their role in the attack on Fallujah in November last year. On page 26 is the following text: 'White Phosphorus. WP provided to be an effective and versatile munition. We used it for screening missions at two breeches and, later in the fight, as a potent psychological weapon against the insurgents in trench lines and spider holes when we could not get effects on them with HE [high explosives]. We fired 'shake and bake' missions at the insurgents, using WP to flush them out and HE to take them out.'<sup>46</sup>*

White phosphorus is fat-soluble and burns spontaneously on exposure to the air. On contact with human skin, it chars and blackens the flesh, causing deep wounds, extreme forms of disfigurement and death.

The army of the United States declare that they only use white phosphorus to 'screen' the areas they attack. In so doing, they appropriate the symbolic role of white as a colour of peace and enlightenment, and instead its 'light' operates as

<sup>45</sup> See <http://justice4lebanon.wordpress.com/2007/04/26/use-of-napalm-like-white-phosphorus-bombs-in-lebanon/> (accessed 2 December 2007) and <http://www.esmonitor.com/2005/1108/dailyUpdate.html>. (accessed 2 December 2007). The documentary, Sigfrido Ranucci and Maurizio Torrealto: *Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre*, shown in Italy on RAI on 1 November 2005, to which Monbiot refers, can be viewed here: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4100751410795302323#>. (accessed 14 July 2010).

<sup>46</sup> George Monbiot is quoting from Captain James T. Cobb, First Lieutenant Christopher A. La-Cour and Sergeant First Class William H. Hight, 'TF 2-2 in FSE AAR: Indirect Fires in the Battle of Fallujah', *Field Artillery* (March–April 2005) p. 26. See George Monbiot: "War without Rules," Holmes (ed.), see note 44, pp. 107–112, pp. 107–108, originally published in the *Guardian*, 15 November 2005. See also <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2005/2-2AARlow.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2008).



a blinding mechanism, part of a contemporary Christian crusade to gain control over many Muslim countries of the Middle East and the oil or 'black gold' they contain.

The sculptures in Trafalgar Square are all made of bronze, which over the years has darkened to become almost black.

*Alison Lapper* stands out as an exception—female, naked and made of white marble. The public exhibition of her white disfigured body is displayed as a sign of democracy, while the black disfigured bodies of Iraqis, charred by white phosphorus attacks, are hidden from view, their very existence denied by a government who conducts its wars in the name of democracy.

### **Dedication**

Three years have passed since I first wrote this paper, in that time white phosphorus has been used by the Israeli Defence Force not as a screen to 'flush out insurgents' but directly to attack unarmed women and children in Gaza. This paper is dedicated to them and any money or fees earned from its presentation and publication will go to Medical Aid for Palestinians.



## **Richard M. Shusterman**

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*Richard Shusterman received a B.A. and M.A. in Philosophy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and completed his doctoral studies in Philosophy at Oxford University. In Israel he taught at the Hebrew University and the University of the Negev, and then moved to the United States, where he was Professor of Philosophy at Temple University, and chaired its department from 1998-2004. He then was awarded the Dorothy F. Schmidt Eminent Scholar Chair in the Humanities at Florida Atlantic University, where he also directs the Center for Body, Mind, and Culture.*

*His authored books include Surface and Depth (2002); Performing Live (2000); Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life (1997); Sous l'interprétation (1994), Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art (1992, 2nd edition 2000); T.S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism (1988); and The Object of Criticism (1984). His most recent book, Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics was published by Cambridge University Press. It provides the most detailed formulation of his project of somaesthetics.*

# SOMAESTHETICS AND ARCHITECTURE

## *A Critical Option*<sup>1</sup>

### I

This paper explores the use of somaesthetics for architecture, paying special attention to the vexed issue of criticality. However contested the disciplinary status, definition, and function of architecture may be, the field of architecture is thoroughly familiar to this audience, while somaesthetics is probably still a mystery that demands an introduction.<sup>2</sup> Rooted in the classical pragmatist tradition that regards experience as a crucial philosophical concept while affirming the body as the organizing core of experience, somaesthetics can be briefly defined as the critical study and meliorative cultivation of how we experience and use the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning. It is therefore also concerned with the knowledge, discourses, practices, and bodily disciplines that structure such somatic care or can improve it.<sup>3</sup> Somaesthetics is thus a discipline that comprises both theory and practice

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1 The indefinite article in the subtitle of this paper is meant to emphasize that somaesthetics is being proposed here as merely one critical option for architecture. It is not being proposed as the only option or even the most important option, but simply as an option that I think is promising and worth considering for certain issues here discussed. I believe we need a plurality of tools in our critical toolbox; and such pluralism will prevent us from mistaking the loss or eclipse of one critical mode for a loss of criticality altogether.

2 In an earlier paper I delivered to an architectural audience, I concluded by evoking the term somaesthetics but had no space to expand on it. See Richard Shusterman: "On Pragmatist Aesthetics," in Joan Ockman: *The Pragmatist Imagination* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), pp. 116–120.

3 For initial formulations of this project, see Richard Shusterman: *Practicing Philosophy*:

**A disciplined,  
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(the latter clearly implied in its idea of meliorative cultivation). The term “soma” indicates a living, feeling, sentient, purposive body rather than a mere physical body that could be devoid of life and sensation, while the “aesthetic” in somaesthetics has the dual role of emphasizing both the soma’s perceptual role (whose embodied intentionality contradicts the traditional mind/body dichotomy) and its aesthetic uses in stylizing one’s self and one’s environments but also in appreciating the aesthetic qualities of other selves and things. Somaesthetics was conceived to complement my basic project of pragmatist aesthetics by elaborating the ways that a disciplined, ramified, and interdisciplinary attention to bodily feelings, methods, and performance could enrich our aesthetic experience and practice, not only in the fine arts but in the diverse arts of living.<sup>4</sup> It originated as an attempt to overcome the rejection of functionality, embodiment, and desire that largely defines the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics from Shaftesbury and Kant through Schopenhauer into the present, despite the fact that body and desire are so prominent in Western art and literature, even in its religious forms.

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*Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997); “Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 57 (1999), pp. 299–313; *Performing Live* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). The most comprehensive account of somaesthetics is in my *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For some of the more interesting elaborations and critical discussions of somaesthetics by other scholars, see, for example, Martin Jay: “Somaesthetics and Democracy: Dewey and Contemporary Body Art,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 36 (2002), pp. 55–69; Eric Mullis: “Performative Somaesthetics,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 40, (2006): pp. 104–117; Shannon Sullivan: “Transactional Somaesthetics,” in her *Living Across and Through Skins* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001); Cressida Heyes: “Somaesthetics for the Normalized Body,” in her *Self-Transformations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Wojciech Malecki: “Von nicht diskursiver Erfahrung zur Somästhetik,” *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 56 (2008), pp. 677–690.

4 For an articulation of that project, see my *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), which has an additional chapter devoted to somaesthetics.

Somaesthetics is a complex field with three fundamental branches that involve multiple aspects. *Analytic somaesthetics* explores the diverse forms of somatic perceptions and practices and their function in our knowledge and construction of reality. Besides topics in philosophy of mind, ontology, and epistemology relating to the mind-body connection and the role of somatic factors in consciousness and action (whose study extends into physiology and neuroscience), analytic somaesthetics also includes the sort of genealogical, sociological, and cultural analyses that Foucault so powerfully introduced: how the body is both shaped by power and employed as an instrument to maintain it, how bodily norms of health and beauty and even the most basic categories of sex and gender are constructions sustained by and serving social forces.

*Pragmatic somaesthetics* is a more normative branch concerned with methods of somatic improvement and their comparative critique. Over the course of history, a vast array of methods have been recommended to improve our bodily experience and use: diverse diets, gymnastic training, martial and erotic arts, dance, aerobics, bodybuilding, cosmetics, massage, yoga, and Western disciplines of psychosomatic improvement like the Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Method, in which I am professionally trained. We can distinguish between holistic methods and more atomistic methods that focus on particular body parts or surfaces. Somatic practices can also be classified in terms of being directed primarily at the individual practitioner herself or instead primarily at others. A massage therapist or a surgeon works on others but in doing t'ai chi ch'uan or bodybuilding one is working more on oneself. The distinction between self-directed and other-directed somatic practices cannot be rigidly exclusive, since many practices are both. Applying cosmetic makeup is frequently done to oneself and to others; and erotic arts display a simultaneous interest in both one's own experiential pleasures and one's partner's by maneuvering the bodies of both self and other. Moreover, just as self-directed disciplines (like dieting or bodybuilding) often seem motivated by a desire to please others, so other-directed practices like massage may have their own self-oriented pleasures.

Despite these complexities (which stem in part from the interdependence of self and other), the distinction between self-directed and other-directed body disciplines is useful for resisting the common presumption that to focus on the soma implies a retreat from the social. My professional training as a somatic educator-cum-therapist has taught me the importance of caring for one's own somatic state in order to pay proper attention to one's client. In giving a Feldenkrais lesson of Functional Integration, I need to be aware of my own body positioning and breathing, the tension in my hands and other body parts, and the quality of

contact my feet have with the floor in order to be in the best condition to assess the client's body tension, muscle tonus, and ease of movement and to move him in the most effective way. I need to make myself somatically very comfortable in order not to be distracted by my own body tensions and in order to communicate the right message to the client. Otherwise, when I touch him, I will be passing on to him my feelings of somatic tension and unease. Because we often fail to realize when and why we are in a state of slight somatic discomfort, part of the Feldenkrais training is devoted to teaching how to discern such states and distinguish their causes.

Somatic disciplines can further be classified as to whether their major orientation is toward external appearance or inner experience. Representational somaesthetics (such as cosmetics) is concerned more with the body's surface forms while experiential disciplines (such as yoga) aim more at making us feel better in both senses of that ambiguous phrase: to make the quality of our somatic experience more satisfying and also to make it more acutely perceptive. Much of my recent book, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*, focuses on the project of experiential somaesthetics by examining the modes and uses of heightened somatic consciousness as a way of critically analyzing and resisting contemporary culture's obsessive focus on advertised representations of external body norms of beauty that are oppressively used to stimulate feelings of inadequacy that impel us to buy products in the usually hopeless quest to meet those norms.

Of course, the distinction between representational and experiential somaesthetics is one of dominant tendency rather than rigid dichotomy. Somatic practices typically have both representational and experiential aspects (and rewards), because there is a basic complementarity of representation and experience, outer and inner. How we look influences how we feel, and vice versa. Practices like dieting or bodybuilding that are initially pursued for representational ends often produce inner feelings that are then sought for their own experiential sake. Just as somatic disciplines of inner experience often use representational cues (such as focusing attention on a body part in meditation), so a representational discipline like bodybuilding deploys experiential clues to serve its ends of external form, using critically trained awareness of muscular feelings to distinguish, for example, the kind of pain that builds muscle from the pain that indicates injury.<sup>5</sup> This paper

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5 As experiential and representational somaesthetics are not mutually exclusive categories, they are also not exhaustive. Some somatic disciplines might be more distinctively classified as more performative than representational or experiential. Such disciplines are devoted primarily

will suggest how heightened experiential somaesthetic awareness can be critically deployed in the experience and design of architecture. But a corollary or reciprocal suggestion is also implied in my arguments: that architecture might in turn be critically deployed to promote more discriminating somaesthetic awareness.

Besides the analytic and pragmatic branches of somaesthetics, we also need what I call *practical somaesthetics*, which involves actually engaging in programs of disciplined, reflective, corporeal practice aimed at somatic self-improvement (whether representational, experiential, or performative). This dimension of not just discoursing about somatic disciplines but systematically performing them is too often sadly neglected in academic approaches to embodiment, but it is crucial to the idea of somaesthetics as practice as well as theory.

## II

Somaesthetics should be pertinent for architecture if the soma is, and though this pertinence should be obvious, let me briefly highlight some features of the soma's architectural centrality. First, the body—as a composite structure through which we live—is symbolically understood through tectonic notions. This symbolic connection extends from ancient Greek philosophers like Plato, Roman architects like Vitruvius and early Christian thinkers like St. Paul, through Renaissance writers like Henry Wotton, and all the way into modern scientific critics of religion such as Freud.<sup>6</sup> As Plato analogized the body's architectural structure to a prison, so Vitruvius and St. Paul highlighted the body-temple analogy: Vitruvius in terms of their attractively symmetrical proportions of parts to whole, while St. Paul

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to increasing strength and performance; for example, weightlifting (as distinct from bodybuilding), martial arts, athletics, gymnastics, etc. But to the extent that such performance-oriented disciplines aim either at the external exhibition of strength and skill or, alternatively, the inner feelings of those powers, we can assimilate them into either the dominantly representational or experiential mode.

6 Plato's famous image is most influentially evoked in the *Phaedo* (82d); Vitruvius: *The Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. M. H. Morgan (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1914), parenthetical page references to this text will be to this edition. Henry Wotton, in *The Elements of Architecture* (London, 1624 and based on Vitruvius) advised his architectural viewers "to pass a running examination over the whole edifice, according to the properties of a well shaped man." For more details on Wotton and 17<sup>th</sup>-century English architecture, see Vaughan Hart: "On Inigo Jones and the Stuart Legal Body: Justice and Equity...and Proportions Appertaining," in George Dodds, Robert Tavernor, and Joseph Rykwert (eds.): *Body and Building* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 137-149; citation 138. Freud explains the body-house analogy in his *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* (lecture 10), see the James Strachey edition (New York: Norton, 1966), p. 153, p. 159; see also Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, translated by A.A. Brill (New York: Modern Library, 1950), pp. 125-126.

**“The body is the storm-center, the origin of coordinates, the constant place of stress in [our] experience-train. Everything circles round it, and is felt from its point of view.”**

**William James**

emphasizing “that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you” (1 *Corinthians* 6:19), an analogy that gets secularized by the time of Freud, whose interpretation of dreams identifies the house as the dream-work’s symbol for the body, the place where one’s far from immaculate psyche is housed.

Besides this symbolic linkage, the soma fundamentally shapes some of the most basic concepts of architectural design. Consider the following features.

1. If architecture is the articulation of space for the purposes of enhancing our living, dwelling, and experience, then the soma provides the most basic tool for all spatial articulation by constituting the point from which space can be seen and articulated. To see the world at all, we must see it from some point of view, a position that determines our horizon and directional planes of observation, that sets the meaning of left and right, up and down, forward and backward, inside and outside, and eventually shapes also the metaphorical extensions of these notions in our conceptual thought. The soma supplies that primordial point of view through its location both in the spatiotemporal field and the field of social interaction. As William James remarks, “The body is the storm-center, the origin of coordinates, the constant place of stress in [our] experience-train. Everything circles round it, and is felt from its point of view.” “The world experienced,” he elaborates, “comes at all times with our body as its center, center of vision, center of action, center of interest.”<sup>7</sup>

2. Our lived experience of space essentially involves distance, and it is through the soma’s powers of locomotion that we get us to our sense of distance and space. The soma is thus what enables us to appreciate not only the visual effects and structural design features that rely on perceiving distance and depth, but also the multisensorial feelings of moving through space (with their kinaesthetic, tactile, proprioceptive qualities) that are crucial to the experience of living with, in, and through architecture. The concrete living space that the soma architec-

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7 See William James: “The Experience of Activity.” In: *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 86.



turally defines is not an abstract, fully homogeneous space but rather a space shaped by the body's directionality—with its front, sides, and back. The essential architectural feature of façade expresses this notion of directional facing.

3. If architecture involves mass as well as space, then the soma likewise provides our most immediate sense of mass and volume. We feel the solid mass and thickness of our body; we also feel the liquids and gases that move through its volume. If verticality is basic to architecture, then the body is our basic experiential model of verticality and of the need to both deploy and resist gravitational forces to achieve it. The soma's vertical posture and ability to maintain it in locomotion not only enables the particular perspective we have in seeing but also is what frees our hands so that we can use them to handle objects more effectively, to draw, design, and build skillfully. Moreover, the architecture of the body (the fact that we are essentially top-heavy—our heavier head, shoulders, and torso resting on our significantly less massive legs) is part of what impels the soma to move since its vertical equilibrium is more easily sustained in motion than in standing still. It is hard to stand motionless in place for more than a few minutes, but we can enjoy walking for much longer periods without any strain.

4. Key principles of architectural form, as Vitruvius long ago remarked, seem derived from the soma. "Without symmetry and proportion there can be no principles in the design of any temple", he argues, defining these formal features in terms of the "relation" between the building's "different parts to the general magnitude of the whole," "as in the case of a well-shaped man" and justifying this relational principle on the grounds that "nature has designed the human body so that its members are duly proportioned to the frame as a whole." He likewise claims the basic forms of circle and square can be derived from the body, as can the basic notions of measurement needed in design (72–73). A case for the soma's role in determining architectural scale could similarly be made, just as one could argue that the body centrally informs the architectural feature of pillars, which Vitruvius saw as imitating male or female forms.

5. Despite its non-discursive materiality (which suggests mute dumbness), architecture, as artistic design, is expressive. The soma's non-discursive expressivity through gesture provides a central model for architecture's expressive power. So much so that Wittgenstein deploys it to define architecture and distinguish it from mere building. "Architecture is a *gesture*. Not every purposive movement of the human body is a gesture. And no more is every building designed for a purpose architecture."<sup>8</sup>

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8 Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Culture and Value* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 42.

6. The soma further provides a basic model for the relationship of architectural design to the environment. An architecturally successful building must both fit in and stand out as a distinctive achievement, just as a soma must do in order to survive and flourish, performing a balancing act of absorbing and relying on the wider natural and social resources of its environment but at the same time asserting its distinctive individuality. Just as we always experience a building in terms of its background environmental framing, so we cannot feel the body alone independent of its wider *Umwelt*. If we lie down close our eyes and simply try to feel ourselves alone and motionless, what we will feel, if we are attentive, is the environmental surface on which we are lying and the enviroing air we are breathing and feeling on our exposed body surfaces.

7. Such non-visual feelings of the body remind us that if architectural design is based on the soma and aims to enhance somatic experience, it should be critically attentive to the soma's multiplicity of senses. These senses, as neurophysiologists now realize, go beyond the traditional five and include some that are identified as distinctively somaesthetic senses in the narrow sense of dealing with sensory perception through the body per se rather than through its particular sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, etc.).

### III

If the soma is the crucial medium through which architecture is experienced and created, then developing its critical discriminatory powers could enrich architecture's critical and creative arsenal, since critical perception is always part of the creative process. It is often said that our term criticism comes from the Greek word for a judge "krites" (κριτης) but it ultimately comes from the Greek verb "krino" (κρινω) which means to distinguish, discriminate, separate; hence the adjective (κριτικος) the counterpart of our term critical means "able to discern" or discriminate.<sup>9</sup> Recalling this core sense of discrimination can help us address, with the help of somaesthetics, two of the greatest challenges to criticality in architecture: the problem of autonomy and the problem of atmosphere.

1. Autonomy connotes independence, and one prominent (spatially derived) notion of independence implies a separation from that of which one is indepen-

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9 For more on the Greek terms, see *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Interestingly, design—a core concept of architecture has a rather similar etymology of distinguishing or marking off: deriving from the Latin *de* + *signare* to mark off or separate—as in the articulation of space through making signs or marks.

dent. That separation is reflected in the notion of critical distance, where the critic sustains his objective judgment by having a point of view somehow external to the object or situation she is judging rather than being essentially involved or implicated in it. The idea of the judge as disinterested observer conveys the same sense of critical distance. But contemporary theory has shown that a purely external viewpoint for judging our natural, social, and cultural world is logically untenable; such a view would be a view from nowhere and from which we would see nothing meaningfully. We simply cannot stand outside the world to assess it altogether apart from the interests we have and seek in it. Today's thoroughly globalized political, economic, and media networks reinforce in concrete socio-cultural terms this message of our essential, inextricable implication in the world and world order.

Architects have not been slow to draw the conclusion by questioning the notion of autonomy on which several versions of critical architecture rely.<sup>10</sup> In using the energies, institutions, permissions, monies, and other affordances of establishment society, the architect cannot avoid being somehow entangled and complicit with it. That the architect is somehow “a surfer on the waves of societal forces” forms part of Rem Koolhaas's questioning of architecture's critical posture, a suspicion that “there is in the deepest motivations of architecture something that cannot be critical” and that leads him into the far broader field of urbanism to urge a radically uncritical outlook: “we have to dare to be utterly uncritical...we have to become irresponsible,” embracing a “Nietzschean frivolity.”<sup>11</sup>

Such post-critical arguments may seem compelling if the critical attitude is presumed to require an external, autonomous standpoint—altogether detached and disinterested. But that basic presumption can be challenged by recalling the

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10 In proposing a “post-critical” architectural approach, Somol and Whiting define the critical position (exemplified in different ways by Michael Hays and Peter Eisenman) as presuming “that autonomy is a precondition for engagement” and that such autonomy implies some sort of separation or distance from other things, sometimes described as being “between” other disciplines or discursive formations. Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting: “Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism.” In: *Perspecta*, 33 (2002), p. 73.

11 Rem Koolhaas: “What Ever Happened to Urbanism.” In: Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau: *S,M,L, XL* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), p. 971, for the quotes on uncritical Nietzschean frivolity. The other quotes are taken from Hilde Heynen: “A Critical Posture for Architecture?” In: Jane Rendell and Jonathan Hill (eds.): *Critical Architecture* (London: Routledge 2007), p. 51, and George Baird: “Criticality and its Discontents,” *Harvard Design Magazine*, 21 (2004–5), p. 649 who takes this Koolhaas quote about architecture's deepest (and uncritical) motivations from an oral remark, quoted by Beth Kapusta in the *Canadian Architect Magazine*, 39 (August 1994), p. 10.

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soma. We can critically examine aspects of our somatic experience without going outside our bodies to some putative detached, disembodied mind. We use a finger to probe a small bump on our face; we use our tongue to discover and remove the traces of food on our upper lip or on our teeth. We discriminate or assess our pain within the painful experience not only after it has passed and we are, in that sense, beyond or outside it. Beyond these ordinary practices of somatic consciousness, a variety of meditative disciplines are structured on heightening the soma's conscious critical self-examination.

In short somatic self-examination provides a model of immanent critique where one's critical perspective does not require being entirely outside the situation critically examined but merely requires a reflective perspective on it that is not wholly absorbed in the immediacy of what is experienced; a perspective better described as positionally eccentric (or decentered) rather than as external. Such perspectives can be achieved by efforts of disciplined willful attention but also often arise spontaneously through experiences of somatic dissonance where unreflective coordination is disrupted and so stimulates a decentered, reflective critical attention to what is going on. Critical somatic consciousness involves some aspects of the soma's complex array of systems examining other aspects of that complexity.

I could say far more about the relations between unreflective immediacy and reflection in body consciousness, and how these different modes can be integrated to maximize the quality of our experience and performance. But retaining the crucial point that criticality requires no position of complete independence or externality, I now turn to the second major challenge to architectural criticality: the problem of atmosphere.

2. Deriving from the Greek words for vapor and sphere, atmosphere's primary meaning is air, thus suggesting lightness, intangibility, a certain formlessness and elusiveness that can readily evoke a sense of frivolity or lack of gravitas, structure, or substance. In modernist architectural discourse the notion of atmosphere had a typically negative nuance, suggesting a vaguely subjective quality without

clear structural form or function but also something gratuitous, frivolous, contrived, and artificial or impure.<sup>12</sup>

With the decline of architecture's modernist paradigm (and its positivist, rationalist, objectivist, and minimalist ideologies), there has been increasing recognition of atmosphere's important architectural role.<sup>13</sup> Architectural meaning and

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12 Despite atmosphere's primary sense of air and hence lightness, modernism's critique of atmosphere focused on the sort of artificially intensified atmosphere that was thickly laid-on as an ornamental effect to heighten mood or intoxicate perception. Though air is essentially light we can speak of a heavy or stale atmosphere.

13 The decline of criticality in architecture is sometimes linked with the waning of the modernist paradigm. It is certainly true that various trends in the modernist movement of architecture had utopian visions that were critical of the hierarchical social status quo that was both reflected in traditional architectural structures and sustained by them. But it also needs to be remembered that key figures in modernism equally advocated a realistic, pragmatic policy of reconciling architectural ambitions with the hard realities of the socioeconomic world. For instance, Bauhaus visionaries such as Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe justified their departure from the earlier utopian expressionism by emphasizing the need for a pragmatic acceptance of the new realities of technological progress, new materials, and living conditions. If Gropius urged a "resolute affirmation of the lived environment of machines and automotive vehicles," without "romantic beautification," then Mies insisted that "we take the changed economic and social conditions as a fact," since "these things go their own destined way, blind to values" and the designer can only accept "these realities" in order to bring out from them something of value. See Walter Gropius: "Grundsätze der Bauhausproduktion" (Dessau), 1926. In: Ulrich Conrad (ed.): *Programme und Manifeste zur Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bauwelt Fundamente: Braunschweig, 1975) p. 90. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: "Die neue Zeit," 1930, in Conrad, 114. My translation. Here are the quotations in German, first Gropius:

"Nur durch dauernde Berührung mit der fortschreitenden Technik, mit der Erfindung neuer Materialien und neuer Konstruktionen gewinnt das gestaltende Individuum die Fähigkeit, die Gegenstände in lebendige Beziehung zur Überlieferung zu bringen und daraus die neue Werkgesinnung zu entwickeln:

- Entschlossene Bejahung der lebendigen Umwelt der Maschinen und Fahrzeuge.
- Organische Gestaltung der Dinge aus ihrem eigenen gegenwartsgebundenen Gesetz heraus, ohne romantische Beschönigungen und Verspieltheiten."

Now the quote from Mies:

"Die neue Zeit ist eine Tatsache; sie existiert ganz unabhängig davon, ob wir 'ja' oder 'nein' zu ihr sagen. Aber sie ist weder besser noch schlechter als irgendeine andere Zeit. Sie ist eine pure Gegebenheit und an sich wertindifferent. Deshalb werde ich mich nicht lange bei dem Versuch aufhalten, die neue Zeit deutlich zu machen, ihre Beziehungen aufzuzeigen und die tragende Struktur bloßzulegen.

Auch die Frage der Mechanisierung, der Typisierung und Normung wollen wir nicht überschätzen.

Und wir wollen die veränderten wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Verhältnisse als eine Tatsache hinnehmen.

value cannot be reduced to tectonics and definable visual or structural forms. A crucial dimension of architecture is what its articulated spaces mean and contribute to the lived experience of those who dwell in those spaces and pass through them. A significant part of that lived experience of meaning and value is what architectural theorists now generally denote as *atmosphere*. This notion, which deserves extended analysis, seems to encompass the vast array of perceptual qualities, dominant feelings or moods, and ambient effects that emerges not only from the complexity of forms, relations, and materials of the articulated space, but also from the complexity of practices, environmental effects, and experienced qualities that pervade the lived space of a building or other architectural structure.

The increasing attention given to atmosphere can be traced to new directions in aesthetic theory, but also to broader cultural trends that challenge the traditional emphasis on the weighty, the substantive, the resistant as that which defines what is truly real. Our new media and technologies (with their corresponding new economies and ethos) are dematerializing the traditional heaviness of the life world, so that the previously invisible atmospheric dimension of our environments (through which our ever more electronically and nano-technically shaped experience is conducted) now emerges as powerfully real and essential. As one popular thinker puts it (with characteristic errant faith in our unlimited resources): “It is through the occurrence of abundance in the modern that the heavy has turned into appearance—and the ‘essential’ now dwells in lightness, in the air, in the atmosphere.”<sup>14</sup> Moreover, we should remember that airiness has, in our cultural history, very strong associations with spirituality.<sup>15</sup> This extends even to architecture, where, as Peter Eisenmann notes, “the airy” is associated with “the sublime” in contrast to the materiality of the grotesque.<sup>16</sup> Aura, which is also frequently used to convey the notion of atmosphere (and derives from the Greek for air or breath) is often applied with lofty or spiritual connotations. Walter Benjamin’s famous theory of art’s aura, for example, clearly links it to the elevated, religious atmosphere of ritual or cultic use.<sup>17</sup>

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Alle diese Dinge gehen ihren schicksalhaften und wertblinden Gang.

Entscheidend wird allein sein, wie wir uns in diesen Gegebenheiten zur Geltung bringen.”

14 Peter Sloterdijk: “Against Gravity,” an interview with Bettina Funcke, *ArtForum/BookForum*, February/March, 2005, cited from [http://www.bookforum.com/archive/feb\\_05/funcke.html](http://www.bookforum.com/archive/feb_05/funcke.html)

15 There are etymological roots for this spirituality, as the Greek root is related to the Sanskrit word for breath or soul (*atman*).

16 Peter Eisenman: “En Terror Firma: In Trails of Grotexes,” *Architectural Design*, 1–2 (1989), p. 41.

17 Walter Benjamin: “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations*,

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In recent architectural theory, the turn to atmosphere has been closely linked to the so-called post-critical project. But post-critical should not be confused with *acritical*. The post-critical turn to atmosphere is also a serious critical response to the perceived limits of earlier views of architecture that denigrated or neglected the atmospheric as irrelevant to architecture's disciplinary practice and mission, and that defined architect's disciplinarity (and criticality) in terms of autonomy. Thus Somol and Whiting affirm the post-critical trend as a move "that shifts the understanding of disciplinarity as autonomy to disciplinarity as performance or practice," and that identifies the defining core of architectural practice within a broad notion of design that includes the atmospheric: "Design encompasses object qualities (form, proportion, materiality, composition, etc.), but it also includes qualities of sensibility, such as effect, ambiance, and atmosphere."<sup>18</sup>

Atmosphere's challenge to criticality does not disappear, however, even if we take a more comprehensive, more sensible view of criticism as involving not only negations, resistances, and oppositional attitudes but also constructive assessments, interpretations, and positive appreciations. Atmosphere remains problematic for criticality because any mode of criticism that claims to be reasonable, principled, and in some sense objective rather than arbitrary seems to logically require some object against which critical propositions can be measured for accuracy and insight. But atmosphere does not provide such an object, because it is precisely something that is defined by its contrast to conventional objecthood. It distinctively lacks the clear contours, firm and enduring substance, and discrete individuality of ordinary objects in space. Nor is atmosphere something that can be reduced to a mere matter of purely personal private space, a merely personal, idiosyncratic reaction, because different individuals obviously share common perceptions of atmosphere. Theorists of

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trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 221–227.

<sup>18</sup> Somol and Whiting, see note 10, p. 75.

atmosphere have noticed that it hovers in an intermediate space between the objective and subjective.<sup>19</sup>

Atmosphere is, I think, best understood as an experienced quality of a situation, and such qualities are notoriously resistant to conceptual definition and discursive analysis. If it defies clear categorization as objective or subjective, this is because atmosphere is a qualitative feature of a situation that is typically grasped as an absorbing whole before that situation is divided into its objective and subjective elements.<sup>20</sup> Atmosphere is experienced by the subject as a perceptual feeling that emerges from and pervades a situation; and like other perceptual feelings, atmosphere is experienced in large part as a bodily feeling.<sup>21</sup>

Such somatic experienced qualities are typically very difficult to analyze because they are not fixed in stable objects, and they tend to be felt in terms of nameless, elusive, and often transient feelings. Further difficulties in critically analyzing these somatically perceived atmospheric qualities derive from the fact that we are not habituated to pay explicit attention to the bodily feelings involved in our perception, because the habitual focus of our attention and interest is the external world of objects.<sup>22</sup> Perceptual feelings are experienced somatically with different levels of awareness, and most of these feelings function beneath full consciousness. While asleep, I still can feel that a pillow inhibits my breathing and so I adjust myself to move it without ever regaining consciousness. Even when we are awake, most of our somatic feelings or perceptions do not reach explicit consciousness or awareness because our attention is elsewhere directed. In descending a staircase, we are rarely aware of our kinaesthetic feelings of movement, our proprioceptive feelings of balance and extension in space, and the tactile qualities of contact that our feet make with the steps. But we must at least implicitly feel these qualities for the soma to react properly in coordinating our movement. Such implicitly felt qualities exert a significant influence on our

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19 See Gernot Boehme: "Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics," *Thesis Eleven*, 36 (1993), pp. 113–126.

20 I have similarly argued that our initial or immediate experience of art is not neatly divided into distinct categories of qualities or meanings (for example, "aesthetic" versus "ethical" qualities and meanings). See Richard Shusterman: "The Convergence of Ethics and Aesthetics," in Sanda Iliescu (ed.): *The Hand and the Soul: Ethics and Aesthetics in Architecture and Art* (Charlottesville, Va: University of Virginia Press, 2009), pp. 33–43.

21 Walter Benjamin, at one point, likewise describes the aura as something that we perceive bodily by "breathing" in the atmosphere of its situation—"a peculiar web of space and time." I here quote from the first German version of Benjamin's essay reprinted in his *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), p. 440.

22 I explore these problems and their remedies in *Body Consciousness*.



behavior, attitudes, and moods.<sup>23</sup> They constitute the core of atmosphere, and atmosphere too is something that often affects us without our even being aware of it as an explicit dimension of our experience.

Many of the qualities that constitute atmosphere are not simply somatically perceived but also relate to senses that are distinctively bodily—namely, our proprioceptive, kinaesthetic, vestibular, tactile, senses. Our sensory experience of architecture is far more than the changing visual input as we survey and walk through its spaces. There are feelings of light and shade that are felt on our flesh and not just through vision. We feel the different temperatures and movements of air on our skin as we move through architectural space (along with the smells that the air brings us that stimulate the senses in our nostrils and mouth. There are also all the tactile and muscular sensations of walking through the space—the feel of the surface material beneath our feet, the rhythm of our footsteps, the kinaesthetic feel, proprioceptive balance, and muscular effort of traversing a courtyard or ascending or descending a staircase or adjusting one’s gait and posture to negotiate a narrow corridor or low door. As the soma is trained or habituated to adjust to different kinds of spaces (at once physical and social), so it implicitly reacts proprioceptively to the changing kinosphere without one usually noticing it; and such reactions often have an affective dimension with real aesthetic significance and sociopolitical import. A huge kinosphere that dwarfs the visitor entering the space of an authoritative power, a demanding staircase to approach the elevated throne of authority provide familiar examples of how architecture can instill an atmosphere of majesty that is at once potently aesthetic and political.

If architectural theory recognizes that the more tactile, somaesthetic senses are crucial to architecture’s experienced atmosphere, the presumption remains that these dimensions of atmosphere are in principle too elusive for the exercise of criticality. The *locus classicus* of this influential presumption is Walter Benjamin’s famous account of architectural experience that contrasts tactile and optical perception while also comparing architectural experience to that of film. Unlike painting (with its traditional aura of uniqueness), film and architecture both enable a “simultaneous, collective experience” for aesthetic reception “by the mass audience” (234). But Benjamin then contrasts film and architecture in terms of the former’s greater possibilities for critical consciousness through its objectifying representational photographic technologies and optic focus as op-

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<sup>23</sup> Indeed as some philosophers and neuroscientists have argued, they even guide our processes of rational thinking. See *Body Consciousness*, ch. 5–6.

posed to architecture's problematic resistance to critical consciousness through its predominant reliance on habits of tactile appropriation.

"Buildings," writes Benjamin, "are appropriated [the German is the less dynamic *rezipiert*] in a twofold manner: by use and by perception—or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation [*Rezeption*] cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building. On the tactile side there is no counterpart to contemplation on the optical side. Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit" (240). We should note how Benjamin's terminology does not even give tactile experience the full status of perception (*Wahrnehmung*), which connotes cognition and active consciousness but rather suggests blind absorption (*Rezeption*) through the mechanism of habit. Benjamin goes on to argue that this unthinking, uncritical tactile absorption through habit also "determines to a large extent even optical reception" in architecture. Moreover, through its persistent deployment in the ubiquitous realm of architecture, this uncritical mode of habitual, somatic reception "acquires canonical value" or pervasive power that extends to other domains of culture and of life, where, in times of great historical change, the challenges that face human perception and adjustment "cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation [or focused attentive consciousness], alone" (ibid.) Benjamin can then return to film experience and argue that there too, reception by the masses, though optical, is still essentially a reception governed by habit and characterized by distraction that thus "requires no attention". Thus the mechanical reproduction of art is matched by an unfocussed, "absent-minded," uncritical reception through the mechanism of habit (241).

Benjamin provides no evidence that the tactile feelings we experience in architecture must remain in the realm of inattentive, absent-minded, mechanical habit that precludes explicit awareness for critical assessment. There is nothing in tactile and other distinctively somatic feelings that prohibits our perceiving them with conscious, focused attention – and in many conditions we do. In everyday experience we often notice and even try to describe varieties of pain, itches, tickles, caresses, sensual pleasures, feelings of dizziness, speed, hot, cold, and the feel of different surfaces and fabrics on our skin. Benjamin, of course, is right that our habitual way of experiencing architecture is in term of blind inattentive habit. But habits, as learned (even if implicitly learned) behavior, can be changed, and not all habits are blind and inattentive. Though Benjamin understandably contrasts habit with attention, there are indeed habits of attention; and developing such habits is an essential key for success in education and life. It is certainly true that most of us are far better at focusing critical attention on visual representations

than on tactile or somaesthetic feelings, and there may be reasons for this beyond the effects of mere habit (for example, evolutionary reasons and factors concerning the way that distance and visual spatial array can facilitate individuation and objectification). But we should not erect a dualism between optical and tactile perception, because the former in fact intrinsically involves the latter, as the very act of vision necessarily deploys the muscular movement of our eyes and thus the tactility of proprioception—or feeling of muscular movement. Moreover, as recent research in the visuo-motor neuron system has shown, perception is significantly transmodal such that seeing an action will also activate neurons involved in the motor or muscular performance of that action, and apparently vice versa.

If Benjamin argues that our habitual and absent-minded tactile reception of architecture has rendered its optical reception likewise inattentively absent-minded, then why not turn the tables and argue that by heightening our attention to the tactile or somaesthetic feelings of architectural reception we could render such perception not only more acute, penetrating, and critical but also sharpen our attentiveness and penetration of architecture's optical experience. It is an anatomical fact that one's rotational range and ease of vision can be increased by improving, through proprioceptive sensitivity, the rotational range of one's spine. Moreover, by training and exercising somaesthetic attention we can gain a more attentive and explicit consciousness of the vague but influential somatic feelings that constitute our experience of architectural atmosphere and thus a more focused, more discerning awareness for its critical analysis. Such training is valuable for improving the critical sensibilities not only of designing architects but also of the various populations who inhabit architectural spaces and whose informed input on architectural design would be useful, if such design is truly meant to serve them best. There are a variety of methods for training such somaesthetic sensibility, which I discuss in my book *Body Consciousness*; they are best demonstrated in workshop settings and not from the podium in huge lecture spaces such as this, whose atmosphere is inappropriate for such training, and where I'd need to take more time and demand even more acute and patient attention than you have already granted me. Thank you.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> I also wish to thank the organizers of the conference for inviting me, and to give particular thanks to Olaf Pfeifer for providing me with helpful bibliographical assistance in preparing this lecture.



## **Eymen Homsî** Istanbul Technical University

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# GENUFLECTION AND EMPIRE

Genuflection always accompanies Empire, as evidenced by some of the earliest wall carvings of prostrating supplicants. Knee-bending survives in many forms (e.g. curtsy and obeisance), testifying to the continued importance of ritual and myth in our time. But genuflection is never neutral: dressage is extreme genuflection. The types of genuflection that have survived the transition to globalization all reflect our unease with questions of divinity, class, nationality, and territory. Today's most visible and politically charged form of genuflection is the ritual of Islamic worship.<sup>1</sup> The image of prostrating Moslems has become emblematic of the push and pull of late capitalism, a symptom of passage to Empire, as Hardt and Negri would put it.<sup>2</sup> For the individual worshiper the spiritual aspect may yet endure—genuine introspection doubtlessly continues to exist—but at the collective level, and in the context of Empire, it is the question of power that becomes significant.

The rite has come down to us intact after 1400 years, though its origins are probably much older. An archaic ritual of the pastoral age has suddenly appeared as a propaganda tool in our midst. It is paradoxical that this most inward and private of rituals should have far reaching communal and political dimensions. In itself, as a set of gestures, it is 'smooth', neutral and borderless, but as a contemporary ritual it represents a key ideological struggle of our time. When wor-

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1 Anmarie Schimmel: *Deciphering the Signs of God: a Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). p. 172 fn 43, cites the basic works on ritual prayer: Friedrich Heiler (1923): *Das Gebet*; Constance E. Padwick (1960): *Muslim Devotions*; E.E. Calverley (1925): *Worship in Islam*.

2 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri: *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 2001), p. 137–153.



Fig. 1: Gestures of worship.

shippers align themselves on the invisible spokes of a universal circle centered on Mecca, they help establish the *Dar al Islam*, the ‘domain of Islam’, a territorial and spatial entity whose logic and aspirations are global, and therefore in direct challenge to those of Empire. (It was already a significant political gesture 1400 years ago when the direction of the original alignment changed from Jerusalem to Mecca.) The communal aspect of the ritual is most visible at noon prayer on Fridays, the public face of Islam, when worshipers are seen to perform in coordinated and reinforced unison.<sup>3</sup> Even when the ritual is performed in solitude, it is coordinated precisely with the invisible others. The certainty that many others are aligned along the same network, performing the same genuflections at the same time and reciting identical phrases, magnifies the effect and monumentalizes the gestures. Ritual genuflection thus superimposes on everyday space a worldwide web of territorial and visual control, a virtual network that, five times a day, reassembles dispersed locations, activates dormant axes, renders ordinary space sacred, and makes every location potentially Islamic. This system of alignment accompanies the horizon everywhere, providing a simple and effective way of striating the globe. It is easy to see how such a system can have important political consequences today. On one level it functions to subjectify and subjugate, to proselytize, to observe, chaperone and enforce communal, patriarchal and masculine identity, both within the domain of Islam and without. The collective control of bodies in space reinforces ideology in explicit ways, as, for instance, through the displacement of women to the back of the space. On another level the ritual may have revolutionary potential, a capacity to subvert the sovereignty of Empire.

And yet, despite its apparent power, this network of spatial domination and command is unstable and under threat. It is the familiar story of how the destruc-

3 “A bird’s eye view of the Moslem world at the hour of prayer... would present the spectacle of a series of concentric circles of worshippers radiating from the Ka’bah at Makkah and covering an ever-widening area from Sierra Leone to Malaysia and from Tobolsk to Capetown.” Hitti, Philip K.: *History of the Arabs*, 10th edition, with a preface by Walid Khalidi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 130.

tion of place-making memory has eroded the mythical underpinnings that held the center in place. The disappearing horizon, as described by Paul Virilio, spells a lingering and trivial death.<sup>4</sup> We witness, for example, the dilemma of the first Moslem Astronaut, Sheik Muszaphar Shukor of Malaysia, as to which direction he should face while praying in the Soyuz-TMA capsules.<sup>5</sup> In what follows I will speculate on the relationship of the ritual to conceptions of space in Islam in three phases: early nomadic, middle imperial, and late global. I will suggest that the ritual fosters habits of body alignment, restriction of vision, willful disregard of visual space and control of territory that serve to reinforce the ethos of Empire.

### **Early Nomadic**

A character in Balzac's *A Passion of the Desert*, a soldier in Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, exclaims in fear and awe: "In the desert, don't you see, there is everything and there is nothing... it is God, but without mankind."<sup>6</sup> An allied soldier in today's Iraq or Afghanistan might echo the sentiment. Monotheism is born out of a confrontation with the threatening void of the desert.<sup>7</sup> The desert, as a metaphor for solitude, absence and estrangement, *has* to be filled with lines and figures. The void must be overcome, nomadic flow channeled, organized, measured. One can imaginatively read the prostrating figures as compensating for the featureless horizontality of the ground. 'Smooth' space has to become 'striated', to borrow Deleuze and Guattari's insightful distinction.<sup>8</sup>

In the case of Islam, the striation of the desert begins by marking the one point on the horizon that aligns with Mecca. From an infinite number of trajecto-

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4 "The loss of the horizon-line of geographical perspective imperatively necessitated the establishment of a substitute horizon: the artificial horizon of a screen or monitor, capable of permanently displaying the new preponderance of the media perspective over the immediate perspective of space." Paul Virilio: *The Information Bomb*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2000), p. 14.

5 Patrick di Justo: "A Muslim Astronaut's Dilemma: How to Face Mecca From Space," *Wired Blog*, entry posted 26 Sept, 2007, [http://www.wired.com/science/space/news/2007/09/mecca\\_in\\_orbit](http://www.wired.com/science/space/news/2007/09/mecca_in_orbit), (accessed June 28, 2009).

6 Quoted in Christian Jambet: *Le Caché et l'Apparent* (Paris: l'Herne, 2003), p. 33, my translation.

7 "It was said of Abbot Agatho that for three years he carried a stone in his mouth until he learned to be silent." quoted in Thomas Merton: *The Wisdom of the Desert* (London: Sheldon Press, 1960), p. 30.

8 On Deleuze and Guattari's conception of smooth and striated space see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 474–500.

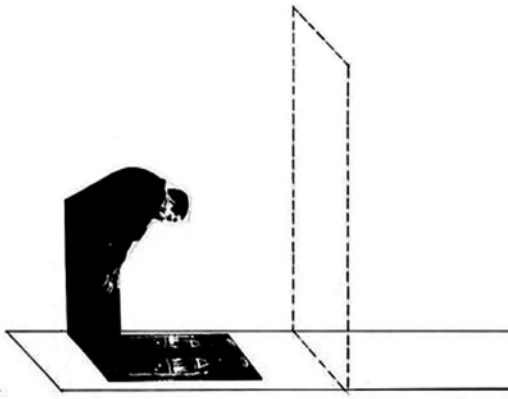


Fig. 2: Facing the sutra.

ries crisscrossing the surface, one is made significant by the authority of the One God, while the others recede in importance. The gaze and body are thus oriented towards this privileged *qibla*, from the root word in Arabic for ‘facing’, ‘moving towards’, or ‘direction’.<sup>9</sup> It represents the symbolic threshold of the invisible realm, being the point where earth and sky meet. Worshipers experience it tangibly, perhaps not unlike the way mariners experience crossing the Meridian. It tugs on the body, and eventually brings it in pilgrimage to the center and down on its knees in genuflection. As a non-dimensional point, it is reductive, conservative, unitary and authoritarian. To face it in worship is the symbolic equivalent of devout practice, correct attitude, proper orientation, and the “straight path” of religious life. The line of the horizon, by contrast, stands for the opposite metaphor of mobility and freedom, and represents the smooth, unimpeded space of the nomad. It is the *qibla* which triumphs in this opposition, as it must if imperial authority, hierarchy, and organized religion are to be established. The point divides the line, defines its center, delimits its extension, and in so doing begins the process of transforming the free space of the pastoral nomad into the segmented space of the sedentary farmer.

The elemental clash of point and line, of focus and extension, singularity and multiplicity, is reenacted in the first gestures of the ritual. Proper alignment is insufficient in itself to domesticate the infinite horizon, for no sooner has the *qibla* been established than that it recedes along with the receding horizon. So a second striation is needed to secure the first, and it comes in the form of a mental/visual operation in which the worshiper evokes an imaginary screen and places it at two paces ahead. This cross-axial *sutra*, from the root word for ‘hidden’ or ‘veiled’, symbolically erases profane space beyond itself for the duration of the ritual. It reflects the gaze backwards and downwards, reinforcing the meaning of Islam as ‘submission’ by showing regard to the ground and disregard for vis-

9 For the origins of the *Qibla*, and Islamic spatiality see Dominique Clevenot: *Une Esthétique du Voile: Essai sur l’Art Arabo-Islamic* (Paris: l’Hatmattan, 1994), pp. 17–22.



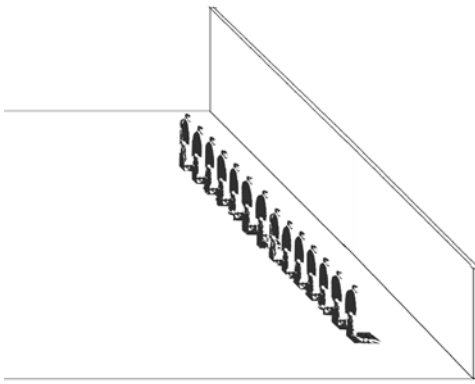
ible space.<sup>10</sup> The worshiper thus stands bounded in a sanctified bubble organized along the three primordial axes: the *qibla* axis, the vertical axis-mundi, and the cross-axial *sutra* screen. Movement is fixed in place as an oscillation between the divine vertical and the terrestrial horizontal. The vast space of the horizontal plane is delimited, measured, localized, made tangible by the outline of the prayer rug as a personal temenos, and the mosque as its communal form.

The alignment of the body with the *qibla* and the restriction of the gaze through the *sutra* become concretized, are made physical, in the form of the mosque's 'qibla wall', a long liturgical wall placed perpendicularly to the *qibla* axis, i.e. oriented parallel to the horizon that faces Mecca. The wall can be read as a materialized, collective *sutra*, shielding the row of worshipers from profane space. Worshipers face it in rows, standing shoulder to shoulder in a manner that is said to reflect the habits of nomads accustomed to facing wide horizons and resistant to confinement and hierarchy. The physical wall thus evokes the horizon, equalizes the relation between worshipers, and embodies the male community and its mechanisms of domination and control. Successive rows reinforce the striation and codify the system of limits and visual controls in a reversal of the original motivation for unlimited space and free movement. A new precinct is thus established behind the wall in which the visual world is erased and the distance to the centre is collapsed. The cross-axial organization finds its architectural expression in the elongated form of early hypostyle mosques. A typical example, such as the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus (706–715 ca), has the main entrance on the long side of its rectangle, monumentalizing the *qibla* wall, abruptly interrupting vision and rendering the space shallow. The *qibla* wall, as a vestigial memory of the horizon shows that, despite having left the desert and acquired the requisite urban luxuries and institutions, the memory of the menacing void remains, to be expressed in artistic endeavors and spiritual disciplines. A similar sensibility governs the production of early *Qurans* in *Kufic* script, whose wide pages require the head to turn while reading, thus enhancing the monumentality of the text and formalizing even the smallest gestures in the service of authority and sovereignty.

Striation of the body complements and reinforces that of the ground. The opposition of smooth and striated, which for the horizon was a question of extension/focus, and for the *qibla* wall was a question of passage/barrier, becomes

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10 For the esoteric meaning of ritual prayer in Islam see Schimmel, pp. 148–155; also Henry Corbin: *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn'Arabi*. trans Ralph Manheim (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), Chapter V, "Man's Prayer and God's Prayer".



*Fig. 3: Facing the qibla Wall.*

for the body a question of movement/stasis. Points of arrival replace Bedouin lines of mobility. Movement in the vertical is reduced until the forehead touches the ground and complete cessation is achieved in the horizontal. By degree the worshiper descends to the ground in an act of submission, gaining a measure of immortality by touching the ground in genuflection.<sup>11</sup> The descent consists of sets of formal genuflection, *rukaa*, performed in five daily regimens, starting with the standing position, the vertical datum of the ritual, followed by the half prostration (the body momentarily triangulated), followed by the full prostration (the body in a nearly fetal position that represents perhaps a symbolic death). In the process the eye travels from full space in the vertical to flat space in the half prostration (the eye suspended and looking down) to no space in the fetal position. The restoration of vision comes with a final gesture, where the head, with eyes open, turns from the right to the left shoulder in salutation to the companion angels, visually sweeping the length of the *qibla* wall and symbolically reconciling good and evil. The ritual concludes in the seated position where the ground plane is experienced bodily, its dimensions internalized.

### **Middle Imperial**

Individual genuflection is spiritual technology, but collective genuflection is bio-power, the mechanism of (modern) subjugation and subjectification.<sup>12</sup> Remote control and persuasion become more systemic in the layout of imperial spaces. Istanbul's Suleymaniye mosque (completed in 1557 ca) is a machine for the bio-striation of space. It gradually compresses the traversing body: slowing it down to sanctify it in the ablution forecourt, stopping it in the worship hall, and compacting it in the cemetery. Thus the three main spaces on the *qibla* axis can be said to correspond

<sup>11</sup> For the esoteric meaning of invisibility in Islam see Toshihiko Izutsu: *Sufism and Taoism, a Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1984), p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> See note 2, pp. 22–27.

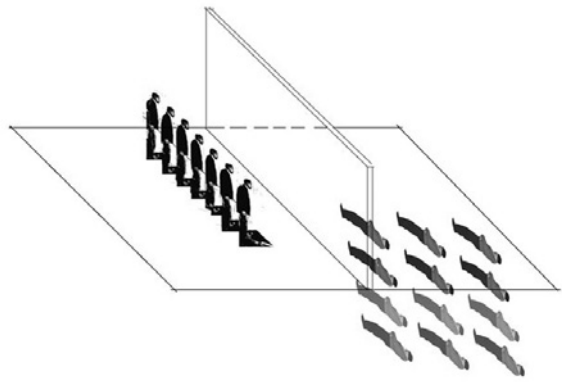


Fig. 4: Facing Mecca underground.

to the three postures of standing, half prostration, and full prostration. The trajectory of worshiper goes symbolically and actually from the city to the cemetery, the body repeatedly facing the *qibla* wall as a barrier until such a day that it becomes a passage. The characteristic stillness of the space of the mosque is the analogue to the immobility of the body. It is the final result of the devolution of movement started outside. The control of bodies extends below ground to the alignment of corpses, the dead constituting a separate but adjacent realm to the living. They are interred in rows parallel to the rows of worshipers. Their heads are made to turn towards the *qibla* in a last gesture similar to the concluding salutation. Their underground eyes are thus set to face Mecca on the Day of Judgment. The necks of both the living and the dead crane in anticipation of a promised reconciliation at the end of time, when distance collapses and space flattens.<sup>13</sup> The analogy is never more explicit than in the Suleymaniye, where the cemetery and worship hall mirror each other perfectly, being identical in size, alignment and shape, divided by the *qibla* wall into two gardens, one carpeted and the other floral. The worship hall pairs the earth and sky, with the cemetery on one side and the void between the four minarets above the ablution forecourt on the other.

But to overemphasize the striation and immobility of the body is to overstate the case. Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly point out that the “the simple opposition ‘smooth-striated’ gives rise to far more difficult complications, alternations, and superpositions.”<sup>14</sup> The ritualistic body is divided in its loyalties. Its vertical stance expresses authority and hierarchy, but its descent returns it to the ‘plane of immanence. The immediacy and intimacy of the ground challenges the singularity of the vertical, bringing into play the oppositions of optic/haptic and distant/close vision. The “descent” (*tanzil*) of the Word is the founding moment of

13 Quran, sura 78:20, sura 77:10.

14 See note 8, p. 480. Hardt and Negri describe a related overlap but in another context when they refer to the formation of Empire as being one of “mixed constitution.” See note 2, pp. 304–324.

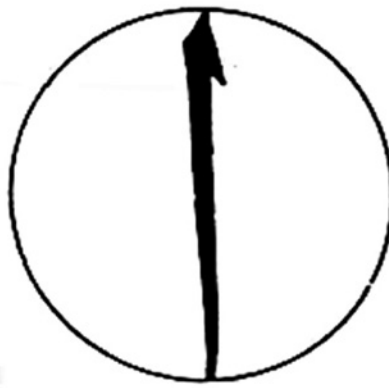


Fig. 5: Alif in Muhakkaq script.

Islam, the transcription on the plane of human action of the “Preserved Tablets”, kept at the apex and containing the totality of all that exists.<sup>15</sup> Thus to stand in worship is to align oneself with the transcendent vertical, while to genuflect (or recite/inscribe the *Quran*) is to transmute the timeless into the time-bound. The alternations and superpositions are exemplified in the affinity between script and gesture. The Alif, the carrier of sovereign and religious authority, the datum of the alphabet, the primordial line, here descends into contingent time, to be followed by the other letters dissipating along the horizontal line, becoming talismans that restore life to the cold hierarchy of the vertical.<sup>16</sup> This is made explicit in Bin Muqla’s *Muhakkaq* script, where the vertical Alif is rendered to evoke a standing worshiper whose neck is slightly bent in an attitude of humility.<sup>17</sup> It would seem that Bin Muqla’s alphabet was playfully subversive and dissenting, not only for evoking the forbidden human figure, but also for playing up the humble multitude of letters as against the sovereign vertical. The analogy further extends from the page to the realm of living space: many of the same verses and key words being silently recited also happen to be inscribed on the surfaces of the space of worship in a paradoxical change of state, as if liquid became solid. They accompany and compliment the oscillations between the vertical and horizontal, and reinforce the relationship of gesture, Word and space.<sup>18</sup>

15 Quran Sura 85:21-22 and Sura17:145 for mention of the Eternal Tablets. The first word of the first revelation, ‘Read’, (the source word for Koran) unites the celestial axis with the horizontal page.

16 A folk parable tells of how the Alif was the first among the assembly of letters to prostrate in worship and how God rewarded its devotion by restoring it to its original and ideal—that is vertical—shape while the others letters remained in the form of their prostration. God also placed the Alif at the head of the assembly of letters and at the head of his own name and that of man (Allah and Adam).

17 Seyyed Husein Nasr: *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 19–21. The Muhakkaq style was invented in Baghdad by the calligrapher Bin Muqla (d. 939), and still in general use today.

18 Furthermore, the letters are not simply attached one to another, but ‘placed’ in function of each other and the horizontal line, the form of each changing according to its position in the

The alternations and superpositions likewise constitute imperial mosques. The centralized and domed Suleymaniye retains, a thousand years after the nomadic phase, a cross-axial striation that modulates the advance of axial space in pronounced and significant ways. The *qibla* wall appears flatter than the other three walls; lateral compression is present; the forecourt is wider than it is long; many important entrances into the precinct occur along the cross axis; the east and west outer buttresses divide the form laterally.<sup>19</sup> Though monumental, the building responds to the intimate gestures of worship, themselves acts of homage to the smooth space of the desert, the primordial ‘body without organs’. The vitality and multiplicity of genuflecting figures contrast with the timelessness and immobility of the space, where neither movement nor shadows are registered (the carpet absorbing all sound and the colored glass filtering all light), where all trajectories are equal in the uniform space, and where every spot can confer stasis and centrality. The removal of shoes lends intimacy and domesticity to the monumental space. It is perhaps in this sense that Deleuze and Guattari write of Arab architecture (and Moslem by extension) that it “begins very near and low, placing the light and the airy below and the solid and heavy above. This reversal of the laws of gravity turns lack of direction and negation of volume into constructive forces.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Late Global**

It’s a long way from the liturgical wall of 8th Century Damascus to the wall of security monitors in the control room of the Hajj, the annual rite of pilgrimage to Mecca, one of today’s largest mass gatherings and most extensive crowd-control operations. The striating element moves to an entirely different register here: instrumental, impersonal, systematic, invisible. The habits of communal alignment, of limiting view, compressing the body, appropriating the horizon, and virtualizing space all find their place in the service of this new panopticon. In this instrument of mass security it is the collective rather than the introspective that becomes significant. All the factors contributing to globalization come to view on the wall: immigration, spectacle, fundamentalism, authoritarianism, the multitude, single world advertising, etc. The screen is a new collective *sutra*, but now as a means of external control. The crowd-control room is the active mechanism at the center

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sequence and so requires kinetic and sculptural choices to be made. Likewise, the worshiper’s choice of recited texts determines the length, rhythm, pacing, and internal meaning of the ritual. As the forehead finally touches the ground, so the inscription finds its balance along the line.

19 Godfrey Goodwin: *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992), pp. 215–239.

20 See note 8, p. 494.

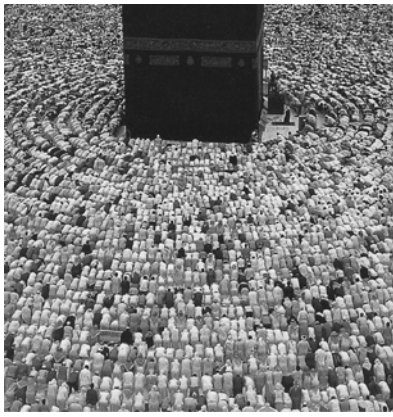


Fig. 6: Kaaba in Mecca.

of vision, competing with the *Kaaba* at the hub of worship. The wall is instrumental both practically and politically-ideologically. Millions of pilgrims are made to move, and therefore genuflect, in an ordered fashion according to techniques developed for football matches.<sup>21</sup> This is one segment of Empire’s extensive system of control that goes far beyond mere pilgrimage.

All the striating lines converge in obeisance at the *Kaaba*, the extraordinary cube at the center of visual and spatial control. Mythic origins enhance its transcendental power.<sup>22</sup> “The great monuments rise up like levees” says Bataille, “opposing the logic of majesty and authority to any confusion: Church and State in the form of cathedrals and palaces speak to the multitude, or silence them.”<sup>23</sup> But the *Kaaba* is an unusual monument in that it remains invisible at the center of vision, a blind panopticon shrouded in a black vesture (*kiswa*), absorbing all light and space and prayer.<sup>24</sup> Its invisibility reinforces the suppression of vision (e.g. veils, genuflections, courtyard houses, decorated surfaces, ban on figural representation, etc.). It contains no icons of veneration, no striating object; it merely points to an absence. It is believed to be the lowest in a stack of celestial cubes, functioning as a relay point between the cosmic axis and the axes of terrestrial worship.<sup>25</sup> It is simultaneously of this world and otherworldly, appearing to be ter-

21 Crowd Dynamics: “Ministry of Haj workshop: Jamarat Bridge Saudi Arabia 2001–2005,” updated 23 May 2009, <http://www.CrowdDynamics.co.uk/>, (accessed June 28, 2009).

22 It is believed to have been built by Adam after the Expulsion, and later again by Abraham in his desert wanderings. Its Black Stone, an ancient and sacred meteorite, is believed to have been brought down from one of the celestial sphere by the archangel Gabriel. For an account of the origins of Islamic pilgrimage, and a description of its stages and procedures see Ibn Warraq: *Why I Am Not a Moslem* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1995), pp. 34–41.

23 Quote in Dennis Hollier: *Against Architecture: the Writings of George Bataille* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press 1989) p. IV, trans. Betsy Wing of Bataille text.

24 A new *Kiswa* is woven every year to replace the old one. The habit of draping the Ka’ba might have its origins in pre-Islamic Arabia, with its tradition of draping epic poems (called the ‘mual-lakaat—those that hang) from the Ka’ba during market and pilgrimage periods.

25 See K. A. C. Creswell: *A Short Account of Early Moslem Architecture* (Aldershot: Scolar

restrial, like the receding *qibla*, almost available, potentially intimate. This paradox of remote intimacy, of vision (and understanding) touching at a great distance but without attainment describes well the abstract quality of the God of Islam. And yet this invisible and small edifice controls a radiating network of formidable monuments.<sup>26</sup> To worship along its axis is to turn away from everyday space and occupy one end of an opposition: the sophisticated mosque and the elemental cube, architecture and proto-architecture, development and origin, the time-bound and the timeless. Deleuze and Guattari describe the power of the center thus: ‘the absolute itself can appear in the Encompassed, but only in a privileged place well delimited as a center, which then functions to repel beyond the limits anything that menaces the global integration.’<sup>27</sup>

But Empire is without center or periphery, and therefore indifferent to the architectural subtleties of monument and center. It challenges Islam exactly at its center, by erecting a monument of its own that dwarfs the *Kaaba*. The Abraj-al-Bait mall/hotel development, when completed in 2010, will be the largest single building in the world, at 1.5 million square meters (having started in 2002, in the interval between 9/11 and Iraq II). It will house 100,000 people and contain all the requisite elements of global commerce (complete with Tiffany’s, Starbucks, and H&M).<sup>28</sup> The audacity of placing it precisely here, at the point of greatest friction and proximity, exposes the raw and insatiable power of Empire. Here the passage to Empire appears not as the subtle and seamless structural transformation described by Hardt and Negri’s, but as something altogether more archetypal and primitive, a crude battle in the mold of earlier empires. The two monuments abut each other but are worlds apart, representing diametrically opposed ways of persuasion and control. The juxtaposition exposes a simmering hostility, the uncanny moment before a disaster. (Evidently, high-end design is also needed in the mix of monument and multitude, if one is to believe the rumored involvement of Norman Foster and Zaha Hadid in the design of a new urban plan for Mecca and the

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Press, 1989), pp. 3–4. See also Titus Burekhardt: *Art of Islam, Language and Meaning*. Translated by J. Peter Hobson (Westytherham, Kent: The World of Islam Festival Publishing Co. Ltd., 1976), pp. 3–5.

<sup>26</sup> The Suleymaniye, again as one example among many, registers the magnetic pull of the Kaaba in the apparent advance of its formidable main volume up the hill and past the four minarets.

<sup>27</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 494.

<sup>28</sup> Hassan M. Fattah: “The Profane Crowding Out the Sacred in Mecca,” *New York Times*, March 8, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/08/world/africa/08iht-mecca.4842728.html>, (accessed June 28, 2009).



Fig. 7: Abraj al Bait,  
Mecca, 2002-09.

expansion of the *Kaaba* mosque, following on the earlier Bin Laden expansions).<sup>29</sup> The new Abraj building has all the credentials of Empire, down to the identity of its developer, the Saudi Binladin Group, the corporate name of the less well know half of the family.<sup>30</sup> The two halves constitute the symmetrical bookends of Empire. The symmetry is necessary if one accepts Hardt and Negri's formulation by which Empire-construction requires real or manufactured enemies. The new barbarians at the gate serve only to consolidate and strengthen the system. Terrorism becomes as necessary to the machinery of Empire as global capital. Hardt and Negri designate both postmodernism and fundamentalism as 'symptoms of passage'. They observe that the discourses of postmodernism and fundamentalism appeal respectively to the winners and the losers in the process of globalization. Already in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Ibn Khaldun foretold of winners and losers being one and the same thing. In his *Muqaddimah*, he observed that great empires are overrun by nomadic tribes that still possess *asabiyyah*, the Bedouin ethos of endurance, strength, and group cohesion. The new rulers, in their turn, succumb to luxury and are overrun by more vigorous tribes living along their peripheries.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the Abraj luxury tower, overlooking a sea of pilgrims, foretells of a similar passage. But if Empire is indeed the terminal civilization, then the evidence for the future is discouraging. The Abraj towers indicate the loss of the symbolic vertical pole, paralleled only by the loss of the environmental North Pole. The two events, different though they are, point to

29 Richard Wait: "Foster and Hadid to Redesign Mecca," *AJ, The Architect's Journal*, 26 November, 2008, <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/foster-and-hadid-to-redesign-mecca/1935469>. article, (accessed June 28, 2009).

30 Saudi Binladin Group, <http://www.sbgpbad.ae/default.asp?action=article&ID=3> (accessed July 8, 2009).

31 known in the West as the Prolegomena, and considered today to be the first work of cultural history, sociology; and perhaps economics. Ibn Khaldun: *The Muqaddimah: an Introduction to History*. trans Franz Rosenthal. Ed N. J. Dawood. (Princeton, Bollingen Series, 1967).



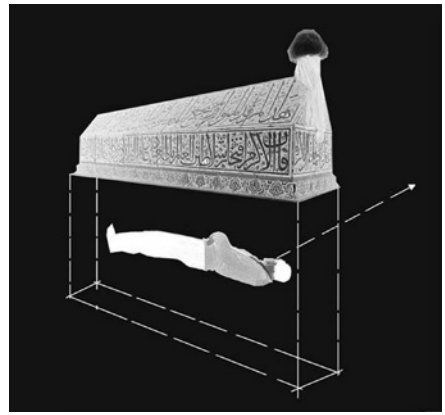


Fig. 8: underground eyes.

gether to a radical and permanent change in our sense of ourselves as oriented, spatial beings.<sup>32</sup>

The multitude, with its dream of liberation, enters into this volatile mix of monuments, politics, and religion. The agent of liberation, says Edward Said, “has now shifted from the settled, established, and domesticated dynamic of culture to its unhoused, decentered, and exilic energies, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant.”<sup>33</sup> The millions of pilgrims circumambulating the *Kaaba* represent a cross-section of vast humanity, a microcosm that includes every form of pilgrimage, dislocation, immigration, homelessness, the destitute and the forgotten. But it remains to be seen if this cross section of mobile humanity is indeed the revolutionary nomadism that Hardt and Negri designate as the Multitude, the obverse side of Empire. It is tempting to imagine that the ethos of genuflection and pilgrimage can produce the diffuse and extensive network of free individuals to resist globalization. But this multitude is motivated by a traditionalist, patriarchal and conservative culture. Its circumambulation have hardly changed in 1400 years. The lifetime habits of sublimating the horizon, diverting the gaze, and straitening the body lead to passivity in social and political matters. How else to explain the Abraj tower? The Syrian poet Adonis (pen name of Ali Ahmad Said) blames what he calls the ‘double dependency’ of Arab modernity: “a dependency on the past, to compensate for the lack of creative activity by remembering and reviving; and a dependency on the European-American West, to compensate for the failure to invent and innovate by intellectual and technical adaptation and borrowing.... In both cases there is an obliteration of personality.”<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, the tent city of pilgrims represents an interplay of modularity/multiplicity at the scale of land that parallels the interplay of Empire/Multitude; the collective genuflections

32 On the significance of the north for orientation see Henry Corbin: *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, trans. Nancy Pearson (New Lebanon, NY: Omega, 1971), pp. 1–12.

33 Edward Said: *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), p. 332.

34 Adonis: *An Introduction to Arab Poetics*, trans. Catherine Cobham (London: Saki Books 2003), p. 80.

aspire to a new equilibrium between the individual and the crowd, the singular and the multiple, the conservative and the progressive whose direction is hard to forecast once it joins other forces and other groupings. If the predicted passage to Multitude does take place, and Empire goes the way of earlier empires, we might someday look upon the Abraj with the same bemused bewilderment that we now reserve for Stalinist architecture--as a caricature of power in our times, and with relief at its passage. Likewise, the passage might restore our ritualistic body, at present so divided in its loyalties. It would redeem our horizontal dimension, our tangible and tactile ground plane.



# PROJECTIVE AND CRITICAL PRACTICE

## *Workshop 1*

**Jane Rendell**

University College London

**Olaf Pfeifer**

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

*Professor Jane Rendell is Director of Architectural Research at the Bartlett, UCL. An architectural designer and historian, art critic and writer, her work has explored various interdisciplinary intersections: feminist theory and architectural history, fine art and architectural design, autobiographical writing and criticism. She is author of Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism (2010), Art and Architecture (2006), The Pursuit of Pleasure (2002) and co-editor of Pattern (2007), Critical Architecture (2007), Spatial Imagination (2005), The Unknown City (2001), Intersections (2000), Gender Space Architecture (1999) and Strangely Familiar (1995). Her talks and texts have been commissioned by artists such as Daniel Arsham and Bik Van Der Pol, and galleries, as the Baltic, the Hayward, Kunstmuseum Thon, the Serpentine, the Tate and the Whitechapel. She is on the Editorial Board for ARQ (Architectural Research Quarterly), Haecceity, The Happy Hypocrite, The Issues and the Journal of Visual Culture in Britain.*

*Olaf Pfeifer is an Architect who teaches Architectural Theory and Design at the Chair for Theory and History of modern Architecture in Weimar since 2005, after having worked for Sauerbruch Hutton Architects and other Firms for a few years. He graduated from Pratt Institute's MArch Program in 2000 and from Berlin Institute of Technology (TU Berlin) in 1999. His research is focused on constructions of authenticity, places and atmospheres in and by means of architecture. A recent project and publication, 're-thinking home', involves interdisciplinary work in public space of a small town by Artists, Architects, and Urban Designers.*

Workshop 1, tutored and peer reviewed by Prof. Jane Rendell (Bartlett School of Architecture, UC London)<sup>1</sup>, titled 'Projective and Critical Practice' was derived directly from the core topic of the conference: the relation between projective practice, often illustrated with Rem Koolhaas' metaphor of the architect as a surfer on the waves, and critical practice, sometimes associated with the autonomy of the discipline and its protagonists, as already claimed since post-modernism by theoreticians such as Eisenman or Tafuri.

Since that topic had been subject to a number of publications and symposia<sup>2</sup>, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, most of the contributions tried to show a possibilities for further evolution of the obviously conflicting positions.

The Talk 'Architecture Fiddles while the World Burns', given by Tatjana Schneider and co-authored by Jeremy Till, starts out by using Tafuri's words to describe the – apparently unavoidable – inability of architects to influence what they are commissioned with, as a result of the "impotent and ineffectual myths, which so often serve as illusions, that permit the survival of anachronistic hopes in design." "Architecture has deluded itself into believing that the production of form alone can intervene productively in the social world". Tafuri provocatively deems architecture "obliged to return to pure architecture, to form without utopia; in the best case to sublime uselessness." This kind of, often claimed for, autonomy of the discipline is, however, neither leading anywhere, nor practically applicable, as Schneider points out.

Instead, she proposes to replace the traditional concept of the heroic, yet authoritarian star-architect offering formal solutions to real-world problems with the concept of Agency. Here, architects are rather seen as participants of a dialogue, as anti-heroes, discussing and questioning their goals, opening up to act otherwise, yet offering professional expertise and ethics as well as mutual knowledge to social and political networks that they participate in.

Rixt Hoechstras Lecture 'How critical is criticality?' contextualizes the critical and post-critical positions within the architectural debate against the background of the critical project in critical

theory and cultural criticism since the founding of the Frankfurter Schule in 1923. Here, the seemingly opposed positions of oppositional and pragmatic criticism turn out to be attempts of dialectic evolution of the critical project, in order to avoid or "overcome the reductivism and naïveté of oppositional criticism" as well as the aimlessness of positions that refrain from utopia. After all, she summarizes, the post-critics insistence on 'reality' is naïve as well, if not a way to remove the most difficult question – the question of the individual stance – off the agenda. "The point for the anti-theorists then, is just to gen on with what we do, without all this distracting fuss about theory", she quotes Stan Allen. "The Advantage of oppositional criticism was that [...] it actively pointed towards the possibility of an opposite way of living. [...] [Otherwise], the question for me is whether criticism in our society still exists", she closes.

Lara Schrijver's very eloquent discussion titled 'Architecture: Projective, Critical, or Craft?' on the other hand shows the impact of different cultural backgrounds for this debate in the United States, the UK, and the Netherlands, in order to show how different concepts of the idea of resistance, which, according to Michael Hays, is central to Eisenman's claim for autonomy of the discipline, lead to different forms of critical architecture. To answer the question, what architecture actually can contribute besides questionable utopian ideas, she points to Richard Sennett's concept of 'craftsmanship', a holistic type of expertise, which, similar to the concept of 'agency', focuses on the professional experience of the architect rather than his authority, yet serving (primarily) the goal to make better Buildings, and thus advance society.

In his study 'Non-Places of Immaterial Labour – Architecture's Dildotopia', Andreas Rumpfhuber aims to read two built examples, the 'Bürolandschaft' by Eberhard and Wolfgang Schnelle, and the 'Fun Palace' by Cedric Price, as manifestations of the 1950s/1960s cybernetic theories which introduced new forms of organization and self-governance. Initially promising "a society on equal terms, a pluralistic community", which consequently followed the transformation from industrial to

immaterial labour that had been induced by growing automation of production, self-governance, as an integral part of Hardt and Negri's 'Empire' also entails embedded mechanisms of control, which Rumpfhuber explains in detail. That same process of de-materialization of work and hierarchy also led to the intermingling of private and public spheres, a 'never-ending casual Friday', as Rumpfhuber quotes from Koolhaas' famous text *Junkspace*. It also created the ideal of universally available, individualistic, nomadic, yet cybernetically connected workforce known as 'cyborg', that can be read as a blueprint for today's creative class. Rumpfhuber, who states to be interested in subversive strategies of over-affirmation, then sets out to graft these theories with Beatriz Preciado's 'manifiesto contra-sexuel', in which she develops dildotopia as an idea in which the (constructed) individual's body is a freely programmable container of organs and protheses: "each part of the body is becoming a zone of activity and thus is able to become sexually stimulated".

'Explaining *Junkspace*' is also Silke Ötsch's ambitious title. Yet, while Rumpfhuber identifies cybernetics, or self-governance, as its precondition, and ultimately searches for over-affirmative strategies to subvert these, Silke Ötsch focuses on widely accepted, yet clearly ideological neo-liberalist market theory, and the details of the economic subtext in her contribution. She pinpoints examples of obviously ideologically compromised views in project descriptions by Rem Koolhaas and explains how Koolhaas, to avoid bankruptcy, had to change OMA's work style in response to its investors. The term 'financialization' is used to describe the growing influence of the mechanisms of decision-making within financial institutions, that are not the same (or even adequate) to real-world economies, influence the latter. Setting up an interesting hypothesis about the economical consequences for architecture, she especially identifies the so-called 'second-tier builder' as key position that is the driving force behind most of the market-driven architectural production. Whereas star architects sometimes serve as figureheads for projects that can be

marketed in this way, they pose a risk to investors, since they have other interests, besides earning revenue. Corporate building departments that work largely without architects and simply copy proven designs circumvent such problems, since they respond only to the concerns and logic of the investor. 'Second tier builders', such as John Jerde or Hundertwasser, who do not necessarily design innovative or culturally valuable buildings, yet understand how to address aesthetic needs of the broad public, turn out to be the best bet for financial investors.

Grace Quiroga's Text 'Pants on Fire?' is a joyful attack against O.M.A.'s TVCC Headquarter building in Beijing ('Big Underpants'), part of which went up in flames on Chinese new year's eve, 2009. Although never literally using the words ('liar, liar') from the beginning of the famous children's rhyme which forms the title, she juxtaposes various quotes by Ole Scheeren, Rem Koolhaas, Chinese TV and government officials, leaving serious doubts about phrases like 'embedded activism', and the degree of "criticality inherent in projective practice". Quiroga analyzes the case from various sides – the importance and possible impact of the project, its obvious ties to the powerful Chinese regime, as well as the vainly ascribed iconic and symbolic meanings and explanations of the building's shape. Another point that the author elaborates, are the sexual connotations that disturbingly keep coming up in the media as well as in O.M.A.'s own publications ("Big-ness fucks context"). This may be seen as an evidence of how critical expertise, confronted with the challenges and temptations of such commissions, quickly turns into sarcasm ("a position of resistance seems somehow ornamental"). Ultimately, that same sarcasm comes up when Quiroga states – in lack of anything more positive to say: "The CCTV building demonstrates how architecture can function as an agent of globalization, asserting the superiority of the Empire over a nation state. [...] The success of global architecture is a [...] proof of

its political conservativeness; it makes no difference.”

The paper that closes this section in the present book was originally part of another workshop, but it also addresses some of the difficulties facing architects in a globalized context. Martin Peschken’s paper, ‘World Stages for Lady Justice,’ is a case study of the 2008 competition for the International Criminal Court building in the Hague. Looking for a timeless image representing the mission of the ICC, the organizers stressed that “the premises must be unobtrusive and on a human scale, while at the same time symbolizing the eminence and authority of the Court.” The jury felt that these expectations were best met by Christoph Ingenhoven whose entry they described as the “happy building”. Rejecting Western conventions, the architect was aiming at a universal architectural language, understandable to all the people in the world. Peschken notes that architecture is here not only used to express a specific corporate identity but also to give legitimacy to the ICC as an instrument with which Empire undermines the legal sovereignty of nation states.

Olaf Pfeifer

## Notes

1 For logistical reasons, the last two presentations, as well as a closing panel, had to be administered and commented by the curator of the conference, Prof. Kari Jormakka.

2 cp. Jane Rendell, *Critical Architecture*, London 2007.



## **Tatjana Schneider**

### The University of Sheffield

*Tatjana Schneider is lecturer at the School of Architecture, University of Sheffield. She holds a PhD in architecture. She worked in architectural practice in Germany and the UK, and has taught, lectured and published widely (including Flexible Housing with Jeremy Till). She was a member of the worker's cooperative G.L.A.S. (Glasgow Letters on Architecture*

*and Space), which undertook agit-prop works, educational workshops, community based design consultancy and produced the quarterly journal glaspaper. Her work focuses on the production and political economy of the built environment. Current work includes the research 'Spatial Agency'.*



# ARCHITECTURE FIDDLES WHILE THE WORLD BURNS<sup>1</sup>

The title of this text is a quote from Jeremy Till's recent book *Architecture Depends*.<sup>2</sup> He notes

*In the last chapter of Architecture and Utopia, Manfredo Tafuri writes of the impossible position of the architect: caught within the structure of capitalism, the architect has lost any means of resistance. Tafuri's most devastating argument is that architecture has deluded itself into believing that the production of form alone can intervene productively in the social world, and that this delusion has hidden the real state of affairs in which fresh form has been appropriated by the very forces of capital that it presumes to escape. The final sentence of the book talks of 'impotent and ineffectual myths, which so often serve as illusions that permit the survival of anachronistic hopes in design.' Tafuri's trenchant argument—he talks of being 'uselessly painful' because it is useless to struggle for escape when completely enclosed and confined without an exit,—leaves no apparent way out of the conundrum, and so led his critics to talk of the death of architecture. Answering this charge, Tafuri*

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1 This paper is based on work carried out together with Jeremy Till for the research project 'Alternative Architectural Praxis', funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The research will be published as a book with the title *Spatial Agency* by Routledge in Spring 2011. The arguments of spatial agency on which the second part of this text are based are developed in detail in: Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till: "Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency," *Footprint 4* (2009): pp. 97–111.

2 Jeremy Till: *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009).

sees ‘architecture obliged to return to pure architecture, to form without utopia; in the best case to sublime uselessness.’ It is too easy to take these words at face value, to escape from the pressures and just fiddle while the world burns. But that sentence is surely not a prescription but a provocation, with all its caustic sarcasm meant to shake the profession out of its slumber.<sup>3</sup>

Tafari’s quote dates back to 1975 and amazingly, the profession as much as academia still seems to be in this slumber. Or maybe, it is a different slumber. I’m not sure.

It was probably too easy to remain there, sleepwalking. Too easy to just go on and unwittingly fulfil the great man’s prophecy. Architecture retreated further and further into autonomy, equally architecture as building and architecture as thinking. But, also: both went into different rooms.

It is as if we suddenly find ourselves in a world were one part says:

*Well, you know, I told you so. Told you that it would happen. Was only a matter of time until the whole thing went up in smoke. Might have said something else until recently, but, you know, deep down, always thought it was going to happen. So, let’s change ship.*

And then, there’s the other part that says:

*Uh, let’s wait for a bit. Let’s just keep building (or thinking) for some time. This surely isn’t going to last.*

So, we have those who are leaving the sinking ship and those who’ve decided to stay on it for another while.

Those who will stay on it will probably continue to theorise or be theorised about.

What might they theorise about? Maybe autonomy?

Autonomy is interesting. It is something that architecture, like any other cultural field, is so good at.

The American sociologist Magali Sarfatti Larson notes “autonomy is justified by the professional’s claim of possessing a special and superior knowledge, which should therefore be free of lay evaluation and protected from inexpert interference.”<sup>4</sup> Garry Stevens writes that architecture even strives to increase its autonomy. Yet, he also argues “no other field is less autonomous in terms of its relationship with other cultural fields.”<sup>5</sup>

3 Ibid., p. 189.

4 Magali Sarfatti Larson: “In the Matter of Experts and Professionals, or How Impossible It Is to Leave Nothing Unsaid.” In: *The Formation of Professions*, ed. Rolf Torstendahl and Michael Burrage (London: Sage, 1990), p. 31.

5 Garry Stevens: *The Favored Circle: The Social Foundations of Architectural Distinction*

Looking from the outside, Till observes, “it is almost laughable to think that architecture, as practice and product, could be seen as autonomous. And yet, from within the black box of the profession of architecture, it somehow seems a sensible move to keep the practice and products inside the walls, there to treat them as autonomous processes and objects. That way you can control them better. ... The walls of the black box protect architects from the contingencies of the world beyond, allowing them to develop theories and practices unfettered by others.”<sup>6</sup>

You’re still in your separate room on the (I would say sinking) ship, call it black box, or call it—Tafuri’s term again—*prison* and left to perform “brilliant gymnastics”: technology, beauty, criticality, projectivity, autopoiesis, you name it. But—“how ineffectual are the brilliant gymnastics carried out in the yard of the model prison, in which architects are left free to move about on temporary reprieve?”<sup>7</sup> You are about to fulfil his prophecy: you’re doing pure architecture that is sublimely useless.

Yet, as Till further declares, it is “a prison yard of architecture’s own making.”<sup>8</sup>

By retreating from the world and staying put within this self-inflicted, self-implemented separation from the world (practice within practice and discourse within discourse), practice—as well as academia (at least architectural academia) is—broadly speaking—refusing to deal with economic, political and social issues as well as ‘real people’ and the world as such (a discussion that includes ethical and moral values and responsibilities). At the same time it leads to the complete marginalisation of the profession and the discipline and a self-imposed limitation on its capability and ‘power’ or its negation thereof.

Still, it is a comfortable position. Architects typically desperately want to build—often regardless. They are, through indoctrinated architectural mythology, conditioned to believe in the power a building can have. They live in the hope—against hope—that fame is just one step away. And who would really risk this, would go out into the world and refuse a job simply because they feel site safety isn’t met, that their client isn’t adhering to ethical values, that the clearing of a building site might involve the forced displacement of an existing community.

And that’s because they, the Architects with a capital ‘A’, believe in the redemptive power of form (or technology)—above all else. Discourse (and that in-

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(Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), p. 93.

6 Till, see note 2, pp. 17–19.

7 Manfredo Tafuri: *Theories and History of Architecture* (London: Granada, 1980), p. xxii.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 189.

cludes buildings) is practiced as an internalised discipline of formal production in which words, shapes and details assume equivalence in terms of their supposed power but eventual impotence.

Yet, if understood from a sociological point of view, discourse includes “all that a particular category of agents say (or write) in a specific capacity and in a definable thematic area. Discourse commonly invites dialogue.”<sup>9</sup>

In that, it is then important, how open this dialogue is and who it is that participates or is entitled to participate in this dialogue.

This is not to dismiss the role of theory, but to see theory as isolated from practice and practice isolated from theory is to miss the point.

As Jeremy Till and I have written elsewhere<sup>10</sup>, the discussion about whether we are living in a critical or post-critical era seems almost irrelevant since these terms circle round each other. It is the fate of all terms ‘post-’ that they can never escape the grip of the condition that they would wish to ensue and succeed. Just, as Zygmunt Bauman notes, postmodernity is no more than “modernity without illusions”,<sup>11</sup> so, Jeremy Till and I have argued post-theorising is theorising without brains. The critical is an immanent condition of architecture since architecture as a discipline is inherently political.<sup>12</sup> Autonomy is out of the question, since to be relevant architecture needs to be situated firmly in, and working with, the context of the world beyond because architects—those writing, researching, building and producing architecture—are but one part of a much wider social system. Architecture needs to be a socially and politically aware form of agency, critical of the social and economic formations of its context in order to engage better with it in a transformative and emancipatory manner.<sup>13</sup>

Which bring us to this elusive term *agency*—which could be seen, as an anonymous reviewer of a text on spatial agency recently noted, as just another architectural cliché or trope or “the latest version of an intellectual fetish process that once offered us the ‘cut’ and then the ‘gaze’ as seemingly profound terms that perhaps didn’t turn out to be as profound as they might have seemed.”

9 Magali Sarfatti Larson: *Behind the Postmodern Facade: Architectural Change in Late Twentieth Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 5.

10 Schneider and Till: *Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency*, pp. 97–111.

11 Zygmunt Bauman: *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 32.

12 The term critical is understood in the early Frankfurt School sense, as something that starts out with an unravelling of the social reality of the given condition so as to be able to understand how to transform it into something better.

13 See note 10, p. 98.

He went on to say that terms such as agency should not necessarily be avoided but they ought to be used in a critical and circumspect way.

He is perfectly right.

Architectural criticism, maybe architecture per se, has seen too many of those terms—whether that was (and still is) criticality, realism, pragmatism, progressive or projective architecture. As was the case with the Harvard Design Magazine Reader entitled *The New Architectural Pragmatism*, rethinking of architecture and architecture's value usually comes packaged as something that addresses (or deliberately denies) the architect's social responsibility. Typically, the question is limited in scope right from the outset by adding something like, "but how much should we ask of architecture?" William Saunders, the editor of this Harvard Design Magazine Reader, proposes an answer to this, which is printed on the dust cover: "architecture must be at once flexible and robust, responsive and self-directed."<sup>14</sup>

I am not sure whether these terms actually mean much, or indeed anything. If you add why and how to this list, you're none the wiser.

Flexible in what way?

Responsive to what?

Even self-directed is ambiguous.

While starting by setting out the socio-political context, most of these approaches in the end defer to the idea of retreat and non-engagement. Agency, on the other hand, inevitably addresses the context beyond the black box, in so much as it is always engaged with the actions for and of others.

Agency, in this context therefore is not a further attempt at the commodification of knowledge. Agency questions the 'authority' of the architect, which still seems to be the prerequisite for one's credibility as a professional. It questions the mythology of the individual, the sole architect as hero-author as played out through the so-familiar figures of Rems, Zahas, Normans et al, which give a comforting familiarity with genius that disguises the reality of how little of the built environment is associated with any architect-author.

In that sense, agency is about the architect as an anti-hero—someone that is in many ways the opposite of the above. Yet, it is also more than just the opposite—since I'm not just after straw (wo)men or the heads of Rem, Zaha or Norman.

Although agency challenges the norms of professional behaviour, it doesn't disregard the role of professional knowledge. "Superior, differentiated and highly

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14 William Saunders (ed.): *The new Architectural Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), dust jacket.

specialised activities have never been separate from everyday practice,” Lefebvre says “but have only appeared to be so.”<sup>15</sup> What this suggests, Jeremy Till argues is “that professional knowledge needs to be seen as part of a network that weaves together human and nonhuman, specialized knowledge with everyday insights, rules with instincts, the social sciences with the social. It asks the profession to be part of the networks of others, and in this confronts it with its very worst fear, that of being normal.”<sup>16</sup>

To be an architect in that sense, to be an agent, is to act with intent and purpose, yet not just applying learned procedures. Purpose is also guided by hunch, intuition, negotiation, and other conditioned reflexes. Anthony Giddens says that first and foremost agency “presumes the capability of acting otherwise.”<sup>17</sup> And, although this phrase is seemingly quite harmless, it opens up a large can of worms.

To admit to the possibility of doing otherwise is against the instinct of the professional since this means to offer up one’s fragility, and this is the symptom of the amateur, a symptom that must be avoided at all costs. To accept this sense of agency is also to accept a new sense of what it may mean to be an architect, one in which the lack of a predetermined future is seen as an opportunity and not a threat.<sup>18</sup>

Till argues that “for the given to be seen as a place of potential, one has to rid it of the negative connotations of mess and chaos. The only way to do this is by understanding the contingency of the given, in its very uncertainty and openness toward establishing something else, as an opportunity and not a threat: to see that freedom is to be found in the recognition of contingency and not outside of it.”<sup>19</sup>

The contingency of the given, the hope and potential of encounters between the professional (architect) and human (all others) is a fundamental to what Giddens calls *mutual knowledge*<sup>20</sup>. Knowledge that is generated as collective action in understanding and working with the ‘other’ is fundamental in that it provides the counterpart to *discursive consciousness*. Hunch and intuition versus or, more exactly, negotiating with explicit and explainable matters. The lines between the practical and the theoretical are fluctuating, continuously shifting and permeable, with each drawing on the other in the act of agency.

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15 Henri Lefebvre: *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. John Moore, vol. 1 (London: Verso, 1991), p. 86.

16 See note 2, p. 165.

17 Anthony Giddens: *Social Theory and Modern Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), p. 216.

18 See note 10, p. 98.

19 See note 2, p. 191.

20 See note 17, p. 4.

Again this is a challenge to professional norms, both academic and architectural. If one cannot explicate, then one cannot claim authority; hence the domination of the discursive over the practical, of discourse over doing. Hence too the marginalisation of discourse as it increasingly needs to feed off itself, discourse on discourse, in an ever-spiralling effect of internalisation with its accompanying autonomy. Just at the moment, in late 2009, when the crisis caused by the unfettered market is forcing even the most hardened institutions to rethink their values, practices that have been critical of the hegemony appear not so much as radical alternatives, but as prescient harbingers of new ways of acting.<sup>21</sup>

Nothing is new really. We're still surrounded by the same questions. Yet, as Mike Davis suggests, "We are looking into an unprecedented abyss of economic and social turmoil that confounds our previous perceptions of historical risk. Our vertigo is intensified by our ignorance of the depth of the crisis or any sense of how far we might ultimately fall."<sup>22</sup>

The call for papers for this colloquium asked "How does architecture respond to the Empire". Well, you could ask: how does architecture respond at all to the above?

And if you were really honest, you might say: It hasn't so far.

## **Epilogue**

At the end of the workshop session for which I had prepared this paper I was, alongside all other presenters, invited to the stage for a plenary session.

The room where the workshop and plenary took place was the Oberlichtsaal in the main building of the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar on Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 8. The room itself is level, chairs for the audience were arranged in rows. To the right and in front of this set-up was one table for the session chair and his assistant. To the right and opposite from the table for the session chairs and in front of the audience, the lectern that had been there for the presentations had been replaced by a long table behind which we, the presenters, were supposed to take a seat and questions.

For me, this set up in itself—the clear hierarchy of power, knowledge and authority expressed in and through space was something that I had challenged and questioned in my presentation. Lines between the different parties—the chair,

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21 See note 10, p. 99. For examples of spatial agency please refer to [www.spatialagency.net](http://www.spatialagency.net).

22 Mike Davis: *Can Obama See the Grand Canyon? On Presidential Blindness and Economic Catastrophe* (2008 cited March 22, 2009); available from <[http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/174989/mike\\_davis\\_casino\\_capitalism\\_obama\\_and\\_us](http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/174989/mike_davis_casino_capitalism_obama_and_us)>.

the speakers, the audience—were too clearly drawn, real exchange of ideas not wanted.

In order to illustrate the argument that I put forward in my presentation and this paper, I left the stage and joined the audience, noting that for me the spatial control exerted through the setup was an architectural gesture indicative for the stasis within which architecture has found itself in. By acting upon this through simply shifting my personal and political space I raised the anger of the session chair who repeatedly shouted at me: “That is not architecture!” Quite what architecture, in his opinion was, he didn’t say.

My simple spatial redeployment nonetheless constituted an infringement of the given set of rules and accepted code of behaviour—after all I questioned his ‘authority’, joined the ‘non-experts’ and became ‘normal’—which was clearly not wanted and did not fit in.

Yet, if we accept this expanded role for the architect along the lines discussed above and if we do want architecture and architects to be useful, we need to continue to contest and dispute given boundaries, get out of that Tafurian slumber, and intervene creatively and productively in order to be relevant to the wider social world.







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*tion of a historical discipline (2005) and Lost in Translation? Tafuri on Germany, Tafuri in Germany, a history of reception (2008). Currently, her research interests focus on the status of criticality in architecture in relationship to the legacy of the Venice School and on genderstudies in architecture.*

# HOW CRITICAL IS CRITICALITY?

## *The Critical Project in Architecture and the Humanities*

Since the publication of the essay *The Doppler Effect* by Sarah Whiting and Bob Solom in 2002, architecture's criticality once more stands at the epicentre of architectural debate. This questioning of criticality is hardly a surprise, given the fact that most design gestures nowadays fulfil an affirmative role with respect to their political and social surroundings. It seems like the potential criticality of architecture—for example, the ability of architecture to be critical with respect to social developments—has become more and more a matter of armchair debates among experts.

That this was not always the case becomes clear from an interview I held with the Dutch architect Gijs Wallis de Vries, who is today a theory professor at the technical university of Eindhoven in the Netherlands. While reflecting upon his student years, Wallis de Vries remembered how his aim was to distance himself from the existing design practice. “We believed”, said Wallis de Vries, “in the possibilities of theory and criticism because we thought that the insights gained from these disciplines were indispensable for an architect to manage in a changing world”.<sup>1</sup> And so, Wallis de Vries no longer studied Le Corbusier, Berlage or other architectural heroes, but instead he studied the work of ‘difficult’ intellectuals such as Foucault and Barthes. This was not an attempt to become an erudite architect, so explained Wallis de Vries. Rather, studying theory was a strategy to

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1 Interview held with dr.ir. Gijs Wallis de Vries, University of Technology Eindhoven, Faculty of Architecture, The Netherlands, October 2005.

take a step back from the architectural practice: to reflect, from a distance, upon its traditions and conventions, helped by the analytical instruments provided by progressive branches of science. Nowadays the ideals of Wallis de Vries seem further away than ever. The “theoretical delirium” of the 1970s and 1980s is over, exchanged for an attitude that is far more pragmatic. The uncertainty about architecture’s critical function seems to mark the most recent age in architecture. However, what I want to highlight in this paper is that the current debate is but a phase in a discussion which has been going on for over thirty years in architecture. Moreover, this discussion is not only an architectural concern, but a concern of society at large. In the past decades in such diverse academic disciplines as Sociology or Literary Studies people have tried to find new critical tools and to give new life to the “critical project”. In fact, this is what very diverse thinkers such as Derrida or Deleuze have in common: the work of these people can be seen as different attempts to overcome the reductivism and perhaps also naïveté of *oppositional criticism*.

To gain an insight in the problems of oppositional criticism we should return to 1923, the year in which the Frankfurter Schule was founded as an independent institute for neo-Marxist science.<sup>2</sup> Disappointed by the failing revolution of the working class in Europe, the researchers of the Frankfurt *Institute für Sozialforschung* set out to develop new instruments of analysis so that social reality could be studied more acutely. They attacked ‘traditional science’, formulating an alternative they called ‘critical theory’. One of the pillars of critical theory was the rejection of positivism, which looks for ‘positive facts’ in social reality to be detected by a strictly neutral observer. Instead, they believed that there was no strict neutrality in dealing with social, political or cultural matters. Instead of claiming a false objectivity, the researcher should be ‘honest’ and declare what is his or her own position vis à vis the object under analysis: he or she should be aware of personal interests, of desires, opinions and dependencies as they necessarily conflate with the object that is studied. In fact, for the Frankfurters, the researcher could not possibly be neutral, since his or her task was always emancipatory: to end unjust practices, or at least to contribute with one’s research to that ending. In other words, science had a normative connotation. This had far reaching consequences for the choice of themes they considered suitable for scientific research: critical research was not about *facts* or *things* in the world, but about *values*: about opinions, ideologies and cultural convictions.

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<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is based upon: René Boomkens: *Topkitch en slow science, kritiek op de academische rede*, Amsterdam 2008.

However, towards the end of the 1930s something changed in the outlook of the Frankfurters.

In 1944 Horkheimer and Adorno wrote the book *Dialectics of the Enlightenment*. This is perhaps the most dark and gloomy book that has been written in the twentieth century. Driven by the tragic ways of history, Horkheimer and Adorno had by now lost what had always been the motor of their intellectual energy: the belief that Enlightenment would contribute to the betterment of human life. Following dialectical argumentation, Horkheimer and Adorno became convinced that Enlightenment had turned its powers against itself: instead of leading to emancipation, reason had subjected man to an instrumental and cruel calculus. It is also here that their criticism became in the true sense of the word *oppositional*. This becomes clear in the most influential essay of the book which deals with the so-called 'culture industry'. This notion refers to what Horkheimer and Adorno saw as the growing standardisation and industrialisation of culture. In the mass culture against which Adorno and Horkheimer protested, culture was reduced to a 'package': it was offered as a calculated, tailor made unity in which everything was said, done and organised for the consumer. Culture had become an industry, suited for the world of capitalism. This led Horkheimer and Adorno to oppose to popular music, even though in the 1960s critical engagement was expressed through this medium—think of the protest song. However, for Adorno popular music only turned the suffering of the world into a form of "Warenkonsum": into a form of amusement and consumption. It was therefore the most perverse of all forms of 'industrial culture'.

However, at the same time reality proved Adorno and Horkheimer wrong. In the 1960s, when their book was finally read by a wide audience, the opposite of what they had prophesized was happening. Through such new media as radio and television and though new cultural genres such as pop music, people developed a new critical conscience about their own role in society. Cultural in general became an important means to criticize society: its outdated hierarchical character for example, or the issue of false authorities and the political abuse of scientific knowledge. The new popular culture did not produce a passive audience, but on the contrary a highly active one. In the face of a complex and manifold reality, oppositional criticism had become deeply problematic.

Modern criticism was born out of a struggle against the absolutist state and so closely connected to the goals of the Enlightenment. Since its early days, there have been two ways of 'doing' cultural criticism: a broad and a narrow way. Early critics such as Denis Diderot (1713–1784) were moralists who developed a discourse that covered a wide range of topics, including art, politics and society. In

the nineteenth century, criticism became more narrowly defined as critics specialised as reviewers working for newspapers: this meant bringing disciplinary issues to the fore, while social and political issues receded to the background.<sup>3</sup> However, the commercialization of culture in the 1960s made a single-disciplinary criticism implausible. In 1972 Stuart Hall broke away from the comparative literature department of Birmingham University to found the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Hall reacted to the commercialization of culture in the 1960s by starting a broad critique that would expose the linkage between culture, society and politics. Like the Frankfurters some forty years earlier, Hall was convinced that this movement was necessary in order to develop the proper instruments to understand reality. In fact, the failure of oppositional criticism had led to a debate, or better said, a constant search for new instruments to understand reality and intervene in it. Something which may be called ‘The Critical Project’ was now born, as the need for criticism to constantly re-invent itself, by way of self-criticism and a constant adaptation of its instruments to the new demands of reality. Stuart Hall departed where Adorno and Horkheimer had left him in the 1960s: if culture has become an industry, than one should acknowledge the active participation of that industry in society, claimed Hall.<sup>4</sup> Culture was not only a matter of ‘false consciousness’ as traditional Marxist theory would have it, but an active force which constituted society. However, it was also on this point that cultural criticism met with problems in the 1970s. In fact, what is the status of cultural criticism if one acknowledges one’s participation in that which is criticised? As Richard Johnson, successor to Stuart Hall in Birmingham, wrote: “cultural studies is necessarily ... implicated in relations of power. It forms a part of the very circuits it seeks to describe.”<sup>5</sup> Cultural criticism was not merely an observer but just as much an offender. The uncertainty that resulted from this insight ultimately weakened cultural studies. If oppositional criticism was not the answer, the alternative had not yet been found.

Meanwhile in architecture the discourse in the 1970s was dominated by a critique of the utopian character of modern architecture, regarded as an authori-

3 This paragraph is based upon: Tahl Kaminer: “Undermining the Critical Project: The post-critical ‘third way’ and the legitimating of architectural practices.” In: *The Architectural Annual 2004–2005*, Delft University of Technology, Delft, the Netherlands, pp. 70–73.

4 See Heinz Paetzold: “Cultural Studies als Herausforderung für die philosophische Ästhetik”. In: Melanie Sachs, Sabine Sander (ed.): *Die Permanenz des Ästhetischen*, Wiesbaden 2009, pp. 181–196.

5 Tahl Kaminer, 2005, p. 72, quoting: Robert Hewison: *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, London 1995, p. 207.

tarian and changeless image of ‘liberated society’. An interest in so-called ‘reality’ now took the place of the fascination for utopia. It was once more the need to really grasp reality, and find the instruments for it, that was at stake. This need could take different forms: for example, the focus on subcultures, on the mundane and popular. This was the theme of Venturi and Scott Brown’s *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972) and also of Koolhaas’ *Delirious New York* (1978). However, the discrediting of utopia also led to a growing uncertainty about the role of criticism. In fact, if criticism did not serve the arrival of a Brave New World, than what was its purpose?

In many ways the architectural discourse of the 1980s and 1990s resembles the agenda of cultural criticism in the 1970s. For example, in studies such as *Mutations* (2000) or the *Harvard Design School of Shopping* (2001) what is proposed is a demolishing of cultural hierarchies so as to place shopping malls side by side to museums and public institutes. However, at the same time there is also a large difference with respect to the 1970s. The language used in the Koolhaas studies is only *seemingly* critical: where cultural studies studied mass culture in order to criticise society, there the balance in the work of Koolhaas seems to have shifted towards a legitimization of consumer society—the so-called Yes regime.<sup>6</sup> Nowadays, the acceptance of current reality is the starting point of many theoreticians. They stress the futility of trying to transform reality; at most, they suggest a vague idea of influencing society ‘from the inside’, but more often their work tries to ideologically legitimize current architectural practice.

However, this development is not only caused by events in the architectural world. The lack of criticality also reflects the vicissitudes of the larger ‘Critical Project’. In the 1980s the need to once more give new life to the notion of criticality led a number of novel approaches by such brilliant philosophers as Derrida and Deleuze. However, as fascinating as their theoretical insights were, in practice their propositions also had a dangerous side. The danger of poststructuralist and deconstructionist approaches was that it questioned not only the status quo but also its alternatives. Stating that there is no solid ground goes for the dominating ideology but equally for the feasibility of its alternatives. Also, putting emphasis on transgression often had the paradoxical result that people felt threatened by it and so re-affirmed the boundaries existing in society. Most of all, the formulation of an effective critique was made problematic by the disappearance of the human subject as an active agent constructing society. In this context, most of the so-

6 Silke Ötsch: “Des Königs neue Firma. Inside the global ¥€\$ ... and how to get out”, *GAM, Architectural Magazine Graz*, 04 “Emerging Realities”, pp. 1–13.

called “post-critics” ended up affirming the status quo. The theoretician Roemer van Toorn most clearly expresses the struggle of the so-called post-critics. First, his work expresses an uneasiness with the current lack of criticality. However, at the same time he rejects any form of adverse, oppositional criticism. He writes: “The either/or world has become an illusion”, and “There is no longer any sympathy with the permanent criticism of society or with the paralyzing impossibility of making a better world.”<sup>7</sup> However, if utopia is not an option, and the acceptance of reality is not acceptable either, then what choices are left? The position of Van Toorn also reflects the world in which we live. The opacity of developments which created contemporary society and the lack of feasible alternatives seem to lead the post-critics to emphasize the organic character of society. Society grows automatically as a branch of nature: thus, the manner in which society is tangibly a result of actions and decisions by groups and individuals is obscured. Again, it is the human subject as an active agent constructing society that seems to be absent in this discourse. There are many ways in which post-criticism can be criticised. For example, the insistence on reality is at least naïve: isn’t reality different for different groups, different classes, different nations? Reality is always a matter of interpretation. In this context, while tackling ‘the real’, postcriticism simply seems to remove the most difficult questions from the agenda. As Stan Allen put it, “The point for the anti-theorists then, is just to get on with what we do, without all this distracting fuss about theory”.<sup>8</sup>

Post-criticism seems to confront us with the essence of criticality. The premise of the Critical Project has been the betterment of society by providing a systematic critique of its structure, its ideology, its system. This was also the goal of critical theory, rather than the dissemination of knowledge, which was only a matter of secondary importance. The advantage of oppositional criticism was that it made such a critique possible. In fact, one of the advantages of dialectics, of its thinking in thesis and antithesis, was that it actively pointed towards the possibility of an opposite way of living. The question is whether post-criticism is able to deliver such a critique and to open up such an opposite horizon. If not, the question for me is whether criticism in our society still exists.

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7 Tahl Kaminer, 2005, quoting: Roemer van Toorn: “The Society of The And (An Introduction),” *Hunch*, 1, 1999, p. 90.

8 Idem, quoting: Stan Allen: *Practice: Architecture, Technique and Representation*, (Australia; the Netherlands, 2000).







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# ARCHITECTURE: PROJECTIVE, CRITICAL OR CRAFT?

Certain notions seem to have been returning throughout the architecture debates of the past five years, including most notably the 'post-critical', the 'projective', and the 'post-theoretical'. These phrases have been used alternately to delineate a new direction in architectural thinking, or as an opposition to ambiguous interpretations of the 'critical'. Insofar as it can be addressed as a coherent whole, the current debate on 'post-critical' and 'projective' architecture often treats the two notions as interchangeable despite their distinctions.

This conflation has made it perhaps too easy to dismiss both the projective and the post-critical, simply because there is a strong faith in a generic sense of critical perception that seems crucial to the practice of architecture. At the same time this generalized critical view has become conflated with a much more insidious form of criticality that has misdirected our attention from the issues at hand. Simply dismissing the notion of the projective does not do it justice; there is some value in its rethinking of the discourse, and might even be emblematic for a specific issue confronting architecture (in practice and in discourse) today. Therefore this paper begins quite simply by teasing out what I think is still of value in the projective debate. I will hold primarily to the term 'projective', as there is something distinct about the projective that appears to suggest a more productive orientation towards architecture and its discourse. Where the 'post-critical' largely appears to dismiss the previous paradigm of the so-called 'critical', the projective attempts to incorporate criticality and re-inscribe it directly within the disciplinary boundaries of architecture.

The notion of criticality that has become central in the last half of the twentieth century derives from a neo-Marxist discourse that presumes the presence of a false consciousness. The distinction is made between affirmation and negation—to operate within existing conditions without critiquing (in the grand sense) its conditions places one in the affirmative camp, while self-consciously manipulating existing codes in order to evoke a consciousness of existing preconceptions is the desirable outcome of an artistic endeavor: the artist (or the architect) is given a Nietzschean position of ‘lifting the veil’ of an illusory reality. In most cases, this revolves around societal conditions: revealing oppressions and preconceptions that perpetuate our unequal divisions of power and affluence, in particular in the contemporary conditions of late capitalism, which seem to somehow incorporate every form of critique that is presented.

Now in a generic sense, the desire to be critical is almost a truism. It seems almost trivial to note that most architects would at least presume a critical (reflective, thinking, considered) position in the world. That they would typically not want to be seen as purely affirmative of the conditions they operate under, and that they would typically consider their contribution to be somehow of value to the world, whether this is in terms of ‘revealing’ an as yet unconsidered alternative, or rather offering an unforeseen space of quietude, or rather mirroring the cultural fabric we operate within. Any of these positions requires some form of thought and perception that goes beyond simple replication of the cultural conditions the architect operates within.

At the same time, there is a more specific sense of criticality that the ‘projective’ as put forward by Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting responds to. It is this response that is also embedded in the slew of various terms that position themselves as beyond, after, or in opposition to the critical in architecture. In particular, the conflation between the projective and the post-critical has hit a raw nerve. This has turned the debate towards an unproductive direction in which the protagonists argue semantics more than the issue at hand. They’re easily dismissed as too smooth, too easy, they’re either seen as too cynical or too naïve.

However, I believe there is a need for something like the projective. It addresses a specific problem with the notion of the critical that should be considered. In first instance, I will use the ‘critical’ as a general term to describe the incorporation of the neo-Marxist criticality: the general sense that the term projective was aimed at.<sup>1</sup> The problems with the critical can be taken as a number of general

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1 This is the critical as used by Theodor Adorno, but the role of criticism became prominent with Manfredo Tafuri’s “L’Architecture dans le Boudoir: The Language of Criticism and the Criti-

ones within (at least) the transatlantic debate on architecture.<sup>2</sup> Within this general identification of problems, there are also specific cultural distinctions that should not be discounted, which will be briefly noted below. First, critical theory in general and its role in architecture has somehow deflected our attention from the architectural object by focusing (almost exclusively) on the underlying conditions that form the object, such as power structures, societal prejudice, and dominant discourse. In the end, this deflection of attention has become so strong that the architectural object is reduced to the illustration of the theoretical lens through which it is viewed. The problem with this approach was sensed as early as the mid-90s, when various ideas were introduced that attempted to transcend traditional categories, most incorporating some notion of a pragmatic approach such as ‘pragmatic idealism’. These new ‘sensibilities’ somehow responded to the idea that the critical theories employed in the architecture discourse were no longer sufficient to help us understand and work within the increasingly complex reality we resided in.

The criticism addressed to the pragmatic approach is typically directed at its acceptance of reality as it is. Again this does not do justice to the complex position taken up by architects. Have they, in the wake of a ‘post-critical’ era, become nothing but affirmative? Did they dive into reality and reject any form of criticality? This seems unlikely, because architects almost by definition must envision a ‘better world’. You cannot put a pen to paper unless you have some idea that what you are about to make is ‘better’, whether that means your building or urban plan is more appropriate, more subtle, more interesting, more engaging, more provocative or more delicately proportioned, than what you are about to erase or add to (transform). And it’s in this position that we can begin to make a distinction between the projective and the post-critical. The projective and the post-critical are typically dismissed because they are after or beyond the critical (therefore they are not critical). This seems a little unfair to the potential of the projective

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cism of Language,” *Oppositions* 3 (1974). The edition in K. Michael Hays, ed.: *Architecture Theory since 1968* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998, pp. 146–173) includes an introduction that notes that “criticism must violate and pass *through* the object of such an architecture *to the system that gives the object’s meaning*” (p. 146, my italics). This role of critical theory is the central one addressed by the notion of the ‘projective’, and it can be approached, as it is by Bruno Latour, as a general strategy of revealing undisclosed preconceptions throughout the twentieth century.

2 As the debate circling around specific reconsiderations of criticality and architecture has taken place primarily in transatlantic academic circles, I will remain within these boundaries. This is not to discount any contributions from elsewhere, but simply to focus on the center of the debate.

however: as a word, it was a clever choice. It incorporated the notion of the ‘project’ as fundamental to architectural production. It avoided the limitations of framing something as a ‘post’ development, therefore remaining also slightly off-center from the traditional discourse. The article by Somol and Whiting that launched this might have been imperfect as a well-researched scholarly position, but it offered nevertheless a number of provocative suggestions that held some appeal. They clearly sensed something in the air—something that is only now beginning to be framed in a coherent fashion, a group of ideas that seem to transcend a merely individual intervention.<sup>3</sup>

In essence, Somol and Whiting argued that there is something so specific about the architectural project, about making something, about envisioning something new, that we must endeavor to understand it as fundamental to what we do as architects. And if we understand it in this way, we might have a little opening (not a lot, but just enough) to move beyond what critical theory has enforced, which is to remain within an oppositional framework between creation and critique. We either critique the world (remove ourselves from it as agents) or we build a utopia. But there somehow was no room left in between these categories to maneuver within the very complicated world we have. Neither in theory nor in practice does this do justice to the many layers of problems architecture is required to address, nor does it acknowledge the fact that sometimes, a project may simply have to find the most satisfying solution to multiple wishes that are mutually exclusive.

The problems with critique as such, to the extent that they have been discussed in the architecture debate, are best addressed by Bruno Latour’s article from 2004, ‘Why has critique run out of steam?’<sup>4</sup> This article introduces this prob-

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3 Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting: “Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism,” *Perspecta* 33 (2002), pp. 72–77. One could even argue (and indeed the authors themselves have remarked) that this was a relatively small article, meant to provoke a little, but certainly not meant as the sledgehammer it was taken for. In some sense, the importance of the article is not in the depth of its literal argument, but in the power of its reception and reiterations throughout a transatlantic debate. At the very least, we can take this to indicate that its provocations somehow hit a nerve, one that merits further exploration.

4 Bruno Latour: “Why has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern,” *Critical Inquiry* 30, 2 (Winter 2004), pp. 225–48. See also the paper of Rixt Hoekstra elsewhere in these proceedings. She not only gives a good introduction on the Frankfurter Schule, but also noted that, contrary to Adorno’s expectations, the generation of 1968 enjoyed their pop music, got immersed, and became critical. This is at odds with the principles of critique according to the Frankfurter Schule, which presumes a strong division between artistic production and (derivative and therefore uncritical) mass production. Immersion is seen as excluding

lem of critical research about opinions and subjective filters, about understandings of the world, and not about facts. Latour has as a subtitle for his article: ‘from matters of fact to matters of concern.’ The crux of the article is encapsulated in a relatively simple diagram that shows the relation between the subject and the object. The critic places himself outside of this. There is a subject in this diagram (as we are all subjects), who believes that the object he values is somehow inherently valuable because of the qualities of the object itself. Now in the mechanisms of critique, the critic is the one who reveals the falseness of this view: he notes that the object is no more than a blank screen on which the subject projects his own interests and values. It is the attribution of values to this object that makes it valuable: this is the empowerment of the subject. At that point, when the subject begins to realize that this involves a sense of empowerment, of autonomy—of agency to create his own world, the critic again steps in and disabuses him of this idea. The critic tells him that he is not a free agent able to autonomously determine his actions, but is rather guided and determined by invisible forces and societal preconditions. The subject is now at the mercy of upbringing, social class, ethnicity and gender. These forces will determine your every move. This puts you in a double bind: you are neither powerful nor powerless. Or, to recall Rem Koolhaas’ characterization of architecture, you are both impotent and omnipotent.<sup>5</sup>

There is a rather remarkable situation here though: the critic has somehow remained outside of this scheme.<sup>6</sup> He has appropriated the god’s eye view (or the position of the evil scientist in Hilary Putnam’s *Brain-in-a-Vat*, or the Architect of the Matrix) and placed himself *jenseits*: beyond societal determination. The critic performing the critique is miraculously outside, while everyone else in the world is constrained within this diagram.

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the critical impulse by definition, yet this seems to deny the duality with which one can be part of something and reflect on it at the same time.

5 “it [architecture] is a paradoxical mixture of power and powerlessness.” Alejandro Zaera: “Finding Freedoms: Conversations with Rem Koolhaas,” *El Croquis* 53 (1994): pp. 6–31. Curiously, his phrasing may distinguish (in a general sense) the critical theorists from the architects. A sense of alienation rings through in architecture’s being identified as *neither* powerful *nor* powerless, while there is an undertone of liberation in the mixture of *both* power *and* powerlessness. It seems as if Koolhaas’ position, in its diffusion, offers the possibility of accepting conditions we work within while preserving some individual agency. It simultaneously relieves us of changing the world in its entirety, and demands that we hold ourselves accountable for our actions.

6 According to Latour, this construction is made possible by allowing the two different steps (from all-powerful to omnipotent) to be based on two different subjects and objects. This aspect of the argument is not central to my argument, as it is primarily the position of the critic that is at question here.

This diagram is truly a remarkable feat. Even though it seems a little convoluted in its presentation, it very precisely indicates where the problem with critical theory arises: it begins from a position that is placed outside of its own logic. This, in the view of Latour, quickly then devolves from a useful mechanism into the conspiracy theories that can be used to defuse truly important (political) arguments.<sup>7</sup> Does Latour thus refute critique entirely? No, but what he says is that we have committed the greatest intellectual crime by using the tools of a previous era to address the problems of this one. Critical theory was crucial in the post-war era, in the 1950s and 1960s, to make us conscious of underlying conditions and preconceptions that were invisibly determining our actions. And yet, if we cannot presume, 30 years down the road, a minimal level of critical awareness, we cannot have this debate to begin with. So I would suggest that we begin with a presumption of some (fraction of) wisdom gained within those 30 years, of some awareness that apparently objective arguments are sometimes colored by their ideological agendas. If we can presume this minimal level of awareness (and suspicion of apparent objectivity), then maybe we can also acknowledge that we can simply try to formulate potential pitfalls, but need to primarily remain aware every step of the way. We can propose that we need to recalibrate our own ideas in response to the changes in the world around us. Then perhaps we can take a closer look at the presumptions we are operating within that keep us trapped in replicating the same mechanisms, despite the changes in our world.

### **Cultural misconceptions: different translations of critical**

As an illustration of the benefits of critical theory that we can perhaps consider incorporated in our discourse today, we can briefly examine some cultural distinctions in how ‘the critical’ as a general term is approached. This requires both an awareness of the debate as a general (transatlantic) issue, as well as the ability to see the specific cultural inflections that can inform us about underlying suppositions that color the debate.

The post-critical debate arose out of the U.S. This was mainly a response to the work of Eisenman and his interpretation of Tafuri’s ideas on autonomy in

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7 Latour notes that this became truly apparent to him when, on the issue of global warming, a Republican politician used the tools of critical theory against the commonly held position of scientists that man-made pollutants were the cause. He suggests that the lack of scientific certainty, the fact that the evidence is not complete, should remain central in the media. Latour notes his concern that his own work in emphasizing the lack of scientific certainty (originally intended to emancipate the public) is now used to prevent action being undertaken against the urgent problem of global warming. Bruno Latour, see note 4.



architecture, which was premised on the inability to act in a culturally significant way upon society due to the already complicit nature of architectural practice.<sup>8</sup> In other words, architecture must recede somehow to be critical, and if it is implicated, it must thus by definition not be critical.

One of the specific traits of this American discourse, not only configured by the work of Eisenman but also strongly determined by the work of Michael Hays, is its focus on resistance to dominant ideas.<sup>9</sup> This cultural resistance is based on the idea that the autonomy of architecture is determined by its ability to disengage itself from the existing structures of power and capital. In the work of Eisenman this is largely expressed through his attention for the internal mechanisms on the discourse, and the near-linguistic modulations of his designs. Ironically, one could argue that this work thus reinforces the separation between architecture as a cultural act and the institutionalized theory that informs it. This precisely again replicates the sense of critique Latour argues is now failing to address contemporary conditions appropriately.

The book *Intersections* offers an introduction to this debate in England, which I would argue is more an ‘expanding’ of the historical object.<sup>10</sup> The discourse in England seems to have been marked by a stronger sense of a perceived objectivity of historical work, which never really incorporated a critical view of the underlying conditions that form the historical object as well. In this light it makes sense to *add* critical theory to expand the historical object with additional information. This takes on a specific form with the explicit desire voiced by the editors to bring together design and criticism. It is in the separation between design and criticism in the intellectual history of England that criticality is perceived to fulfill a role.

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8 This is a reasonably well-documented position. Besides the paper by Jane Rendell elsewhere in these proceedings, the Somol and Whiting article explicitly takes a position in response to Eisenman’s notion of autonomy, as well as the critical architecture discussed by Michael Hays in his article “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form.” *Perspecta* 21 (1984): pp. 14–29. For a lineage of the positions on ‘criticality’ in architecture, see in particular: George Baird: “Criticality and its Discontents.” *Harvard Design Magazine*, 21 (Fall 2004/Winter 2005). The problem with criticality and the way Tafuri is received particularly in American academic circles, see Rixt Hoekstra: “Tafuri: van tijdsgeest tot kwelgeest,” *de Architect* 2, Feb. 2007. pp. 16–19.

9 Hays, see note 8. In his introduction, he notes the idea of form as *resistant* and *oppositional* present in the idea of autonomous architecture.

10 Jane Rendell, Iain Borden, eds.: *Intersections: Architectural Histories and Critical Theories*. (London: Routledge, 2000). The introduction to the book by Iain Borden and Jane Rendell ‘From chamber to transformer: epistemological challenges and tendencies in the intersection of architectural histories and critical theories’ (pp. 3–24) specifically addresses the conditions in England surrounding historical and theoretical research.

This intellectual broadening in first instance appears unarguably interesting, as it claims a role for criticism as design, and the inverse sense of design as criticism. Nevertheless, as this work is framed from the perspective of a (by now traditional) sense of critique, it simultaneously seems to limit itself to a societal critique. The unexpected cultural significance that might arise from an object that is questionable in its original inception but becomes embedded in the cultural consciousness of its time is difficult to identify in this type of work.

In the Netherlands there was a strong sense of the potential of a critical stance to transform culture, as illustrated in the activities of groups such as the Provos. There was an exciting constellation of various urban revolutionaries (with, in retrospect, a charming form of lunacy) changing the face of our country. In the end, the shifts in the 1960s expanded to transform many elements of society: schools were reformed, universities were transformed in both curriculum and organization, and even language was addressed. Dutch spelling was changed, because it was considered too complex and therefore oppressive and authoritarian. Instead, the phonetic spelling became preferred as an indication of democratic equality. Therefore, the tendency in the Netherlands is primarily related to what can be considered the 'krities' appeal (spelled phonetically instead of the traditional 'kritisch').

The 'kritiese' Dutch groups were oriented primarily towards the social program and the political agency of architecture and urban planning. One of the most prominent features of this period is the rise in participatory planning, and the desire to give every (future) inhabitant a voice in the process of urban transformation. This deflected attention for the architectural object as such in favor of the underlying social and political processes. This implied that the architectural object must manifest no less, but also no more than just social program and political intent. Its additional formal, symbolic and cultural implications were essentially ignored.

I offer these distinctions not as a comprehensive history of the influence of criticality, but rather to indicate that in the global debate on notions of 'projective' and 'post-critical', specific modulations arise from the invisible presumptions that arise out of our own cultural history. It is the discourse of critical theory that has helped us understand how our cultural baggage informs the way we approach this issue to begin with. At the same time, there is an obvious question remaining somewhat hidden under the surface of these different interpretations of criticality. Why is architecture so enamored with critique? What has critical theory brought to architecture, and is it still useful as a strategy today? These are precisely the questions Latour raises in the more general role of critique, and his conclusion is that critique was central to a rethinking of many of our cultural preconceptions

at a specific moment in time. However, he also suggests that this is no longer the case. Is this true for architecture as well? Are we finished with critical theory's deconstruction of the intricate webs of power relations and how these enforced their own legitimacy by various means? Are we through with identifying the oppressive elements in dominant styles? Or is the core of the projective debate about a different form of understanding that builds on this history of critique? Could we perhaps treat the notion of the projective as a development that reveals the shortcomings of criticality rather than undermining it entirely?

### **Underlying mechanisms**

What the projective debate above all reveals is that certain mechanisms are still in operation that the discourse of criticality had hoped to undermine. First and foremost, the notion that critique is meant to reveal a false consciousness places the architectural project in a strange position: it is not an object in its own right, but an illustration of the mechanisms that shape it. In an inversion of the traditional all-powerful architect, this supposition removes the possibility of agency from the object. Unless, of course, the architecture is somehow critical: by having placed itself outside dominant culture, it becomes a powerful mode of revealing our undisclosed preconceptions.

This position on architecture continues to build on what Herbert Gans identified in the 1960s as 'physical determinism'. The modernist assumption that the use and reception of a building was more or less in line with their projections equates the physical gesture and the social response. The *machine à habiter* will not only appeal to the rational faculties of its inhabitant, it will induce them. Ostensibly, the notion of criticality undermines this simplistic rendering of cultural production by introducing many of the complex factors that shape it. By understanding such issues as budget, hierarchy, societal convention, gender bias, our understanding of an apparently clear project becomes more layered and comprehensive. These benefits must be acknowledged. At the same time, as criticality became more of a goal than an instrument, it shifted the focus from the richness (and internal conflicts) of the object to the underlying mechanisms. By giving primacy to underlying mechanisms, the surrounding conditions may have gained in clarity and presence, but the object itself began to disappear until it was no more than illustration of outside forces. This reinforces the notion of physical determinism insofar as it supports a singular reading: the critical building will induce critical consciousness.<sup>11</sup>

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11 In the conclusion to his article, Hays himself suggests that the counterpoint to the simpli-

Above all, rather than accepting the idea that the spirit of criticality may also mean discarding the tools we have come to take as central to architecture, the critical has repositioned itself as a universal form of tactical resistance. It demonstrates the understanding we have of cultural output: that it must raise political awareness (or preferably, politically intervene), that architecture will preempt a revolution. Whether we look back at Le Corbusier's 'architecture ou révolution' or Guy Debord's appeal to 'sous les pavés, la plage', there is a presumption that architecture has a significant (and to them perhaps even predictable) effect on society.

Criticality does presume that only *resistant* forms of cultural production are significant, for all other forms fall in the category of 'culture' described by Hays: the (mere) illustration of societal conditions. At the same time, one could also argue that some 'embedded' forms of architecture reveal other mechanisms that are culturally significant. A large generation gap becomes visible in this lineage of the American discourse on criticality: the mutually exclusive positioning of critical architecture as opposed to affirmative architecture seems to deny the very same multiple readings that the postmodern discourse of Eisenman, Hays, and many others explicitly acknowledges as a turning point in contemporary architecture. This is precisely the point that a contemporary reading of architectural practice may offer new insights: more fluid positions, availing themselves of 'small ideologies' that incorporate a strong belief system yet are not presumed to imply a totalizing position, and deeply embedded within the actual process of making, by their very nature both affirm and undermine our preconceptions.

In the end, this is where architecture has been short-changed by criticality. Latour's assertion that critique has taken us outside of the object by refusing to let us study the object itself, but only our projections onto or the underlying conditions that form it, illustrates the problem for architecture. At that point, what do you do with your building? It can never become more than a concrete manifestation of the conditions that you have hopelessly surrendered to. What also follows

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fied treatment of architecture's qualities resides in a 'resistant authority', which neither simply reflects culture nor embraces a purely formal system. See note 8, p. 27. While Somol and Whiting respectfully reference his precision in revealing the necessary dialectic between autonomy and engagement, their arrows are aimed at the general project of critical architecture and its continuing presence in the architecture debate. "The criticality of Hays and Eisenman maintains the oppositional or dialectical framework in the work of their mentors and predecessors, while simultaneously trying to short-circuit or blur their terms." Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting: "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism," *Perspecta* 33 (2002): p. 73.

from this is the notion that a work of architecture can never be properly understood until the social and political context is understood.

I think this forms the core question that gave rise to this debate on the projective. What can architecture do, and what is its scope of action? Can we hope only to reveal the conditions set upon architecture, or can we also intervene in ‘reality’? Do we have any form of ‘agency’ as architects? Or are we by definition determined by existing societal conditions and is it impossible to transcend the temporary significance of our own context? The presumptions of a critical architecture are also founded on the notion that if we somehow reveal this false consciousness (the intent of *Ideologiekritik*), people will automatically respond by behaving otherwise. It rests on the modernist idea of physical determinism: if we somehow create a revolutionary architecture, its occupants will transform accordingly: they will become revolutionary beings. In architecture, envisioning utopia includes not only a social but also a physical component: the ideal reality must be given tangible form. Our agency is somehow always projected at the physical realization of that utopian vision: if it is given a certain form, the social utopia will naturally follow.

The result of this position is a denial of the complexity of the relationship between our building and society. Can we not only envision, but literally build a new society? Can we socially engineer a society through critical architecture? If critical architecture is meant to reveal a false consciousness, then who holds the key to ‘reality’? Does that mean that the enlightened critic needs to tell people how to be critical, and more importantly to what end? This appears to be the weakness of this neo-Marxist, critical discourse. At some point, I am not only told to be critical, but also *how* to be critical. And at that point, does critique not defeat its own purpose? Aren’t the critics telling me that they have remained outside of the destructive influence of the system and I haven’t seen the light? Aren’t they telling me to take the red pill and exit the Matrix, to learn the truth about it? This externalized position of the critic continues to inform the debate today, and it seems difficult to envision a more embedded position that maintains some level of autonomy, that can envision an ideal while remaining implicated in reality.

### **Ways forward?**

This seems to be precisely the problem that Somol and Whiting intended to address: they suggest that there is some form of ‘agency’ in architecture that can elude the choice between physical determinism or impotence. The strength of their article is that they went back to architecture. They may have done this in a slightly diffuse way, calling in the Doppler effect, Robert Mitchum’s acting and

McLuhan's ideas on hot and cool media. Nevertheless, all of this was directed at and centered on the architectural object, and the idea that we might actually have a discipline that we can talk about. Not as some kind of mystical congealing of societal figures, but something that we can talk about as a discipline and as an expertise.

Now this is dangerous territory, because everyone with half a critical bone in their body will say: when you bring in the notion of expertise, do you not reintroduce the oppressive figure of authority that critical theory had taught us to question? Do you not deny the voice of everyone who does not share this level of expertise? Does the expert then determine our reality, taking away our freedom of speech, our freedom of thought? Yet it seems there is a simple way out of this dilemma, which resides precisely in a crucial aspect of architecture: making the building, be it in drawings, models, or concrete. The importance of making is the central theme in a recent book by Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (2008).

The notion of the 'craftsman' is typically associated with a pre-industrial sense of craft, and is therefore deemed inappropriate to what we might envision as the role of architecture in contemporary society. However, Sennett expands the notion of craft. He does not limit himself to making with the hands: he incorporates such 'crafts' as computer programming, parenting, and other forms of expertise not aligned with a traditional understanding of craft. Most importantly, Sennett argues against a more traditional opposition between intellectual production and craftsmanship, putting forward the idea that making is not unthinking, that it in fact *incorporates* thinking.<sup>12</sup> He includes a vast range of crafts and forms of expertise, because he is not looking specifically at a single form of craft or the object that results from it, but rather at what the mechanisms are by which these people create an expertise and through which they are able to speak about it in a more accurate or specific way. His notion of craft is based on an idea of expertise combined with (reflective) practice, requiring about ten thousand hours to lay claim to a level of 'craftsmanship' or 'expertise'. Sennett's description of craftsmanship also presumes a distinction in quality, which immediately raises the critical question of who determines the standards of quality? Are we going to relegate our hard-earned sense of social justice to a dusty corner of ideals and allow ourselves to be told that we simply cannot judge? Yet this also runs counter to what Sennett suggests: he also indicates that the layman can appreciate a well-

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<sup>12</sup> This is not unrelated to the attention Michael Speaks gives to 'design intelligence': a form of thinking that arises out of the process of making. It is also akin to the work of Bruno Latour in 'Give me a gun and I'll make architecture move'.

executed work. More importantly, he suggests that there is a basic level at which all of us can learn to do something well: that talent is simply one aspect of the equation that leads to expertise.<sup>13</sup>

Sennett proposes that practice does make perfect, because it is the continuing practice that engages with specific problems, that allows for progress. Not only must one practice, but one must be willing to acknowledge mistakes and learn from them. To learn from mistakes requires a sense of reflection that is able not only to discern mistakes but also to conceive of how to correct them. The many hours of practice and reflection lead to a moment where the activity is no longer part of your conscious mode, but has become literally embodied: it resides in the fingers, in the voice, in the corporeal movements that make up the activity. Once it is embodied, the problems to be engaged can become more advanced, and the need for correcting mistakes progresses to the question of how to improve performance. One could also say, one needs to intimately know the rules in order to break them. In Sennett's example on music, it is when you have incorporated the expertise of hitting a note precisely and perfectly every time, you can begin to question the existing standards.<sup>14</sup>

This focus on the process of making reveals insights that may not become visible when only thinking through a problem. Architecture with its three dimensions and many contextual constraints may even be more susceptible to the need for making. It encompasses a specificity in conditions such as the site, light, space, context, regulations, client, and local traditions. At the same time, all these contextual constraints as well as the internal qualities of the discipline imply the inverse: once realized, the architectural object may not have the same effect as originally conceived, therefore it also needs to be reviewed and rethought. Moreover, once built, the architectural object becomes part of the everyday fabric, and as time passes it may be reinscribed with new ideas.

It seems that the idea of an incorporated expertise might allow us to redirect the debate on architecture and its 'critical' or 'projective' role, without having to take recourse to the positions on autonomy and criticality. On the one hand, architecture may be said to have a level of autonomy: the work of the architect is not entirely determined by his client, by societal conditions, or by existing standards. At the same time, it is obvious that its autonomy is limited: without a client there is no commission, thus no building, no presence, no 'agency'. It is dependent: you

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13 Chapter 10, on quality.

14 Rendell suggests that it is crucial above all to question existing standards. I argue that we need to know them well, to be able to comply with them first, in order to question them.

are not going to build a World Trade Center if you cannot find your client. You are dependent on a client, on regulations, on context. And yet there is something the architect can do that the client cannot, which is to put that building together. The architect can ensure the infrastructure is solid, is well-organized, that the spaces fulfill their functional or symbolic requirements. The architect can ensure that the building as a whole is well-constructed, and that its spaces are 'good'. And this is what our discussion should revolve around: what are those good spaces? Are they related to what has gone on inside? Are they big, small, comfortable, expansive? Related to a style of the times, to its function, to a form of representation or rather a conceptual composition? These are more fruitful directions for debate now: let us take our insights from the past 40 years and bring them back to architecture itself. Let us understand the limitations of working for a corporate client, yet look at the building as a composite of many opposing influences, from architectural experience to cultural significance, from economic efficiency to urban regulations. How are these buildings designed? How do they respond to the surrounding public space?

My resistance to the by now traditional understanding of agency is that it is always reflected through a (class-oriented) sense of human and societal agency. We must always talk about the political lines, the people in the building, the program. There is at the same time, also an object to discuss, which often remains hidden: the building has a presence, which sometimes outlasts the time it was designed and constructed for. It might even be said to have an active role in the world: it is not only present, but used, looked at, experienced. It will demand engagement or intimidate its users, it will fade into its context or stand out. You can pretend to ignore its presence as an object, but that denies the complexity of cultural significance: each individual may receive it differently, yet there is also a general sense of symbolic value that is culturally biased. Rather than treat the building as a naturalized expression of social agency, why can we not talk about politics as being inscribed in the building? Why could we not presume that an architect will relate to his world, his culture, his society as an architect and not as a politician? This does not require us blinding ourselves to societal constraints and political conditions. This requires us to expand our view rather than compress it, but at the same time to keep it centered on what is most relevant to the questions at hand.

Most architects hold strong views on societal issues. Many architects enter into dialogue with their clients, questioning their wishes, probing the boundaries of the project brief. My experience of architectural practices is that they have a very strong sense of what they can contribute to the world. Yet their propositions



are often more humble than those of their predecessors. Raised on the incongruence between the promise of the spectacle and the reality of the silent majorities, they do not presume to design an ideal society with their buildings, but rather hope to offer something specific – a useful building, a playful building, a provocation or a quietly grounded space. This generation may respond to more or less universal or global conditions, but does not presume the universal applicability of their own work. Their improvements to the spaces of the city are oriented not towards a social utopia but towards a concrete and specific aim, which may nevertheless appeal to an ideal. This comprises a small step forward, in acknowledging that architecture is not all-powerful, but does have something to contribute, and that which it has to contribute is located precisely within the thing itself.

There is a role for critics in looking very carefully and rethinking the vocabulary we utilize to understand works of architecture. This requires an approach that encompasses a critical view perhaps, but more than anything a deep appreciation of the architectural project in all its finesses, from critique to exquisite solution for a specific problem, from cultural significance to the role of composition. For architects, there may well be something to be gained by making their considerations on standards of quality, their goals and the instruments used to attain them, explicit. Rather than speculating on brave new worlds, why should we not discuss very clearly the means and ends of each project? It also requires a certain humility of architecture: to acknowledge that in its bravoure of proposing as yet unimagined architectural propositions, that it is by nature also limited and constrained. However, these constraints could be taken as productive rather than limiting. It is a matter of standing within the discipline and identifying its potential, rather than holding it accountable from without.

In this sense, I would argue that Sennett offers an initial venture into a form of architecture production (ideas and realized) that might take into account not an ahistorical ‘essential’ view of objects, but that rather understands the complexity of contemporary conditions as *inscribed* in the object.



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# NON-PLACES OF IMMATERIAL LABOUR

## *Architecture's Dildotopia?*

In his seminal text “Non-Places” Marc Augé states that the “world of supermodernity does not exactly match the one in which we believe we live, for we live in a world that we have not yet learned to look at.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, he argues we need to re-learn to think about and understand contemporary space. Being an architect and researcher, I want to complicate the Ethnographer’s quest. Not because I am confident that we have already learned to think about contemporary space, but because architects and designers are an integral part of an ongoing space production that accordingly shapes our lives. Hence for the architect the anthropological concern about the right analysis and understanding of contemporary notions and constructions of space needs to be augmented with that of a concern of action and production within the space we live in. Complicating the Ethnographer’s quest from the early 1990’s thus implies to stay within parts of Augé’s analysis, but also question some of its findings, even distancing from it. I agree with Augé’s positive definition of an anthropologic research of contemporary times and spaces—that he calls supermodernity—as well as his critique of some historically grounded and more or less static, ethnographic concepts of culture and individuality, or the arising fantasies and illusions of a “society anchored since time immemorial in the permanence of an intact soil outside which nothing is really understandable.”<sup>2</sup> Augé identifies non-places as self-contained spaces, as

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1 Marc Augé: *Non-Places, An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Verso, London, 1995, p. 35.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

a sort of theme park spectacle of supermodernity that do not exist in pure form, and in which lived places still sometimes constitute themselves, when individuals come together engendering the social and organizing place. But actually the construction of spaces of supermodernity only deals with commodified individuals as customers, passengers, users, or listeners that are identified on entering or leaving. Thus for Augé “non-place is the opposite of utopia, and does not contain any society.”<sup>3</sup> This is exactly where I want to complicate the ethnographer’s quest and analysis. If we spend an ever-increasing proportion of our lives in these non-places—in hotels, in supermarkets, in airports, etc., and if we as individual subjects are becoming more and more commodified by a dominant discourse—we need to imagine alternative ways of how we can *live together* in these contemporary non-places; we need to ask and test how far we can emancipate ourselves from such prevailing formations of discourse; and we need to try to subvert this ever more dominant construction of our world. As for architects and designers, the quest is to think of means of the architectural practice, its necessary expansions, and its inevitable re-inventions—that might be able to transgress the dominant formations of such late-capitalist (or supermodern, however you want to call it) spaces. In other words: how are we able to actively think and propose alternative forms of collective life, to imagine means of architecture and design to foster emancipation.

In asking these questions, I want to offer a comparison here: of two historical architectural examples with that of a contemporary, radical queer manifesto. In the lines to follow I will be focusing on two prototypical, very specific examples of a contemporary architecture of non-places: namely the Bürolandschaft (office landscape) invented by German consultancy firm of the brothers Eberhard and Wolfgang Schnelle, as well as Cedric Price’s Fun Palace. I will be challenging the two examples—thus the concept of non-places—with that of the queer “Manifesto contra sexual” (French: 2000, German: 2004) and its concept of Dildotopia by the Spanish philosopher Beatriz Preciado.<sup>4</sup> This thought experiment thus wants (1) to sketch a possible genealogy of non-places that is not bound to the ethnographers gaze of place versus space and (2) to trace a queer understanding of our world and its proposition for a way of how to live together, in order to utilize it for the practice of architects and designers.

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3 Ibid., p. 111.

4 I use the German version translated by Stephan Geene, Katja Diefenbach and Tara Herbst. Beatriz Preciado: *Kontrasexuelles Manifest*, b\_books, Berlin 2003.

### **The Promise of Cybernetics and the Concept of Immaterial Labour**

Bürolandschaft and Fun Palace are immediate reactions of design to a newly established conceptual model that, after the Second World War, replaced the liberal hypothesis as dominant formation of discourse, and which, I want to argue, is the prerequisite of non-places: namely cybernetics. In the late 1950s—due to a new epistemological precondition of information-theory<sup>5</sup>—cybernetics marks a new model for governance. A model that applied to “living creatures, as well to machines and apparatuses, to economic as well as to psychic processes, to sociological as well as to aesthetic phenomena.”<sup>6</sup> Cybernetics presupposes the compatibility of information-exchange of human beings and machines through digitality. In doing so humans are less understood as machines. Rather they, similar to machines and automata, are modelled as autonomous, self-directing individuals, whose behaviour is understood as coded and thus as being able to be re-programmed. The cybernetic model of control cannot be reduced to a central (supervising) power, since every single instance, every level of cybernetics, is already spread out as a network. Every function within the organisation is not being represented by one person, but by a team of experts and its automata. The chain of command is precise and clearly assigned, but due to the formation of the organization as a network, the power is no longer traceable to an origin.

Understood as a political hypothesis, in the 1950s and early 1960s cybernetics promised a society on equal terms, a pluralistic community and a self-organizing form of governance. The examples that I want to discuss here, as many other examples of post-war times, exemplify the popular cybernetic hypotheses of a new form of collective life that (1) aimed at overcoming the trauma of the devastating second world war, by promising a horizontally organized network-society based on equality, (2) gave hope to a society where machines and automates would take over the burden of repetitive work dismissing human kind into an everlasting leisure-time. Looking back to the immediate post-war years and to the projects of the—then mid-thirty-something architects, designers and artists of the so called Neo-Avantgarde—one gets the idea, that the regulated framework which accompanied work had disappeared altogether from the concept of living and that *pure life* orders the world: leisure time and play is ubiquitous in self-adapting, fluid forms, or in mobile plug-in-designs for living ... Labour, but also new modes of

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5 Cf. Joseph Vogl: “Regierung und Regelkreis, Historisches Vorspiel“. In: Claus Pias (ed): *Cybernetics—Kybernetik, The Macy-Conferences 1946–1953*, Diaphanes, Zürich-Berlin: 2004, pp. 67–79. Vogel draws with his Text historic contours of cybernetics as an art to govern.

6 Cf. Claus Pias: „Zeit der Kybernetik. Eine Einstimmung“. In: see note 5, pp. 9–41, here: p. 14, my translation into English.

production that arise in the post-war years within an ever increasing automation are not depicted or represented by neo-avant-gardist projects for a new leisure society, even though labour is an immanent part of the postulated creative life of the homo ludens.

Bürolandschaft and Fun Palace are not only prototypes of non-places, moreover they are models of an architecture of immaterial labour—a concept coined by Italian operaist workers movement of the 1950s and 1960s, of which Antonio Negri and Paolo Virno are the most well-known protagonists today. Antonio Negri and his US-American co-writer Michael Hardt, for example, describe alterations of work conditions in the 1960s in transition from the mass worker to the labourer of society. Negri and Hardt are using—in the tradition of, yet keeping a distance from the Italian philosopher Mario Tronti—the term *factory of society*. In doing so, Negri and Hardt expand the traditional Marxist concept of labour with a multitude of social productions—a value-creating form of practice that advances natural requirements, artificial desires, and social affairs, thus also incorporating the sphere of the Marxian non-labour (Nichtarbeit). It is this concept of immaterial labour that touches a contemporary condition in Western industrialized societies, that today becomes more and more significant. It points out alterations and changes in the very construction of the concept of work and thus of the construction of life—its attributes and its conditions. It is transformation that disengages from formerly fixed spaces of production, a changeover that makes a distinction between work, manufacture and trade (Arbeiten, Herstellen und Handeln) obsolete<sup>7</sup>. Thus architectures of immaterial labour, like Bürolandschaft and Fun Palace, are spaces in which the modern dictum of a separated time/space of work, leisure and living blurs and all becomes an indistinguishable non-place, as Marc Augé describes it on a general level, and which Rem Koolhaas, following Augé, touched upon in his text *Junkspace*, as the ubiquitous space we live in:

*Junkspace is space as vacation; there once was a relationship between leisure and work, a biblical dictate that divided our weeks, organized public life. Now we work harder, marooned in a never-ending casual Friday.... The office is the next frontier of Junkspace. Since you can work at home, the office aspires to the domestic; because you still need a life, it simulates the city. Junkspace features the office as the urban home, a meeting-boudoir: desks become sculptures, the work-floor is lit by intimate downlights. Monumental partitions, kiosks, mini-Starbucks on*

7 Cf. Hannah Arendt: *Vita Activa, oder Vom tätigen Leben*, Pieper, Munich: 2007 (English original version: 1958).

*interior plazas: a Post-it universe: 'Team memory', 'information persistence'; futile hedges against the universal forgetting of the unmemorable, the oxymoron as mission statement. Witness corporate agit-prop: the CEO's suite becomes 'leadership collective'.<sup>8</sup>*

Hence for the endeavour of thinking about possibilities of alternative action and of how to live together within a contemporary world of non-places. Bürolandschaft and Fun Palace form a highly relevant subject of research on the historical cross-road where work becomes home and home becomes work.

### **Spaces of Information Flow**

Bürolandschaft<sup>9</sup> is a pragmatic experiment—as its creators and inventors, the German management-consultants Eberhard and Wolfgang Schnelle would call it—to create an open, pluralistic and self-organizing space for work. It is a space designed according to strict mathematic descriptions, designed through the analysis of all ascertainable functional and environmental aspects. In other words, it was designed through (1) the particular assessment and analysis of communication flow and document circulation within the organization and (2) by way of the design method “Organisationskybernetik” [cybernetics of organisation] invented by the management consultants in collaboration with a trans-disciplinary team of German computer and information scientists, mathematicians and philosophers. The two brothers claimed that their way of producing space, on one hand, suffices the demand for a human scale of an intimate architecture, and, on the other hand, creates a space that is efficiently organized to allow for dynamic alignment of ever-transforming work processes for ever-evolving requirements.

In the cybernetically organized conception of the world, information machines and automata take over the work and send the human race off to an everlasting, care-free existence. At first they need to take over all the repetitive and exhausting work: regressive work processes, as organisational cybernetics would call it—work processes that are based on known information and routines, work processes that can be precisely coded—are being taken over by automata. For the time being, employees resume to work as specialists and skilled workers in

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8 Rem Koolhaas: “Junk Space”. In: AMO/OMA/Koolhaas/et al. (eds.): *Content*, Taschen Verlag, Cologne, 2004, pp. 162–171, here: p. 169.

9 I consider office landscape Buch und Ton (1959–1961) to be the first Bürolandschaft worldwide. See also: Andreas Rumpfhuber: “Das versichernde Experiment der Bürolandschaft”. In: Akos Moravansky, Albert Kirchengast: *Experiments in Art and Architecture*, Jovis Verlag, Berlin, forthcoming: Herbst 2009, Andreas Rumpfhuber: *Architektur Immaterieller Arbeit* (PhD Dissertation), The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, Copenhagen, 2008.

progressive work-processes—work processes that are based on a high degree of choice, and are based on unknown information. For example: experimental work in research, or creative work, akin to advertising strategies, are based on progressive work processes.<sup>10</sup> But this creates a problem for a cybernetically organized enterprise: since the decisions within such progressive work processes are not controllable, and since such specialized singular decisions are not normative nor objectively comprehensible, they pose a risk to the enterprise: Each deciding and specialized subject becomes an opaque black box. For the goal-oriented enterprise such singular decisions are neither predictable nor calculable and complicate an exact and secure solution. Thus, specialists and skilled workers are being safeguarded for the enterprise as follows: (1) team-building, (2) obligation to work with an exactly defined planning-method and (3) detachment of skilled authority and disciplinary authority. In other words: every single specialist is positioned in a group and thus becomes dependent on other specialists. At the same time, every single worker has to become active and take on responsibility for his or her decisions. The disciplinary function is furthermore detached from the group of specialists.<sup>11</sup> In such a way the given goal is being assessed and objectified by a multitude of specialized perspectives. The inner dependency of the work-groups reduces the possibility of wrong decisions and levels every approach of radicalism that might harm (in the positivistic, rational logic) the system itself. In such a way the team of specialists and skilled workers allows a high degree of variety in decision making processes. Due to the obliged use of a mathematically precise planning-method that allots a regularized decision process, the established risk factor becomes calculable. Parallel to this, a feedback loop is established that cares for the values of the enterprise.

Thus it is a dense network of information that constitutes the (social) space of the office landscape. The network is controlling body and infrastructure of the self-regulating and self-organizing workers-society. Workers, information-processing machines, automata, and furniture are conceptualized within the office landscape as commodified, programmable nodes of a network—as flickering signifiers. The material shell of the office space itself is a container. It marks distinct borders of the organization: within its borders information shall freely float. But every border-crossing is precisely controlled. Like a dynamically wobbling formation whose frame of reference constantly changes the arrangement and figuration itself needs to be modified continually. The office landscape is however not

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10 Cf. Eberhard Schnelle: *Organisationskybernetik*, p. 21.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

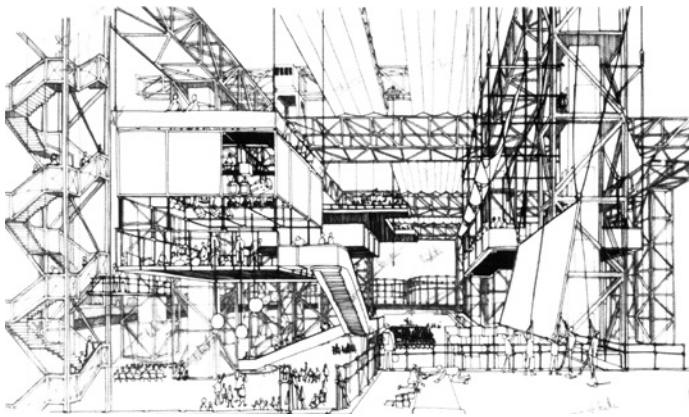




a space as network or infrastructure (as the 1960s architecture utopias like for example Constant Nieuwenhuys' New Babylon or Yona Friedman's Ville Spatiale would mirror the cybernetic thought model). The office landscape is not the architectural representation of a cybernetic model, but rather the direct and literal translation of a cybernetic organization in space. The outer limits of the organization coincide with the building's surface. Workers, machines and furniture are dimensionless points and the information flow connects them.

Consequently with their planning method, the Schnelle brothers and their team meant to foster the construction of a new, self-organized society in post-war Germany. As an enterprise of subjects acting autonomously it constantly aligns itself to new goals. Thus the planning team enforces a tendency that aims to shape society as a whole and produces a new kind of workspace—one based on different assumptions than traditional workspaces. (1) An enclosed space of the organization is being marked. It is an abstract, horizontal plane, that is preferably extensible and provided with barrier-free access within its compounds. The interior offers (2) artificially controlled climate, acoustic and light design, (3) is structured by moveable elements, like tables, chairs, room dividers, and plants, but also personnel and automata are organised in various constellations on the plane. A catalogue of precise requirements controls the visually loose arrangement and configuration of interior space. The furniture is arranged according to the workgroups. It is positioned in space according to set theory. Entrance and circulation routes are marked by plants and never run through a working unit. Special emphasis is placed on intimate working conditions of every single workplace: through lighting, orientation of every single table, etc. Here is a self-description by the Brothers Schnelle of the very first office landscape *Buch und Ton* for the media-house Bertelsmann in Gütersloh:

*A transparent and generous effect is produced through the furniture design. The irregular rhythm of the arrangement and its chromacity structure the perception of the space: it is only the close-up range that is perceived, so that each workplace produces a subjective place that creates*



*intimacy. Moveable partitions and plants provide privacy, as well—they delineate circulation routes and work group areas.*<sup>12</sup>

The paradoxical phrase *irregular rhythms* [irregulärer Rhythmus]—a rhythm which knows no symmetry, follows no regular motion, no regular repetition, but is instead irregular and non-cyclical—accurately articulates the hypothesis of the planners, and gets to the point. To put it in positive terms: it postulates an intended fusion of two divergent movements, as Roland Barthes would contrast (1) a self-rhythmical mode of life—a mode of life that does not follow any kind of organization and in which no institutionalized, reified and objectified authority of mediation exists between the individual and the group, with (2) a confined—both spatially and socially—life that accompanies the imminent emergence of a bureaucratic apparatus.<sup>13</sup> Every single working individual in the cybernetically optimized administration space—cybernetically optimized prototype of a non-place of immaterial labour—needs to realize himself or herself not as crowded cattle (Marx), but as the autonomous subject, which is on equal terms with everyone else. A working subject that needs to come across a familiar atmosphere, being on the same hierarchical level and in spatial proximity to the boss. Although the office landscape looks chaotic and irregular, a strict, meticulous, virtually totalitarian order operates within the arrangements: An order that has been applied from outside onto the organization and that is bound to a conceptually autonomous but interdependent individual and strict rationalism.

On the contrary Fun Palace (1962–1966) is a real worker’s architecture. To be more precise, it is a piece of cybernetic workers architecture for a leisure society. It is a subjectification machine that activates the visitors for leisure according to cybernetic premises. In its programmatic conception, it expounds the problem

<sup>12</sup> Booklet “Beschreibung der Bürolandschaft des Hauses Bertelsmann in der Firma Kommissionshaus Buch und Ton”, no further details available. Archive of Quickborner Team, Hamburg. My translation and emphasis.

<sup>13</sup> See: Roland Barthes: *Wie zusammenleben*, Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp, first edition, 2007, p. 90.

of a new leisure society and the expedient use of the time that is won by the increasing automation of production. In a booklet though, written by the initiators, the theatre-maker Joan Littlewood and the architect Cedric Price, Fun Palace is described as a boundless thing. A building that no longer is a house. An infinite traffic junction, if you will, a boundless hub. As space for activity, it is space for traffic. One can reach it by land, by water, by foot or with the tube or by car, ... It is a limitless thing without borders and has no distinct form. This thing is space for *all* and its program is learning and playing. Its object: self-determination—a kind of do-what-you-want-autonomy. The goal: Join in, and synchronize with a new society and its atmosphere of leisure.

As architecture, Fun Palace is the representation of its cybernetic conception—its only boundary is the structural system. Within its borders, countless machines—based on feedback loops—(re-) organize the building. To quote Cedric Price's biographer Stanley Mathews: "Virtually every part of the structure was to be variable, with the overall structural frame being the fixed element."<sup>14</sup> According to Mark Wigley,<sup>15</sup> the vast open scaffold is the most elaborate version of a networked incubator for leisure time that is associated with participatory democracy, individual creativity and self-actualization. To Wigley, the load-bearing structure has almost disappeared and the building only exists due to zones of activity and zones of a distinct atmospheric intensity. Fun Palace is a building that avoids being a building: "[A] new network architecture emerges, a delicate ghostlike trace that operates more as landscape than building"<sup>16</sup>

In the course of its development<sup>17</sup> Fun Palace advances to become a programmable cybernetic theatre, as the Fun Palace's cybernetic mastermind Gordon Pask would phrase it: a theatre in which guests would actually need to play themselves. Studded with communication systems and programmable control systems to efficiently script a dramatic performance ("the present methods of dramatic presentation are not very efficient ...") the architecture itself shall foster an open-ended theatre. Indeed Fun Palace is a cybernetic machine for leisure time, a revolutionary apparatus that produces spare-time as learning, an architecture

14 Stanley Mathews: *From Agit-Prop to Free Space, The Architecture of Cedric Price*, Black Dog Publishing, London 2007, p. 81.

15 Cf. Mark Wigley: "The Architectural Brain." In: Anthony Burke, Therese Tierney (ed.): *Network Practices, New Strategies in Architecture and Design*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York 2007, pp. 30–53, here: p. 40f.

16 Cf. *ibid.*, here: p. 42, my emphasis.

17 Planning is done in teams directed by Joan Littlewood, Cedric Price, Frank Newby and Gordon Pask.

that prepares people temporarily for a new life. Fun Palace is not passive space in which spare time could just happen. Instead, its explicit goal is to usher people into a new life: it activates people and aims to enlighten them. Cedric Price and Joan Littlewood's intention was that Fun Palace be a space in which people would be awakened from their apathy. It represents an experiment to imagine a new life:

*Automation is coming. More and more machines do our work for us. There is going to be yet more time left over, yet more human energy unconsumed. The problem which faces us is far more that of the increased leisure to which our politicians and educators so innocently refer. This is to underestimate the future. The fact is that as machines take over more of the drudgery, work and leisure are increasingly irrelevant concepts. The distinction between them breaks down. We need, and we have a right, to enjoy the totality of our lives. We must start discovering now how to do so.*<sup>18</sup>

Thus the variety of activities in the building is not pre-determined. The immense structure of the palace needs to permanently adapt to new and unprecedented ideas and new technologies. It needs to suit permanent change and renewal, as well as destruction. To Stanley Mathews the architecture of Fun Palace is like the hardware of a computer that can be programmed in any new and conceivable way. Thus Fun Palace's programme is like software that controls the figuration of all temporary processes within the palace by algorithmic functions and logic interfaces. For Mathews, Fun Palace's architecture is like an operative space-time matrix. It represents its immanent cybernetic conception. A set of autonomous, self-organizing enclosures that are constantly connected with each other are hooked into the structure as zones of activity, that are able to adapt and take on every single identity, depending on its use, [...], creating an architecture that produces, in the words of Cedric Price an "extremely definitive range of requirements and aims in the determination of means of access, site, structural system, materials, servicing and component design of the whole."<sup>19</sup> Price intends an architecture that is never completed, a building that is never a building: without a specific form, without a specific programme and without a fixed layout, that Cedric Price would call *anti-architecture*.

<sup>18</sup> Fun Palace brochure, Cedric Price Archive, quoted in: Stanley Mathews: *From Agit-Prop to Free Space, The Architecture of Cedric Price*, Black Dog Publishing, London 2007, p. 70

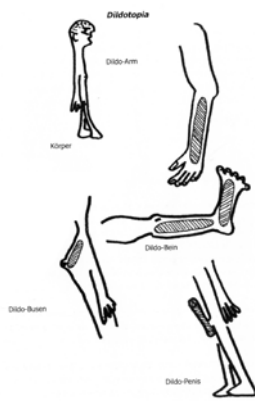
<sup>19</sup> Cedric Price: "Fun Palace." In: *Cedric Price, catalogue accompanying the Cedric Price exhibition at the AA*, London, June 1984, pp. 9–16, here: p. 20, first published in Link, June-July 1965.

Be it *anti-architecture*, be it *irregular rhythms*, the spaces of Bürolandschaft and of Fun Palace, as does the briefly above mentioned New Babylon project and the Ville Spatiale resemble non-places. They are all in fact prototypes of an ever more dominant, late-capitalist, post-fordist, supermodernist (what-ever-you-want-to-call-it) construction of architecture. They are all cut off from context, they are spaces without history, without relation and identity. As Augé puts it, these spaces seem to develop a dense network of means of transportation that—at the same time—also get inhabited. It is space in which the nomadic user, the playing and working-nomad communicates wordlessly with an abstract, unmediated world of commerce, is connected to automata and machines and communicates with them in these transitory non-places. The prototypical projects are ordered by small, horizontally organized, thus easily manageable communities, small teams whose members are strongly dependent on each other. These designs postulate an innocent society beyond all conflict through levelling out of hierarchies, team building and feedback loops – in other words: these designs aim at re-modelling society—from a disciplinary regime towards a controlling one. Architecturally and spatially speaking: the network is the formative concept for all of these projects, a network that extends itself infinitely, that represent a holistic, complete world; a concept, that—for the architects—promises to deliver to the demand for total flexibility and permanent change, that can be coded (with meaning, with function, with attributes) at will. For the architects it resembles a global infrastructure, that, so they hope, different societies can inhabit. Thus Yona Friedman postulates: there is no global society, but a global infrastructure, that, as material base, is available to a multitude of immaterial organizations.<sup>20</sup>

It is needless to say that there is an urge to understand these projects mentioned above in all its ambivalence for a contemporary (work) life and the contemporary practice of architecture and design. That is to say, we need to re-think what this kind of architecture produced in its time, sometimes out of a marginal position, but always connected to a popular discourse. And we need to discuss what it means for its spatial concepts to repeat them today. It is a matter of understanding the power structures in place, that have shaped and are still shaping such super-modern spaces as well as it has shaped and is still shaping the rhetoric of architects. Did these conceptions re-think space really from a marginal point of view? Did they, as postulated by their architects, designers and creators, form a kind of emancipation from hegemonial forms of power that are

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20 Cf. Yona Friedman: *Machbare Utopien, Absage an geläufige Zukunftsmodelle*. Fischer alternativ, Frankfurt/Main: 1977 (French original version: 1974), pp. 136–139.



inscribed in space? Did this cybernetically inspired architecture really think of a society of equal partners (and not of similar, identical partners?). I personally doubt it: Be it the approach of the production of Bürolandschaft, be it the conception of Fun Palace. Both aligned and just simply affirmed the popular cybernetic hypothesis, without questioning its military origins, its popular capitalist use, or the actual problems of its implementation (which, on top of everything, needed to conceptualize people as similar, identical entities, in order to be able to program them).

Still what I want to offer here is another reading, that might vindicate the quality—better to say the non-quality—of these prototypical projects. It is an outset, still very sketchy and fragmentary, that seeks to avoid the trap of dreaming and imagining the possibility of staying outside of these ever more dominant forms of non-places, or junkspaces, but might become a vanishing line, at least, in any case, a new research-question about an alternative, contemporary practice in architecture, a kind of contra-productivity of architecture.

### **Sketching Contra-Productivity, Dildotopia, and a Contra-Architectural Practice**

For the time being, the key to this new outset, to this understanding of a potentially emancipatory practice of architecture and design is a queer manifesto written by the Spanish philosopher Beatriz Preciado<sup>21</sup> starting out like this:

*Robert Venturi rightly claimed that architecture needs to learn from Las Vegas. It is time that Philosophy learns from the dildo.<sup>22</sup>*

In twelve articles Preciado drafts the scenario of an emancipated *contra-sexual society* in which not men nor women, not homosexuals nor lesbians, but tantamount bodies enter temporal contracts. In proposing to create new erogenous zones of the body, that overcome the “natural” attributions of men and of women,

<sup>21</sup> I want to thank my partner Gudrun Ankele for introducing Preciado to me.

<sup>22</sup> Beatriz Preciado: *Kontrasexuelles Manifest*, b\_books, Berlin 2003, p. 10.

as well as deconstructing the bodies' "natural" productivity Preciado aims at abstaining from a closed and naturally defined sexual identity. At the same time abstaining from the benefits of such a pre-defined "naturalness". The wording "contra-sexuality" she directly deduces from Foucault, who thought of the most effective antagonism against a disciplining mode of production, not to be that of a fight against the proscription, but that of a *contra-productivity*. Thus Preciado aims with her manifesto at creating a space for an alternative economy that she calls *Dildotopia*.

In *Dildotopia*, Preciado radicalizes and extends Gender Studies' understanding of the socially constructed gender with a spatial aspect—the body itself. She refuses to accept a concept of naturalness of the sexes, on the contrary, she argues that there is only a constructed order of the organs of the body and thus of the sexes. In her concept the prosthesis—the dildo—comes first, only afterwards there is a penis. But *Dildotopia* is not about the creation of a new nature. On the contrary it is about the end of nature that has been understood as order, which justified the subjugation of bodies by other bodies. It understands sexuality as technology, and its diverse elements of the system Sex/Gender—like "Man", "Woman", "homosexual", "heterosexual", "transsexual", as well as its practices and sexual identities—as machines, products, tools, apparatuses, gadgets, prostheses, applications, programs, designs, logics, formats, mechanism, etc. In *Dildotopia* the body becomes somehow Venturi & Scott Brown's decorated shed, and each part of the body is able to become the dildo—a free floating symbol as technology, that brands spaces, that gives identity. Thus in *Dildotopia* the body is being constructed as an arbitrarily programmable container, or surface if you will. Each part of the body is becoming a zone of activity and thus is able to become sexually stimulated: Free floating, the arm, feet, breasts, the stomach, but also the penis become dildo-prosthesis.

As in Preciado's contra-sexual manifesto we can understand the program of architecture as a technology. We need to accept that architecture as such is political, that it organizes practices and that it judges whatever practices there are: be it public or private, be it institutional or homely, be it social or intimate. And we need to understand that the program of a specific architecture is being established and produced through the detour of spatial and temporal limits of architecture. But it is not the open quality of the neutral container or the endless quality-less plane *per se* that forms a potentially emancipatory aspect of architecture and of space. It is exactly the contra-productivity performed within these spaces: a productivity that not only breaks up the prevailing power-structures, but also produces an empty free space for an alternative productivity within the system.

It is the search for deficient spaces and the search of collapse within traditional spaces, in order to reinforce and empower discrepancy, meandering, and deviation from a prevailing power-structure.

Such an understanding of a potential emancipatory effect of a architectural practice marks exactly the difference to the two architectural examples that I have mentioned, and defines the paradox of the architectural practice: Bürolandschaft and Fun Palace (as well as—for that matter—Yona Friedmann’s *Ville Spatiale*, or Constant’s *New Babylon*) simply affirm the conceptual model of cybernetics and its popular promise in the 1960s. They simply mirror the mechanisms of the cybernetic hypothesis: Bürolandschaft forms a reactive manifestation of a hegemonic work-life that starts to spread out and diffuses into society at large, that no longer has distinct borders. The same does Fun Palace, that needs to be read as the precursor of a concept of “life-long learning”. In doing so Bürolandschaft and Fun Palace, creates spaces for productivity and NOT for an alternative productivity. They simply amplify a popular discourse to boost an existing economy. Preciado’s manifesto on the contrary is somehow a *double affirmation* (in a Deleuzian sense) of a cybernetic society. Preciado de-naturalizes the body, understood as the end of nature, the end a prevailing order creating: contra-productivity and contra-discipline. For a contemporary practice in architecture, as architect this implies: NOT to simply let go, repress its political dimension and simply resonating the existing power-structures. But exactly to be aware of architecture as a power-technology that is part of constituting our way of living together.







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*She published books in the field of architecture theory with the title Stripping las Vegas (with K. Jaschke) and Überwältigen und Schmeicheln, and articles in the review GAM and others, and published in the field of political economy, among others the book Das Casino schließen (together with T. Sauer and P. Wahl) on the financial crisis and Räume der Offshore-Welt (together with Celia Di Pauli), which is a publication on concrete spaces of tax havens and offshore centres in Europe and their implications. Her main research interest is globalization and financial architecture.*

# EXPLAINING JUNKSPACE

## *Architects between Market Ideology and Financialization*

The call for papers for this conference, drawing up a background of the *Empire* as a “headless power”, coupled with the conception of the end of ideologies, nevertheless missed to ask questions on arguments and authorities that constitute decisions. Apparently, it was overlooked that in various sectors of society decisions are justified with financial criteria, which in turn go back to both constraints of the economic system and to the purposefully implanted ideology of the *free market*. Architects take this ideology for a natural order. Consequently, they respond with individual, little systemic strategies to the changing conditions of *globalization*.

In view of the economic situation of architects these strategies can be regarded as a failure. In my contribution I would like to give some examples for this, relating to Koolhaas. Furthermore, I will introduce more appropriate theories on the financial and economic development by sketching some points of theories on financialization. Finally I will present some hypotheses on the role of architects as intermediaries in the context of financialization, and especially deduct one model of architect which seems to play a central role in an advanced state of financialization: the second-tier builder.

### Market ideology and market constraints in Koolhaas' statements and his business strategy

In his publications, Koolhaas and his partners often use keywords from the economic context, such as the market, the New Economy, globalization, shopping, hedge funds, offshore centres, volatility, instability and capitalism. Quick readers, such as students, take these as purely descriptive. Upon closer inspection it becomes evident that terms from the economic field are often presented according to neo-liberal ideology.

For example, this is the case in the publication *Content*, in which the Editor McGetrick praises volatility and the resulting instability as a source of freedom,<sup>1</sup> and in Koolhaas' statements on hedge funds, the operation of which he verbally transfigures as "fast discovery and leverage of market irregularities with the aid of unconventional techniques and at a high risk"<sup>2</sup>. Despite the architect's talkativeness, no classification is given in the context of the national economy and society. It is similar with OMAs/AMOs reference to Offshore Centres in the booklet titled "The Gulf". Here the authors describe Dubai's *tax exemption plan as a system of non-hierarchical cultural and social norms*<sup>3</sup>. *The authors seem to pick up the rhetoric of Offshore service providers and the hosting governments, which often refer to the international character of their location, while leaving out that instead of national there are economical barriers, and that, on top of this, immigrants from poor countries are discriminated on the labour market.*<sup>4</sup>

Following Koolhaas, for architects it is a question of flexibility to cope with the existing economic context. My former research shows how in fact OMA itself had to agree on a partnership with a big investor who forced the architects to scale down the creative aspects of their projects by minimizing the time spent on competitions, by economizing working materials and by eliminating project budgets for design furniture<sup>5</sup>. Koolhaas managed to re-establish himself economically, but

1 See Brendan McGetrick: "Content is a product of the moment." In: AMO/OMA, Koolhaas et al, *Content*, Cologne: Taschen, 2004, p. 16.

2 OMA, Hedge-Fond [sic], in: *archplus 175*, December 2005, p. 90.

3 *OMA-AMO, The Gulf, 2007, p. XX.*

4 It could be argued that even if Koolhaas and his team transmit ideological—roughly said neo-liberal—messages, this is meant ironically, provocative or a part of his business strategy for selling the label "Koolhaas". Even if this should (partially) be true, this is not very relevant. The question is a) whether the assumptions on the relation of the economic context in relation to architecture work and b) how this approach might be used to develop a less ideological model to better predict the interactions of finance, economy and architecture.

5 Silke Ötseh: "The Emperor's new firm. Inside the global Y€\$ and how to get out." In: *GAM 04*,

in doing so he published less, and designed buildings which are often criticised because they are seen as immoral and overly deferential of the existing power structures, such as the television building for the Chinese government (CCTV) or the Gazprom tower in St. Petersburg. That means he made concessions, probably due to financial constraints.

### **How to prevent an ideological view on architecture.**

#### **An attempt to build architecture theory on more appropriate theories of the economic context—especially financialization**

Although Koolhaas addressed crucial points—phenomena that influence the development of the society and among this the situation of architects – the question is how to introduce concepts that deal with the economic context of architecture without taking up the cautiously implanted ideology of free markets. In the recent years there has been an increasing interest in the effects of finance, because it seems apparent that financial criteria are getting more important in different areas of the economy and society. I suggest to look closer at theories from the field of political and cultural economy, which try to understand better the impacts of the economic respectively financial system on real economy and society, especially theories of financialization. *Financialization* is used as a broad term because, as Gerald Epstein phrases it, “there is not even a common agreement about the definition of the term, and even less about its significance”<sup>6</sup>. It describes the era following fordism from the seventies onwards. In his book, editor Epstein distils two common convictions of his authors: the growing importance of financial phenomena and the view that “some of the effects of financialization [...] have been highly detrimental to significant numbers of people around the globe”<sup>7</sup>.

Most economists agree, that capitalism has undergone an important change in the seventies, due to liberalisation of the financial markets and/or the downturn of real economy. Following Crotty, from 1973 onwards firms were confronted with what he calls the ‘neoliberal paradox’: falling rates of GDP in comparison with the ‘Golden Age’, a decreasing demand, but higher interest rates and the demand for higher profits generated by the financial markets. The competition between Non Financial Companies (NFCs) became stronger, firms were managed more and more in accordance to financial market requirements<sup>8</sup>. Duménil and Lévy

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Wien: Springer, 2007, p. 118.

6 Gerald Epstein: *Financialization and the world economy*, Cheltenham UK: Elgar, 2005, p. 3.

7 Ibid., p. 5.

8 Crotty, J.: “The neoliberal paradox: the impact of destructive product market competition and ,modern‘ financial markets on nonfinancial corporation performance in the neoliberal era.” In:

argue that there is a new class alliance between upper salariat and the owners of capital at the expense of wage income which restructures economy by leading to lower wages, decreasing demand and an increasingly unjust division of wealth and income and a downturn of real economy in the long run<sup>9</sup>. One crucial term used here is “accumulation”, which means the tendency to a concentration of capital which is—following *authors from political economy*—inherent in financial capitalism respectively capitalism. Anyhow, research on listed companies has shown that a large majority of NFCs were unable to achieve earnings in excess of the cost of capital: “The small percentage whose earnings exceeded the 12 to 15 percent cost of capital demanded by financial markets were concentrated in industries with oligopolistic structures and price-setting power”<sup>10</sup>. That would mean that the mechanisms described by authors from the field of political economy are probably not as strong as assumed. Froud et al. agree that financialization led to high inequalities and shifted the focus to the leading group of working rich in the 1990s and the 2000s, which they call financial markets intermediaries<sup>11</sup>.

Researchers from the field of cultural economy underline that financialization does not follow one specific logic, but different logics in different times and spaces. Economists and sociologists from this camp often refer to Bourdieu, and argue that people do not act as *homo oeconomicus* because they are situated in different fields. In a study on the operation of the derivatives market at the stock exchange of Chicago, MacKenzie and Millo show that even stock dealers are guided by principles of loyalty towards the expectations of seniors, their patrons and by ambition. Beyond this they show how a mathematical model performs economy<sup>12</sup>. Following Callon, MacKenzie speaks of the ‘performativity of economics’. Referring to case studies on the German automotive and chemical industry, Kädtler concludes that there is a tension between financial markets and the real economy due to different time frames, but emphasizes that real economy is too complex to

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Epstein (ed.): *Financialization and the World Economy*, *ibid.*, p. 78ff.

9 See Gérard Duménil, Dominique Lévy: “Costs and Benefits of Neoliberalism: A Class Analysis.” In: Epstein (ed.): *Financialization and the World Economy*, *ibid.*, 2005, p. 17–45.

10 Froud et al, 2000 quoted by Crotty in: *ibid.*, 2005, p. 100.

11 Ismail Erturk, Julie Froud, Sukdev Johal, Adam Leaver, Karel Williams (eds.): *Financialization At Work: Key Texts and Analysis*, London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008, p. 35. Also see: Peter Folkman, Julie Froud, Sukdev Johal, Karel Williams: “Working for themselves: capital market intermediaries and present day capitalism.” In: *Business History*, vol. 49, no. 4, 2007, pp. 552–572.

12 Donald MacKenzie, Yuval Millo: “Constructing a market, performing theory: the historical sociology of a financial derivatives exchange.” In: *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 109, 2003, pp. 107–45.

simply apply abstract laws or the simple cause-effect relationships of financial markets. These must be merely understood as leading principles established by a public of investors, rating agencies, analysts and media. Thus, financialization is “a shift of criteria in accordance to what is seen as economically advantageous from the prevalent point of view”<sup>13</sup>.

Even though authors such as Martin emphasize the all-embracing character of financialization,<sup>14</sup> most research concentrates on areas where the effects of financialization can be traced in a more direct way, such as listed companies, or addresses the topic from a broader, macro-economic perspective. The question is then, how this phenomenon affects areas of the economy, such as architecture, which are traditionally structured, produce long-lasting goods<sup>15</sup> and consist of a large number of small and mid-size firms. In the recent phase of financialization, the group of intermediaries plays an important role. In this context “intermediaries” refers to actors who provide architectural services in the real economy that match the profit expectations of the financial sector. Intermediaries are highly influential because of their position; a position which attributes authority derived from their connection to the financial markets to them and allows them to channel capital. It is evident that architects too act as intermediaries, but their role is unclear: they are at once winners, as their services are needed, and losers—due to tightened financial constraints. The ambiguity of the position is expressed in star architect Rem Koolhaas’ claim that architects have a lot of freedom within the existing economic context as long as they adapt.<sup>16</sup>

### **Hypotheses on intermediation in architecture**

If one relates the question of intermediaries in the context of financialization to architecture it might be useful to start developing the hypotheses from a case which has clear characteristics of a financialized economy. Such a case is the resort architecture of Las Vegas, because nearly all of the more than 50 resorts are

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13 Traduction of the author. In original: Finanzialisierung ist nicht die “Unterjochung der Vertreter der Realökonomie durch die der Finanzmärkte”, sondern eine „Verschiebung der Gesichtspunkte im Rahmen dessen, was nach herrschender Überzeugung als wirtschaftlich gilt“. Jürgen Kädler: “Bruchstelle der Sozialpartnerschaft. Der Renditedruck schafft soziale Distanzen.” In: *Mitbestimmung* 10/2008.

14 See Randy Martin: *Financialization of daily life*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.

15 Margarete Czerny, Michael Weingärtler: “Volkswirtschaftliche Bedeutung der baukulturellen Qualifizierung”. In: ARGE Baukulturreport, *Österreichischer Baukulturreport 2006*, Baukultur: Wirtschaft, 2006, p. 6.

16 Rem Koolhaas: “On Content.” In: *hunch*, 2004, p. 124f.

owned by listed corporations and are investment objects. Building on my previous research,<sup>17</sup> three types of architecture can be identified in the area.

The first type is the architecture of “copycats”<sup>18</sup>—this means an architecture planned by corporate design and planning departments. Architects play a marginal role, do not coordinate and lead the building process as traditionally expected, and do not even make important decisions on the design. The interdisciplinary planning team is copying architecture which has previously generated high profits. This kind of architecture is the most common among Las Vegas’ casino hotels.

The second type is the architecture of famous architects. Investors have been assigning internationally renowned stars as Koolhaas’ *OMA*, *Morphosis*, or Frank Israel to build casinos or part of the resorts. Most visitors did not appreciate this kind of architecture because it was too academic. Star architects were not invited any more and their buildings were altered.

The third type is architecture of the second-tier builder Jerde and the investor Wynn, described as ‘charismatic’. This kind of architecture has generated most profit. Resorts constructed in this way are economically most successful. The production costs are usually low, compared to the architecture of star architects, because the architecture is not really innovative but the architect adds something that is perceived as relating to high culture and thus appealing to visitors.

Apart from this, there were only very few Architects with the traditional profile of the profession (developing a building from design to construction, including supervision of the building process) working within this context.

Beyond this, I assume that financialization at the same time leads to another tendency: disintermediation (this is what “copycats” are doing). It means that the investor directly deals with the producer. By avoiding competence and control of professionals as architects, the professional criteria are suppressed in favour of financial requirements, and the investor cuts costs for the intermediaries.<sup>19</sup>

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17 See Silke Ötsch: *Überwältigen und schmeicheln. Der menschliche Körper im Visier der Planer*, Weimar, 2006. Also see: Karin Jaschke, Silke Ötsch (eds.): *Stripping Las Vegas: A Contextual Review of Casino Resort Architecture*, Weimar, 2003.

18 See Hal Rothman: *Neon Metropolis*, London: Routledge, 2002.

19 The report on creative industries in Vienna showed that architecture is done by design-and-build also because a package of services is provided which rationalizes the procedure. Demel, Falk, Harauer et al.: *Untersuchung des ökonomischen Potenzials der “Creative Industries” in Wien*, report edited by Mediacult Wifo Kulturdokumentation, Stadt Wien, Magistratsabteilung 27 EU-Strategie und Wirtschaftsentwicklung, Wirtschaftskammer Wien, Filmfonds Wien, Wien, 2004, p. 53. This observation is probably typical for architecture in the context of financialization.



Starting from this example I suggest the hypothesis that star architects can as well act as intermediaries, because they provide buildings of cultural value, which may turn into financial value, but to a smaller degree than those designed by second-tier builders (see below). As the buildings of architects appreciated by critics and professionals are often pioneering, it is risky for investors to engage a star architect, because their buildings are not necessarily well received by the broad public, and because star architects might insist on innovative design which might increase building cost. As a consequence of this, buildings designed by star architects are often taken over for construction by other (cheaper) firms or (sub) contractors, or star architects become second-tier builders by adapting to the exigencies of their clients.<sup>20</sup>

Intermediary services in architecture are provided by the *second-tier builder*. This notion refers to architects who are generally under-represented in professional publications, relative to the sheer amount of buildings produced by them. This is because the architecture is not appreciated as innovative or of high quality from the perspective of critics and colleagues. The second-tier builder does emphasize the architectural qualities of her/his buildings, and may even be perceived as a star architect by the public and the investors, but also provides an architecture that can be built efficiently. Examples of this kind of architect are the already mentioned Jon Jerde, the artist-architect Hundertwasser or the Austrian architect Kaufmann, who is economically very successful but largely unknown among architects<sup>21</sup>. The crucial point about the second tier architect is that this type of architect brings together the most lucrative strategies by combining the strategies of intermediation and disintermediation.

Even if it is difficult to criticise the text *Junkspace* because of its literary character, the question is whether Inaba and Koolhaas intuitively describe the architecture of second tier builders. It is an architecture which is typical for an advanced state of financialization, which is neither the cheap architecture of disintermediation, nor everyday architecture, nor the architecture of star architects. It gives incentives for consumers to spend because it addresses an average taste by preventing being something special, whereas in fact it is built in a rationalistic way. Thus it is an architecture which generates the highest profits.

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<sup>20</sup> The architect Frank Gehry is an example for this. He was economically unsuccessful in his first phase when he was designing average shopping malls. In a second phase he built his own house and some small buildings which were innovative and appreciated by critics but were economically not very profitable. As a consequence he was discovered by investors, became famous and economically successful by providing second-tier buildings.

<sup>21</sup> Wojciech Czaja: "Ich bin der Mann mit Hut." In: *Standard*, 9.08.2008.



## Grace Quiroga

TU Wien

*Grace Quiroga studied architecture at the University of Michigan and at the Vienna University of Technology. Her ongoing architectural projects include the design of a housing project in the Chinese province of Sichuan for a thousand families*

*displaced by the earthquake of 2008. In addition, she is working on a doctoral dissertation titled Rem Koolhaas and the architecture culture of the AA in the 1970's.*

# PANTS ON FIRE?

On February 9, the TVCC building in Beijing, designed by Rem Koolhaas and Ole Scheeren of OMA, went up in flames like a giant lantern. For the author of *Delirious New York*, this must have had its paranoid justification, since it *was* the evening of the Yuan Xiao or ‘Lantern’ festival that marks the end of the Chinese New Year celebrations. The tower was part of the CCTV complex that also includes the headquarters of the Chinese State Broadcasting company. According to the CCTV news, the fire that demanded one life was ignited by illegal firecrackers set off by Beijing residents; later it was reported that the rockets had been fired by an illegal crew hired by the CCTV itself.

Western commentators have speculated that the destruction of the TVCC tower might be seen by the Chinese as a bad omen that could put an end to the habit of inviting Western star architects to design major monuments in the capital city.<sup>1</sup> Beijing’s \$40 billion Olympic modernization campaign encompassed Herzog & de Meuron’s Olympic Stadium, PTW’s National Swimming Center, Schuermann Architects’ Laoshan Velodrome and so on. At the same time, many other major projects were erected in different parts of the city, such as Paul Andreu’s National Grand Theater, Steven Holl’s Linked Hybrid complex, SOM’s World Trade Center and Foster’s airport terminal, along with new subway lines and new roads. Parts of the Forbidden City—Meridian Gate, the Hall of Supreme Harmony, and Qianlong Garden—were also renovated, although in this process much of the tra-

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1 Rose, Steve: “Will the Beijing blaze come back to haunt European architects?” *Guardian*, Tuesday 10 February 2009. Online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2009/feb/10/beijing-fire-architect-cctv>.

Cf. Pasternack, Alex: *In the Ashes of Rem Koolhaas’s TVCC, a Chance for Revision?* Online at [http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/03/rem-koolhaas-tvcc-fire-and-the-future-of-cities.php?dcite=TH\\_sbr\\_design](http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/03/rem-koolhaas-tvcc-fire-and-the-future-of-cities.php?dcite=TH_sbr_design).

ditional courtyard house streets, or hutongs, were replaced by large-scale commercial or residential developments.<sup>2</sup> According to some estimates, 500 million square feet of commercial real estate have been developed in the city since 2006, more than all the office space in Manhattan, and this number does not include government projects. To date, 100 million square feet of office space are vacant, a supply that should not be exhausted for at least the next fourteen years. With the present downturn in global economy, also the Chinese building boom seems to be coming to a halt – even without the impact of the TVCC fire.

### **Bomb**

The architecture critic of the *Guardian* and a friend of Koolhaas', Ian Buruma was critical of the state TV project from the beginning, pointing out that "CCTV is the voice of the party, the centre of state propaganda, the organ which tells a billion people what to think. ... It's hard to imagine a cool European architect in the 1970s building a television station for Pinochet without losing a great deal of street creed." Many other critics followed suit. Inga Saffron, architecture critic for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, saw in the CCTV a giant mushroom cloud: "Obviously, Rem Koolhaas' Office of Metropolitan Architecture isn't the only Western firm guilty of aiding and abetting China's authoritarian regime. A long list of prominent, and not so prominent, designers have provided the blueprints for the country's frenzied construction boom. But Koolhaas and partner Ole Scheeren may be remembered as the ones who gave China's state TV monopoly the architectural equivalent of the bomb. As with the atomic version, it's hard to avert your eyes from the brilliant flash made by Koolhaas-Scheeren's 768-foot-high, uh, megas-structure in Beijing's emerging Central Business District."<sup>3</sup>

Admittedly, the bomb metaphor sounds a bit extreme but on the other hand it actually resonates well with Koolhaas' own rhetoric, especially in the essay "Bigness."<sup>4</sup> The *SMLXL* declares that the "programmatic alchemy" of Bigness re-

2 While the Chinese government estimates that 15,000 residents have been relocated throughout Beijing, human rights groups suggest that the number may be as high as 1.5 million. See Mattern, Shannon: "Broadcasting Space: China Central Television's New Headquarters." *International Journal of Communication* 2(2008), pp. 869–908.

3 Saffron, Inga: "Changing Skyline | For China, a huge, icy landmark." *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Online at [https://listserv.miami.edu/scripts/wa.exe?A3=ind0611&L=TRADARCH&E=quoted-printable&P=15641874&B=-----%3D\\_NextPart\\_000\\_0005\\_01C713FF.4F8DA6A0&T=text%2Fplain;%20charset=iso-8859-1](https://listserv.miami.edu/scripts/wa.exe?A3=ind0611&L=TRADARCH&E=quoted-printable&P=15641874&B=-----%3D_NextPart_000_0005_01C713FF.4F8DA6A0&T=text%2Fplain;%20charset=iso-8859-1).

4 Koolhaas, Rem: "Bigness or the Problem of Large." In: Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau (Ed.): *S,M,L,XL*. Köln, Benedikt Taschen Verlag, 1997, pp. 495–516. As is the case with many of Koolhaas' ideas, the inspiration may have come from Le Corbusier. After visiting the Soviet Union in

invents the collective, reclaims maximum possibility, engineers the unpredictable, creates freedom, provides serenity and excites perpetual intensity; enthusiastically, he even promises that big buildings will start a nuclear reaction in the social world: “Like plutonium rods that, more or less immersed, dampen or promote nuclear reaction, Bigness regulates the intensities of programmatic coexistence.”<sup>5</sup> Certainly, the CCTV building is OMA’s best realized example of Bigness as yet. Koolhaas and Scheren like to claim that the only building in the world that is still bigger is the Pentagon.<sup>6</sup> This reference accentuates the aggressive rhetoric about the CCTV, but in truth the U.S. military headquarters in Washington, D. C. is not the largest building in the world. This distinction belongs to the huge flower auction warehouse in Aalsmeer in Koolhaas’ home country.

### Void

Despite its immense size, the CCTV building is not overwhelming. At least this is what Koolhaas thinks, explaining that “amidst all the skyscrapers there, it’s relatively low. It will feel accessible.”<sup>7</sup> Ole Scheeren goes on to elaborate that “if it was a pure gesture,” the structure might be frightening. “But since it’s actually a circuit of life inside, it’s a huge social catalyst,” he said.<sup>8</sup>

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the early thirties, the functionalist master wrote an essay titled “Bolshoi... or the Notion of Bigness,” included in *The Radiant City* of 1934. Le Corbusier: *The Radiant City*. New York: The Orion Press, 1964, pp. 182–184. Even earlier, in 1927, he explained that “in every epoch, urban design has made use of all technological devices available and in fact has become the expression of technology. And today? Today we can build houses with 60 stories. That is the new fact. Let us consider the consequences.” These ideas were expressed by many others at around this time, including the Nazis, who despite their ideological conservatism were eager to exploit the potential of new technologies. In 1937, Adolf Hitler demanded that “we must make our buildings as big as the technical possibilities today allow and yet build for eternity.” As quoted in Jormakka, Kari: “Functionalism, Zeitgeist, Authoritarianism.” *Datutop 11*. Tampere: Tampere University of Technology. 1987, p. 41. The former quote comes from Le Corbusier: “Schöpferisches Städtebau.” *Das Neue Frankfurt*, 9/1928; the quotation from Hitler from his speech in 1937, see Hinz, Berthold: *Die Malerei im deutschen Faschismus. Kunst und Konterrevolution*. München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1974, p. 180.

5 Koolhaas, see note 4, p. 511.

6 Even the design strategies of the CCTV building and the Pentagon are comparable, as both apply a strong, iconic form collected around a void.

7 Pogrebin, Robin: “Embracing Koolhaas’s Friendly Skyscraper.” *New York Times*, Nov. 16, 2006. Online at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0DE1D8173EF935A25752C1A9609CSB63>

8 Ibid.



*Fig. 1. Guards before the CCTV, Beijing, July 30, 2008.*

*Opposite page:  
Fig. 2. Diagram of  
NeWhitney vs. Japanese  
pornography.*

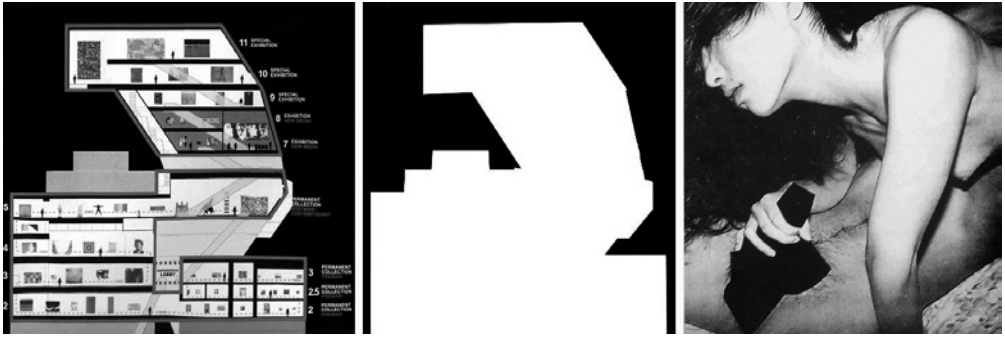
To put it in more precise terms, it is not just the immense mass of the building that matters, but rather the void it circumscribes. “Hardly any building really engages space,” Scheeren maintains. “Most skyscrapers exhaust space. This building leaves open the space it encapsulates. It activates the ground. It draws activities into the building.”<sup>9</sup> (fig. 1)

The emphasis on the void resonates with Taoist metaphysics that has been popular among architects at least since the 1960s, i. e. since Koolhaas’ generation. Tao Te Ching famously muses over “creative nothingness”, arguing that “thirty spokes join together in one hub – just this non-being: the wheel’s usability/ Mould clay, thus form a vessel: just this non-being is the vessel’s usability/ Chisel out doors and windows thus form a living space: just this non-being is the room’s usability / Therefore: the being—it thereby takes advantage, nothingness—it thereby gets usability.”<sup>10</sup>

Some of the central concepts of Taoism, such as those of a formless void (*wu ji*) or a natural chaos (*hundun*), seem to come up again in Koolhaas’ theories in the late 1980s, although tinged with both Zen Buddhism and overtones of chaos theory. Even the title of his essay “Imagining Nothingness”—which begins with the famous quip, “Where there is nothing, everything is possible. Where there is architecture, nothing (else) is possible”—definitely recalls Eastern meditation. This notion was developed into a design method for OMA’s entry to the Melun-Senart competition in 1989. The “strategy of the void” involves defining not that which should be built, but that which areas should be left as voids in the urban

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Lao-Tzu: *Tao Te Ching*, §11. An alternative translation by James Legge: “The thirty spokes unite in the one nave; but it is on the empty space (for the axle), that the use of the wheel depends. Clay is fashioned into vessels; but it is on their empty hollowness, that their use depends. The door and windows are cut out (from the walls) to form an apartment; but it is on the empty space (within), that its use depends. Therefore, what has a (positive) existence serves for profitable adaptation, and what has not that for (actual) usefulness.” Legge, James: *The Texts of Taoism*. Vol. 1. New York: Dover, 1962, §11.



fabric.<sup>11</sup> In Koolhaas' project, the voids eventually trace a figure that he describes as "almost Chinese".<sup>12</sup>

Still, the origin of the strategy may just as well be Japanese. Koolhaas illustrates the essay on the void with a Japanese pornographic image, where the man's private parts have been covered by a black figure (fig. 2).

Elsewhere, Koolhaas explains that the first commandment of Japanese censorship is that pubic hair may not be shown. This generates intellectual issue: ... larger sexual impact through elimination of responsible parts."<sup>13</sup> Is it just an accident that this figure looks so much like the shapes of Koolhaas' buildings? The pornographic origin of the strategy of the void also suggests an explanation why Koolhaas is so obsessed with size or Bigness, which he describes as something that "breaks with ethics" so that it can "sustain a promiscuous proliferation of events in a single container" through its "rigidity." And "like plutonium rods that [are] more or less immersed;" "Bigness *fucks* context", until "a kind of liquefaction" follows and "elements react with each other to create new events" that connect "with a web of umbilical cords to other disciplines."<sup>14</sup> It should be mentioned that all these obsessive tropes come from one page of the essay, "Bigness."

Recently, though, Koolhaas denied making any sexual suggestions, despite the fact the he liberally sprinkled all of his writings with sexual imagery since day one. In June, 2009, retired architecture professor Xiao Mo accusing the architects of the CCTV building of "genital worship," pointing to illustrations in *Content* that

11 In 1993 Koolhaas wrote a text stating that the Berlin Wall was for him the "first demonstration of the capacity of the void—of nothingness—to 'function' with more efficiency, subtlety, and flexibility than any object you could imagine in its place." Here, like in his discussion on pornographic images, Koolhaas jumps from the void to the substitute. Koolhaas: "Field trip (A)A Memoir, The Berlin Wall as Architecture." In: *S, M, L, XL*, p. 228.

12 Koolhaas: "Surrender, Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sènart France competition 1987." In: *S, M, L, XL*, pp. 977, 981.

13 Koolhaas: "Learning Japanese." In: *S, M, L, XL*, p. 102.

14 Koolhaas, see note 4, pp. 511–512.



juxtapose the hindquarters of a naked woman with the headquarters building.<sup>15</sup> “I cannot think of any reason not to blow it up;” was Xiao’s conclusion. Another writer, He Qing, declared: “Doubting the new CCTV, kill the designer” for humiliating the Chinese. The Communist Party organ *Zhongguo Qingnianbao* (China Youth Daily) took a more relaxed approach to the controversy, pointing out that “the worship of procreation is a widespread custom in primitive societies.”<sup>16</sup> In response, Koolhaas insisted that the building is “the positive and shining symbol of a changing world order” and that there no other hidden messages.<sup>17</sup> But more important is to examine whether there is beyond the rhetoric a principle that works (fig. 3).

### Brain

The CCTV building is a marriage of two Koolhaasian themes, ‘void’ and ‘bigness’. They are ultimately variations of the same notion, that of the “social condenser”, as imagined by Russian Constructivists in the 1920s. At a symposium at Tsinghua University in August 2003, Koolhaas assured the audience that the CCTV design “was not an intellectual or aesthetic experiment ... but, rather, a building whose form embodied the Chinese tradition of collectivism”. The CCTV tower was, he said, a “diagram” of “collective inhabitation,” a design that “you would never do anywhere else.”<sup>18</sup> By virtue of bringing together ten thousand CCTV employees in

15 Xiao writes: “I was never able to figure out why the overhang grew higher the further out it went, or why the two verticals were inclined outward at a 6-degree angle, but now I have the answer: it turns out that the problem is because of the structural similarity of the ass and the CCTV headquarters building.” Xiao Mo: *The Structural Similarity of the CCTV Headquarters and Hindquarters*, Online at [http://www.danwei.org/architecture/rem\\_koolhaas\\_and\\_cctv\\_porn.php#xiaomo](http://www.danwei.org/architecture/rem_koolhaas_and_cctv_porn.php#xiaomo)

16 <http://www.examda.com/life/Other/20091009/103057225.html>

See also <http://bjtoday.yinet.com/article.jsp?oid=6355280>

17 <http://china.globaltimes.cn/society/2009-08/461190.html>

[http://www.danwei.org/architecture/rem\\_koolhaas\\_and\\_cctv\\_porn.php](http://www.danwei.org/architecture/rem_koolhaas_and_cctv_porn.php)

18 Zalewski, Daniel: “Intelligent Design: Can Rem Koolhaas kill the skyscrap-



Opposite page:

Fig. 3. Hindquarters vs. headquarters.

Right:

Fig. 4. CCTV, detail of façade.



a “shared conceptual space” the building is promised to create a “chain of interdependence that promotes solidarity rather than isolation, collaboration instead of opposition”. In the book *Content*, he boasts that the project will be a “catalyst for urban and social change” because it “eschews the atomized organization of media production”. More generally, Scheeren described the building as a “three-dimensional physical construct that would inscribe a particular organizational structure that would ultimately affect the way that people inhabit the structure, [so] that people work in the structure differently.”<sup>19</sup> To put it in a nutshell, “the brains will know what the hands are doing”.<sup>20</sup> (fig. 4)

This last statement is not to suggest that the building would function as a control device. On the contrary, “the building introduces accessibility and maybe even something like accountability . . . that is entirely new to CCTV—or perhaps to any TV station,” says Scheeren.<sup>21</sup> At the outset of the project, Koolhaas suggested that by the time his tower was completed, China’s censorship of the airwaves might well have changed and the country could be freer than Britain.<sup>22</sup> Over the years, Koolhaas and Scheeren have repeated this suggestion, claiming that OMA “re-

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er?” In: *The New Yorker*, March 14, 2005. Online at [http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/03/14/050314fa\\_fact\\_zalewski](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/03/14/050314fa_fact_zalewski)

19 Dodd, Philip: “Interview with Ole Scheeren.” BBC Radio 3, Night Waves, March 26, 2008. Online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/nightwaves/pip/8fz0j/>

20 Walters, H.: “OMA’s race to construct in China.” *Time*, Nov. 9, 2006. Online at [http://images.businessweek.com/ss/06/11/1109\\_cctv/index\\_01.htm](http://images.businessweek.com/ss/06/11/1109_cctv/index_01.htm)

21 Dickie, Mure: “Towering change for China: The new HQ of a Beijing TV station is proving somewhat controversial.” *Financial Times*, Nov. 19, 2007. Online at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7a8db09e-970b-11de-b2da-0000779fd2ac.html>

22 Pogrebin, Robin: “I’m the designer. My client’s the autocrat.” *The New York Times*, June 22, 2008. Online at [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/arts/design/22pogr.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/arts/design/22pogr.html?_r=1&oref=slogin).

See also “Die Freiheit ist größer denn je.” *Die Zeit*, 05.06.2008 Nr. 24. Online at <http://www.zeit.de/2008/24/Koolhaas-Interview>. Consult also Hawthorne, Christopher, “Ethics’ place in China’s building boom.” *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 5, 2008. Online at <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/arts/la-et-ethics5-2008aug05,0,7583948.story>

ceived many indications, including explicit statements, that CCTV was interested in becoming more liberal and independent and was seeking a building that would facilitate these changes.”<sup>23</sup> In an interview, Koolhaas stressed: “In the CCTV building there is a utopian nostalgia that is the foundation of architecture.”<sup>24</sup> According to Scheeren, freedom will be generated by the loop that “acts as a non-hierarchical principle, with no beginning and end, no top and bottom,” thereby breaking the traditional hierarch of the vertical line.<sup>25</sup> With the CCTV building, the designers take the criticality inherent to projective practice to its very limits, “tickling the tail of a sleeping dragon,” to quote Richard Feynman’s description of the criticality experiments that were part of the Manhattan Project.<sup>26</sup>

### Horse

Of course, the actions of the CCTV during the fire of its neighbor do not really support Koolhaas’ optimism. The CCTV tried to block the net community from posting videos and photos of the fire on the Internet and accused unnamed passersby for starting the fire. Only later did it take part of the responsibility for the destruction. And last week, the officials blocked YouTube in China, once again.

Apparently, the CCTV is not big enough to generate the emancipatory effects of real Bigness.

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23 Fong, Mei: “CCTV tower mirrors Beijing’s rising ambitions.” *Wall Street Journal*, November 7, 2007. Online at <http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.culture.romanian/2007-11/msg00500.html>

24 Leonard, Mark: “Profile of Rem Koolhaas.” *Financial Times*, March 6, 2004. Online at <http://fpc.org.uk/articles/243>

Not everyone agrees. Mattern quotes Edwin Heathcote’s view of new architecture in China: “In Beijing, the world’s greatest architects have virtually given up on the idea of the city. This is modernism minus utopia, and with no context—physical, topographical, political, theoretical, or urban. The simple, single image is everything. Any of these buildings could have been built anywhere else. Beijing is becoming a realization of the most superficial aspects of a contemporary design culture obsessed with the gesture and the icon, with the cleverness and complexity of its own structure. This is architecture as stage set for the Olympics, for a regime determined to demonstrate its modernity and its emerging economic and cultural power. Radical architecture has let itself be used for spectacle and propaganda.” The original source is Heathcote, Edwin: “Modernism minus utopia.” *Financial Times*, Dec. 29, 2007, p. 17. Here quoted from Mattern, see note 3, p. 880.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 882. The source is A Lian [sic]: “Interview with Ole Scheeren.” Online at <http://www.feedmecoolshit.com/interviews-archive/ole-scheeren/>

26 The goal of these experiments was to determine the critical mass of nuclear material that would sustain a chain reaction. Two researchers, Harry Daghlian and Louis Slotin, died during the criticality experiments at Los Alamos.

However, given that the new architecture has not been able to release Western-style political freedom, at least not just yet, the question arises whether foreign star architects should have accepted these commissions. In an interview with the *Spiegel*, Jacques Herzog was very clear on where he stands on the issue: “Only an idiot—and not a person who thinks in moral terms would have turned down this opportunity—would have said no.” Herzog went on to describe the Bird’s Nest as an act of political resistance: “We see the stadium as a type of Trojan horse. We fulfilled the spatial program we were given, but interpreted it in such a way that it can be used in different ways along its perimeters. As a result, we made everyday meeting places possible in locations that are not easily monitored, places with all kinds of niches and smaller segments. ... in a country like China these kinds of urban spaces acquire a different, almost political meaning.” He elaborates: “our vision was to create a public space, a space for the public, where social life is possible, where something can happen, something that can, quite deliberately, be subversive or—at least—not easy to control or keep track of.”<sup>27</sup>

To Nicolai Ouroussoff, the architecture critic of the *New York Times*, Herzog explained that after the Olympics, the building was to be transformed into an open public forum. To the critic’s comment that the government was going to build a fence around it, Herzog responded: “The building is made to be open ... It is a work of public sculpture ... Even if they put up a fence, they can take it down again one day in the future”.<sup>28</sup>

Possibly to the disappointment of the architects, the CITIC group that operates the stadium announced on January 31, 2009 that the Bird’s Nest will be turned into a shopping and entertainment complex in three to five years. While the maintenance of the 250,000-square-meter National Stadium costs 60 million yuan or 8.5 million dollars a year, it has proven difficult to find interested users for the venue in a country with more than a billion people. The only confirmed event at the stadium this year is Puccini’s opera *Turandot*, to be performed once on August 8, 2009 to mark the first anniversary of the Olympics’ opening ceremony. Incidentally, *Turandot* used to be banned in China because the government felt the original libretto – with its blood-thirsty ice princess, Turandot, who has unsuccessful suitors beheaded – depicted the country in negative terms. In the officially approved

27 “Nur ein Idiot hätte nein gesagt.” *Der Spiegel* 31/2008 (28.07.2008). Online at <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/0,1518,568274-2,00.html>

28 Ouroussoff, Nicolai: “In Changing Face of Beijing, a Look at the New China.” *New York Times*, July 13, 2008. Online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/13/arts/design/13build.html>

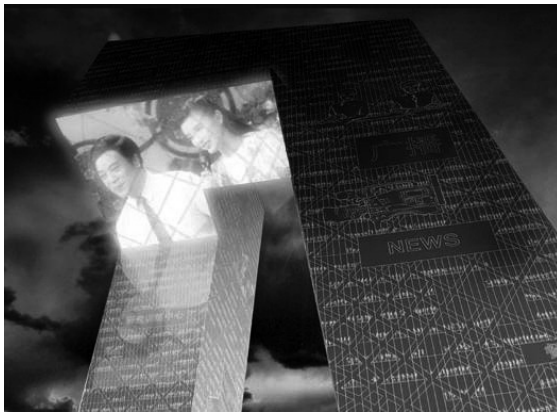


Fig. 5. CCTV, media screen.

Chinese version, with a new 18-minute ending composed by “China’s Champion,” Hao Weiya, conflicts are resolved and “love lights up the world.”<sup>29</sup>

### Icon

For sure, Puccini’s unfinished opera allows for different readings and even different endings. This kind of openness is also what Koolhaas aspires to with the CCTV building. Even though he describes the building as iconic, he stresses that it has no single meaning.<sup>30</sup>

By contrast, many of the recent monuments in Beijing seem to have been fixed in terms of meaning. The National Stadium is internationally known as a bird nest, the National Swimming Center has been dubbed a “Water Cube”, the ceiling of the Lao Shan Velodrome calls to mind a bicycle wheel, the Beijing Shooting Range Hall has been designed to evoke the shape of a pistol or a hunting bow, the facades of the Digital Beijing building resemble computer motherboards, the National Grand Theater is called “The Duck Egg” and the Terminal 3 of the Beijing Airport is said to refer to a dragon. Toyo Ito suggests that the “underlying connection between communism and mass symbols” might explain this figurative fixation. He adds: “In today’s China, the demand is for size, expressions of immensity ... What I envy in China is, while neither the client nor society has any clear idea of what to symbolize, still there’s a strong expectation of architects as creators of symbols.”<sup>31</sup>

This certainly applies to the OMA building. At the groundbreaking ceremony, during which the design was never discussed, the president of CCTV, Zhao Huayong, walked to the podium and stated: “CCTV will keep serving our Communist Party and people with complete faith.” He was followed by Xu Guangchun, the

29 “Hao Weiya:” Online at <http://english.cri.cn/4406/2008/03/06/1122@330721.htm>

30 “This iconic new addition to the Beijing skyline,” Online at <http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/people/faculty/koolhaas/projects2002.html#cctv>

31 Ota, Kayoko (2004): “Toyo Ito: Big Time Dilemmas” In AMOMA & Koolhaas, R. (2004). *Content*. New York: Taschen, pp. 448–449.

head of the Chinese film-and-radio authority, who on behalf of CCTV vigorously pledged “complete loyalty” to the Communist Party; the new headquarters, he said, would become a “revolutionary symbol.”<sup>32</sup> (fig. 5)

To concretize the revolutionary symbolism, CCTV proposed various names. An early favorite was ‘Knowledge Window’ or *zhichuang* (知窗). The effect of this lofty word was, however, somewhat tempered by the fact it is homophonic with the more common expression, *zhichuang* (痔窗) or ‘hemorrhoids’.

Other proposals included: Harmonious Gate (和谐门), Happy Geometry (快乐几何), Peak of the Ages (时代之巅), New Angle (新角度), TV Magic Cube or TV Rubik’s Cube (TV魔方), Future Window (未来之窗), Great Gate of Luck (幸运之门), 3D Window (三维之窗) and, finally, Pattern Space (图案空间), a Chinese pun on CCTV. Astonishingly, none of these stuck, and Chinese netizens came up with such alternative descriptions as Wild Man (野人), Slanting Stride (斜步), Trestle (桁架), High Altitude Kiss (高空之吻) and Big Underpants (大内裤) which seems to be the most popular of all. The concreteness of the alternative metaphors is thoroughly in line with the style of OMA who often promote cartoony and zoomorphic interpretations of their buildings, as the illustrations in *Content* show.

The proliferation of names illustrates the deconstructionist commonplace that those aspects which let a shape suggest any one meaning usually also suggest many other meanings, including contradictory and unwanted ones. Pragmatically, polysemy is not very hard to achieve. True, Roland Barthes argued that the Eiffel Tower was the perfect monument because it meant everything and nothing, but the same might be true of quite a few other things as well.<sup>33</sup> The towers in Paris and Beijing attract readings because their massive size calls for a justification, not because their shape is particularly polyvalent or undecidable.

### Power

Given that it is notoriously difficult to determine—or, for that matter, design—such referential meanings, is it possible to articulate any of the performative meanings of OMA’s colossus? Koolhaas used to be an apostle for the Typical Plan and the Generic City, anonymous structures whose lack of identity was instrumental in generating new events. For his Chinese clients, and presumably for Prada and many others before, he dropped this argument in favor of a more

<sup>32</sup> See note 18.

<sup>33</sup> Barthes, Roland: *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*. Tr. Richard Howard. New York: Hill & Wang, 1979, p. 4 et passim.

traditional strategy of creating unique, iconic monuments.<sup>34</sup> Although OMA's Casa da Musica in Porto may turn out to define a new style—in Los Angeles there is a small house by Johnson Marklee Associates and in Prague another by KSA that seem to come from the same factory—the CCTV headquarters are not likely to suffer from any imitations in the foreseeable future. Of course, it is not as unique as the Phoenix: it could be related to Peter Eisenman's Max Reinhardt Tower or to Steven Holl's American Memorial Library, both projected for Berlin. Still, the lack of economic and structural rationality in the CCTV concept makes it unlikely to set a trend.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, as Scheeren likes to boast, the structure “breaks every single building code in China.” In order to give the design a building permit, the officials formed a special commission that overrode existing legislation.<sup>36</sup>

Of course, the whole complex was part of a larger building program that included the demolition of many hutongs.<sup>37</sup> Christophe Hawthorne, a critic for the *LA Times*, argues that “if officials clear out a vast tabula rasa in a prominent location and then give an architect the freedom to produce something truly innovative,

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34 Perhaps unfairly, Alex Pasternack claims that “design itself is not Koolhaas's strong suit; the shape of CCTV, for instance, was devised by a young associate at OMA, Fernando Donis: ‘I think if you asked Rem he would probably say he's a writer, not an architect,’ the former colleague added.” Pasternack, Alex: “Strange Loop.” *The National Newspaper*, Jan. 23, 2009. Online at <http://www.thenational.ae/article/20090123/REVIEW/926069221/1008>

According to OMA, the competition team included Rem Koolhaas, Ole Scheeren, Shohei Shigematsu, Alain Fouraux, Fernando Donis with Johannes Buchholz, Catarina Canas, Guillaume Colboc, Erez Ella, Mamen Escorihuela, Adrienne Fisher, Sarah Gibson, Anu Leinonen, Shiro Ogata, Tammo Prinz, Torsten Schröder, Hiromasa Shirai, L. E. Tsao, Victoria Willocks, Zhaohui Wu, Yimin Zhu. The construction was led by Ole Scheeren along with project manager Dongmei Yao, as well as project architects Anu Leinonen and Andre Schmidt.

35 Fong reports that Rocco Yim, one of the judges at the design competition that eventually picked the square tower, says he initially had great reservations about the “extremely irrational design.” But gradually he came to see it as representing “a certain spirit that is just what the new China is all about ... Irreverent, a can-do spirit, fearless and extremely confident.” Fong, see note 23.

36 MacLeod, Calum: “China puts twist on traditional skyscraper.” *USA Today*. Online at [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-01-16-chinatower\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-01-16-chinatower_N.htm)

See also note 21, and note 23.

37 For Koolhaas' sympathetic comments on the hutongs that were cleared away to make space for the CCTV, consult Glancey, Jonathan: “Welcome to the future.” *Guardian*, Aug. 27, 2007. Online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2007/aug/27/architecture.chinaarts2008>. Consult also Pasternack, Alex: “In the Ashes of Rem Koolhaas's TVCC, a Chance for Revision?” Online at [http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/03/rem-koolhaas-tvcc-fire-and-the-future-of-cities.php?dcite=TH\\_sbr\\_design](http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/03/rem-koolhaas-tvcc-fire-and-the-future-of-cities.php?dcite=TH_sbr_design)

*that very freedom* can become a mechanism for promoting state strength.”<sup>38</sup>

More symbolically, the formal language of the CCTV speaks of power. For Saffron, the CCTV Tower will always remind you of how small you are, and how big the state. A gravity-defying cantilever will make it clear to anyone standing beneath it who has the power to make things happen.<sup>39</sup>

Such feats are only possible with strong centralized power. Fully aware of this condition, Scheeren argues that “Historically architects have built for those in power. ... How else are great buildings made? Or paid for?”<sup>40</sup> If architecture necessarily has to comply with power, then it is logical to argue, as Koolhaas does, that “a position of resistance seems somehow ornamental... the more radical, innovative, and brotherly our sentiments, the more we architects need a strong sponsor.”<sup>41</sup>

Not surprisingly, Koolhaas likes to refer to “embedded activism”, a concept coined by Groningen professor Peter Ho.<sup>42</sup> While China has experienced an extraordinary economic development, there has been no radical political transformation. Nonetheless, a gradual shift towards a pluralist society has been consistent. China’s semi-authoritarian limitations on the freedom of association and speech are restrictive of, but according to Ho also conducive to, nationwide collective action with less risk of social instability and repression at the hand of the governing elite.

OMA’s intervention in Beijing may be seen as this kind of embedded activism, although in this case the activism does not spring out of a broad social basis but rather from foreign experts. Actually, *Vanity Fair* writer Kurt Andersen may have hit the mark best when he pointed out that “if the Chinese are deferring to and succeeding at the highest levels of global architectural taste, that’s one more way they’re acceding to the liberal global order.”<sup>43</sup> The CCTV building demonstrates how architecture can function as an agent of globalization, asserting the superiority of the Empire over a nation state. It does not affect the life of the em-

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38 Hawthorne, Christopher: “Beijing’s building boom, driven by the Olympics, mixes daring design with a totalitarian theme.” *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 3, 2008. Online at <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-ca-china-architecture3-2008aug03,0,5744284.story>.

39 See note 3.

40 See note 23.

41 See note 24.

42 Vriesekoop, Bettine: “Ingebed activisme; Rem Koolhaas over zijn gebouw voor de Chinese staatstelevisie.” *NRC Handelsblad*, 4.6.2008. Online at <http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/nl/business/frame.do?tokenKey=rsh-20.17>

43 Andersen, Kurt: “From Mao to Wow!” *Vanity Fair*, Aug 2008.

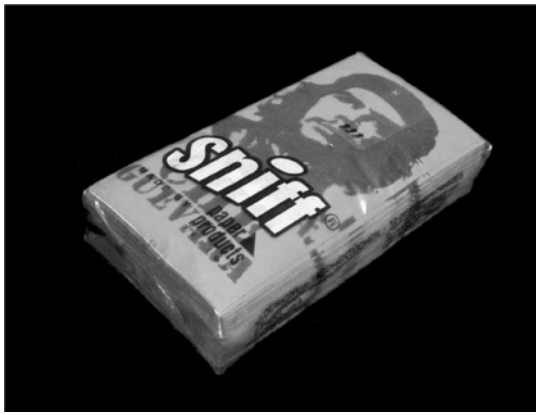


Fig. 6. Sniff tissue paper by Paperproducts Design GmbH, 2008.

ployees or the city's population directly but it may inculcate the values of Western high architecture—which may perhaps be described as liberal in some sense but which are also almost necessarily antagonistic to the values of the majority—in the Chinese elite and thereby affect the future development of Beijing.<sup>44</sup>

As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri acknowledge, the rise of the Empire is not a bad thing in every way.<sup>45</sup> There is no doubt that globalization has brought remarkable advantages in the economic, social and political realms to many countries across the world; the standard of living has often risen and political freedoms have been expanded for many people. However, it is not clear that Chinese leaders can substantially advance their society by embracing Western high architecture culture. Nor is the architecture vindicated by the fact that it is accepted by a political system different from the one that begot it. Such an acceptance could even be seen as a suggestion that this architecture has lost its capacity to effect change.

Maybe the global success of OMA can be compared with the famous photograph of Che Guevara that Alberto Korda Gutierrez took back in 1960.<sup>46</sup> In the fateful year of 1967, culminating in Che's demise in the small Bolivian pueblo of La Higuera, Korda gave two copies of the image to a foreigner whom he took for

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44 A Chinese news release comments on the design: "While elaborating on his design concept, Ram Koolhaas, designer of 'Z crisscross' said: 'It's the architecture that China needs—I bring it to you now!' Wu Yaodong, vice general architect of Tsinghua Architecture Design Institute, pointed out "The open attitude shown in selecting design schemes of this high caliber has surpassed the architecture itself." A member of the review committee said, 'the designer of the new CCTV (China Central Television) site changed from a domestic master to an international master. The pressure it brought is not whether the scheme is backward, but rather the futurist design may not be accepted by the general public'." China.org.cn by Wang Qian and Daragh Moller, "Four Great Buildings to Shape Olympic Beijing." January 16, 2004. Online at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Jan/84895.htm>

45 Hardt, Michael; Negri, Antonio: *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. v, 42-63, *et passim*.

46 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrillero\\_Heroico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrillero_Heroico).



a supporter of the cause but who actually was Italian publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. Soon, images of Che started to appear on posters and later on T-shirts, beach towels, napkins, energy drink cans and so on all over the Western world, without Korda ever receiving any royalties. According to the Victoria & Albert Museum, Korda's photo has been reproduced more than any other image in the history of photography. The successful dissemination of the Che portrait is proof that it carries no political meaning and posits no threat. The success of global architecture is a similar proof of its political conservativeness: it makes no difference (fig. 6).



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# WORLD STAGES FOR LADY JUSTICE

## *Some Notes on the Architectural Representation of International Criminal Courts*

In February 2008 an architectural competition was launched to design the permanent premises of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, thus adding another cornerstone for the city to become “the legal capital of the world”.<sup>1</sup> The call for tenders notably stresses the prestige of the assignment:

“The International Criminal Court premises and buildings should immediately be perceived as reflecting the Court’s identity. The Court’s main facade should serve as a timeless image symbolizing its principal mission: to bring to justice the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.”<sup>2</sup>

This demand for an architectural component of its corporate identity also reflects the intent to express the legitimacy of the ICC as a supranational institution. It is, first of all, an ethical legitimacy. The crimes of global concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression are defined in the Rome-Statute, the treaty which established the Court and was negotiated at a diplomatic conference held in Rome 1998.<sup>3</sup> The idea of setting up

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1 Cf. website of the City of The Hague [www.denhaag.com](http://www.denhaag.com), *passim*.

2 *Informal summary of design requirements*, Public Affairs Unit of the International Criminal Court, February 2009, p. 6.

3 For full text of the Rome-Statute of the International Criminal Court see <http://untreaty.un.org/cod/icc/statute/romeofra.htm> [2009-07-01].

such an institution gained momentum through demands by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1947 and was reconsidered constantly ever since; the ICC, however, was not set up as an organ of the UN but as an independent organisation with an independent budget, sustained by contributions of the about 100 states that signed and ratified the treaty.<sup>4</sup>

In its Preamble the state parties declare their consciousness “that all peoples are united by common bonds, their cultures pieced together in a shared heritage” and that they are “concerned that this delicate mosaic may be shattered at any time.”<sup>5</sup> This statement implies that the aforementioned crimes violate ‘essential values of justice’ and therefore affect the global community, no matter where they take place. That is why the call for tenders demands the design of the permanent premises to “also reflect the fact that the International Criminal Court is an international Court with a universal vocation, and seeks well-balanced representation of the entire international community and a place at the heart of that community.”<sup>6</sup>

The explicit mentioning of a ‘universal’ vocation touches on yet another and much more problematic aspect of the Court’s legitimacy: its political significance. In the international criminal justice system individuals, not states are accused of violations of international law.<sup>7</sup> But since those individuals are citizens of nation states, and therefore legally responsible to their national authorities as well as protected by them, the state parties of the Rome-Statute are obliged to hand over part of their sovereign rights to a supranational institution. Otherwise the ICC would hardly get hold of the accused and thus would not be able to operate. Obviously the ICC interferes deeply with the concept of national sovereignty, which is widely considered as the main reason why some of the most powerful nations, such as Russia, China, the United States or India, have not signed or ratified the Statute.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the ICC does not yet have the authority of a universally supported institution. And yet, the claim for it does nonetheless persist.

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4 See Antonio Cassese: “From Nuremberg to Rome. International Military Tribunals to the International Criminal Court.” In: Antonio Cassese / Paola Gaeta / John R. W. D. Jones (eds.): *The Rome Statute of The International Criminal Court. A Commentary*, vol. I, Oxford 2002, pp. 3–22.

5 See note 3, Preamble.

6 See note 2, p. 6.

7 This was implemented for the first time in the Nuremberg Trial after World War II. It meant a milestone in the process not only of accepting human rights as one of the foundations of international law but also of implementing them as a legal reality.

8 U.S. signature was suspended from the treaty by former president George W. Bush shortly after the ICC began its work. The Obama administration indicates a new approach towards the ICC, but has not yet taken any respective formal policy steps.

As a consequence, the ICC could be seen as a symptom or even an instrument of passage to Empire's sovereignty, as described in Hardt's and Negri's book. The Court's principal mission coincides with some of the central qualities these authors attribute to 'Empire': „The arsenal of legitimate force for imperial intervention is [...] vast, and should include not only military intervention but also other forms such as moral intervention and juridical intervention. In fact, the Empire's powers of intervention might be best understood as beginning not directly with its weapons of lethal force but rather with its moral instruments.”<sup>9</sup>

In their conception of Empire there can also be found a parallel to the 'universal vocation' stated in the guidelines for the ICC competition: “Empire is characterized fundamentally by a lack of boundaries: Empire's rule has no limits. [...] Empire posits a regime that effectively encompasses the spatial totality, or really that rules over the entire 'civilized' world.”<sup>10</sup> This lack of boundaries does not only apply to space but also to time: “although the practice of Empire is continually bathed in blood, the concept of Empire is always dedicated to peace—a perpetual and universal peace outside of history.”<sup>11</sup> I cannot discuss here in detail Hardt's and Negri's criticism of the instruments of 'imperial intervention', which is aimed mainly at non-governmental organisations. Although the International Criminal Court is not explicitly mentioned in “Empire”, it is clear that the authors would consider this supranational institution as a means of establishing a new world order.<sup>12</sup> What part the international criminal justice system takes in the emerging of this order is a matter of discussion in social and legal sciences.<sup>13</sup>

However, a brief look at the design requirements for the permanent premises of the ICC reveals that the organization is determined to have its new seat become part of the global political iconography. Debating the role of 'architecture

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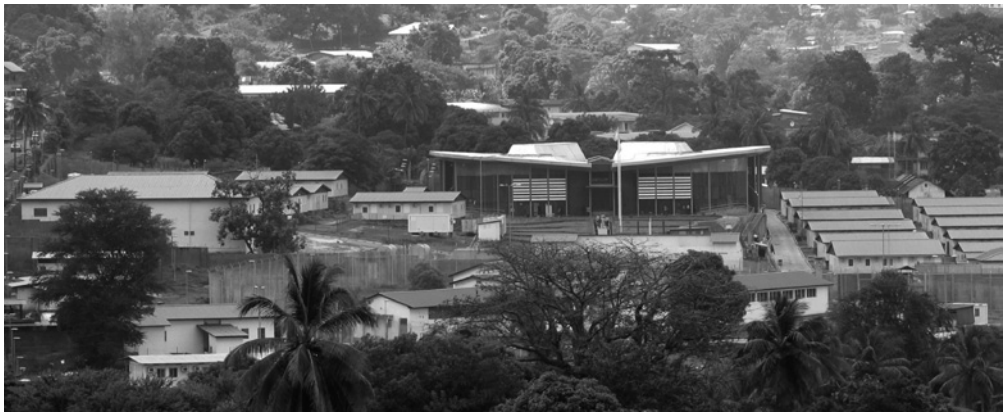
9 Michael Hardt / Antonio Negri: *Empire*, Cambridge (Mass.)/London 2000, p. 35.

10 Ibid., p. xiv.

11 Ibid., p. xv.

12 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 38: “The active parties supporting the imperial constitution are confident that when the construction of Empire is sufficiently advanced, the [international or supranational] courts will be able to assume their leading role in the definition of justice. For now, however, although international courts do not have much power, public displays of their activities are still very important. [...] Courts will have to be transformed gradually from an organ that simply decrees sentences against the vanquished to a judicial body or system of bodies that dictate and sanction the interrelation among the moral order, the exercise of police action, and the mechanism legitimating imperial sovereignty.”

13 See for example, Steven C. Roach: *Politicizing the International Criminal Court. The Convergence of Politics, Ethics, and Law*, Lanham 2006; Anne-Marie Slaughter: *A New World Order*, Princeton/London 2004.



in the age of Empire', a closer examination of this process might therefore be of interest.

The ICC is not the first international criminal tribunal for which a building was specifically designed. Since the Nuremberg Trial, which started in 1945, several similar tribunals have preceded the ICC. However, each of them was established *ad hoc* with a temporally and geographically limited jurisdiction, as for instance the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia. All of them were installed in already existing facilities (such as local courts of law, military academies, conference centres, office complexes), which were adapted to the needs of international criminal trials.

When the civil war of Sierra Leone ended in 2002, an agreement was made between the United Nations and the local government to launch a Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).<sup>14</sup> The tribunal is a so-called 'hybrid' international court, for it will not only apply international criminal law but also the national law of Sierra Leone (unlike e.g. the tribunals for Rwanda or former Yugoslavia). Creating the tribunal in the place where the crimes had occurred was an experiment in some respect, as was the involvement of local institutions. It was an attempt to integrate criminal justice into the process of coping with the most recent traumatic history, thus making it part of the mental and moral restoration of the nation. The former president of the SCSL, Geoffrey Robertson, described this as the chance "of delivering justice when and where it matters—where it can be seen to be done by those who need it", because the "presence of the court in Freetown symbolises the nation's emergence from the moral and physical degradation of the war: the process of prosecution and punishment of any who can be proved [...] to bear greatest responsibility will permit some sense of closure for all living victims and advance the broader goal of sustainable peace, through the nation's return to the rule of law."<sup>15</sup>

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14 For full text of the Statute of the SCSL see [www.sc-sl.org/ABOUT/tabid/70/Default.aspx](http://www.sc-sl.org/ABOUT/tabid/70/Default.aspx) [2009-07-01].

15 First Annual Report of the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (Dec 2002 – Dec

*Opposite page:*

*fig. 1: Special Court for Sierra Leone, Freetown, aerial view.*

*Right: fig. 2: Special Court for Sierra Leone, Freetown, construction work.*



In March 2004, only two years after the SCSL started its work in the capital of Sierra Leone, the tribunal was able to move into the courthouse designed by the London-based practice Norman & Dawbarn. [fig. 1 & 2]

The site of the SCSL really became a landmark, although one based on the process of building and running it, rather than through its visual impact alone.<sup>16</sup> Aesthetically the site seems rather peculiar: The courthouse stands on the side of a hill, overlooking its smooth and terraced slope. Stonewalls mark the different levels of the lawn and the garden design remotely recalls the drive-up to the Parliament of Sierra Leone on a nearby hill, which is an architectural symbol for the national sovereignty since it was built (after plans by Dov and Ram Karmi) in 1961/62, as Sierra became independent from the United Kingdom.<sup>17</sup> The law court is a decidedly modern and, concerning its architectural surroundings, extravagant wing-roofed structure. The architects chose a mixture of concrete, glass and wooden panels as main materials. The latter seemingly manage, along with the porch-like effect of the protruding roof, to give the building a ‘tropical’ touch. It serves as a condign and memorable background for press photos showing the reunions of the judges or internationally renowned politicians who come here to visit the site and observe the work of the tribunal. The inside of the courtrooms however, from where most of the images of the SCSL are aired across

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2003), p.3, see “Documents” on [www.sc-sl.org](http://www.sc-sl.org) [2009-07-01].

16 Robertson: The court “will provide a legacy for this recovering nation not merely by building and leaving behind an impressive, modern courthouse and by providing training and experience for local lawyers, investigators and administrators”, *ibid*.

17 The following quote from the Parliament’s website illustrates this symbolic significance of the building: “His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent G.C.V.O. ceremonially opened the country’s unicameral House of Parliament on 26th April 1961 and the ceremony of independence from monarchical rule was held in the oriental, dome-shaped Chamber of Parliament the following day 27th April. Parliament Building is a solid House built on a rock foundation, a House that towers on the crown of a hill to proclaim the values of democracy and good governance.” See [parliamentsl.org/overview.htm](http://parliamentsl.org/overview.htm) [2009-07-01].

the globe,<sup>18</sup> are of an introvert demure design. White walls prevail here over the glass and wood, foreclosing the outside completely. The shape of the building was announced as “reflecting the internationally-recognised image of the scales of justice”.<sup>19</sup> Although the image of the scales may derive from the architects’ concept sketches and very likely inspired the process of design, it can hardly be identified by those who are not familiar with the suggested association. More likely the aforementioned statement in turn reflects a longing for an immediately understandable ‘architecture parlante’. Taken literally, this would have meant a burden on the architects, which would have been hard to accomplish without compromising the rigorous and complex spatial programme of the building. But even more revealing—concerning the symbolic quality of the SCSL’s premises—may be the composition of the whole site. The prestigious courthouse is surrounded by pre-fabricated, container-sized structures, which house the offices of registry, chambers and prosecution—the “ramshackle huts”, as they were once called by the press.<sup>20</sup> With their special blue roofs these huts gather around the courthouse as if they were UN soldiers wearing their blue helmets. The containers were made in Slovenia, shipped to Freetown and reassembled in very little time. The main goal must have been to set up simple and effective working places. The same priority was also applied in purchasing the equipment (e.g. furniture, books, computers) out of contributions from diverse countries and organizations. In the current situation of rebuilding Sierra Leone, this provisional arrangement and the obvious emphasis on the tribunal’s legal work may well give a stronger image of justice than any ‘representative’ architecture could do. This concurs with the judicial constitution of the SCSL as a hybrid tribunal: joining the international criminal justice system with national law largely inhibits to associate the tribunal’s work with unwelcome alien influence, in particular with ‘victor’s justice’. When the work of the court will be finished in 2010/11 the containers can be removed. They leave behind the courtroom building, which might continue to function as a national monument. At the moment, this symbolic legacy is also a heavy burden for Freetown, because the subsequent use of the building remains unclear and the maintenance costs are high.<sup>21</sup>

18 I.e. some of the trials can be observed via video transmission, cf. [www.sc-sl.org/PRESSROOM/tabid/73/Default.aspx](http://www.sc-sl.org/PRESSROOM/tabid/73/Default.aspx)

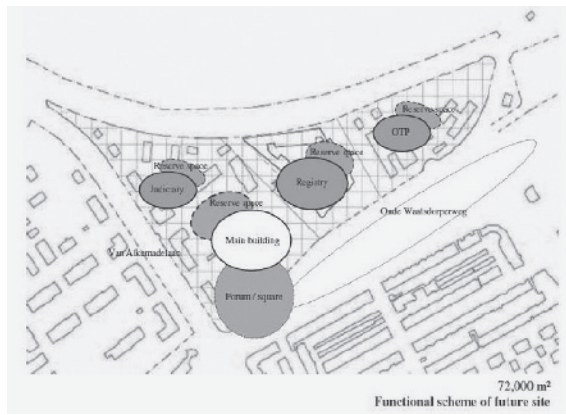
19 SCSL Press Release Oct 3 2003, see “Pressroom” on [www.sc-sl.org](http://www.sc-sl.org).

20 Tim Butcher: *Ramshackle huts in Africa offer clue to how justice may be done*, in: *news.telegraph.co.uk* [filed 2003-12-16].

21 The SCSL’s 7th Annual Report (2009/2010, p. 48, see “Documents” on [www.sc-sl.org](http://www.sc-sl.org) [2010-10-04]) reports of plans for the future use of the site by the Government of Sierra Leone: “The pre-



fig. 3: Future International Criminal Court, The Hague, functional scheme.



The realisation of the permanent premises for the International Criminal Court in The Hague runs in the opposite direction. Whereas the ICC started to work as of 2003 on preliminary premises it was only in 2008 when the architectural competition started. After a suitable site was found near the coast of the North Sea (a former military casern), 171 applications were submitted from all over the world. After pre-selections 19 proposals remained, among them David Chipperfield Architects, Sauerbruch Hutton, Moshe Safdie and Associates, and OMA. The winning practices were Düsseldorf-based Ingenhoven Architects, Schmidt Hammer & Lassen with Bosch & Fjord from Århus in Denmark and the Dutch practice Wiel Arets Architects.

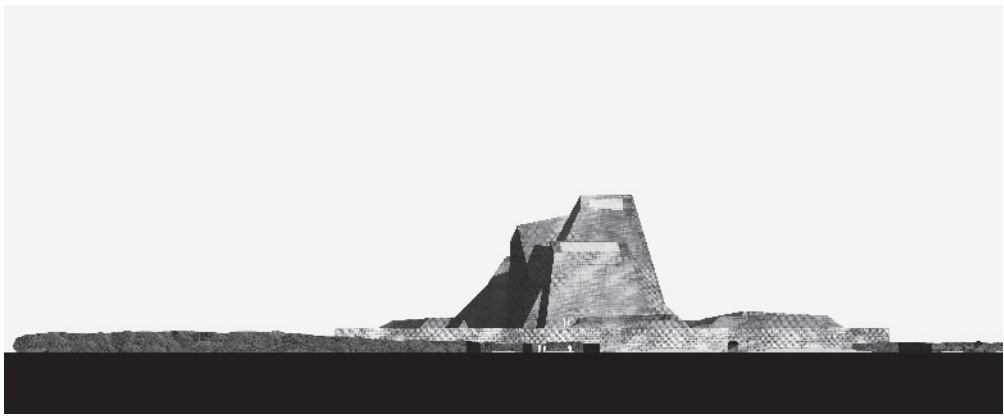
The design requirements draft a spatial programme that separates “clearly and visibly” the workstations of chambers, registry and prosecution from the courtroom area and supplying facilities.<sup>22</sup> Naturally, special attention should be given to the placing and design of the courtrooms: two medium-sized courtrooms are needed for standard hearings plus one larger courtroom for trials of particular political and public interest. The site should be used economically, so that further extensions would be possible. [fig. 3]

Interestingly, the aesthetical and symbolical qualities demanded in the call for tenders seem to be much more challenging than to accommodate the spatial programme. As I pointed out at the beginning, these demands are even predominant in the requirements. „The ICC is expected to become a prestigious institution on the world stage. Its significance and status as an enduring symbol of international criminal justice will gradually increase. The permanent premises

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ferences included using the Courthouse as the seat of a regional court or the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone, establishing an international/regional/national judicial training centre, a museum and a specialised prison. [...]The Court is in the process of applying for a \$165,700 grant from the Peacebuilding Fund to establish a Peace Museum on the Court’s site that, alongside a memorial and exhibition, would house a public copy of the Court’s archives.”

<sup>22</sup> The workstations of registry, chambers and prosecution would require about 18.200 qm<sup>2</sup>; public and semi-public areas 9.100 qm<sup>2</sup>; services, supplying facilities, equipment about 18.200 qm<sup>2</sup>.



must reflect this stature and importance. The international media will add a visual dimension to the perception of the Court by the outside world by presenting images and pictures of both the exterior and interior [...] The permanent premises will [...] become the public face of the institution—an emblem of fairness and dignity and a symbol of justice and hope.”<sup>23</sup> Dignity is an attribute that in the history of architectural iconography was mainly expressed by forms representing a religious order; or, more importantly, an order maintained by powers which ruled by physical force. In contrast, the paper explains the nature of the order that rules the ICC: “the premises must fully reflect the Court’s character and identity as a *permanent, effective, functioning, independent and therefore credible*” institution.<sup>24</sup> The order of the rule of law is certainly something the design should evoke, but this rule is not to be perceived as brute force but, much more subtly, as the superior power of civilization, whose attributes are stated in the call for tenders as fairness, dignity, justice, hope. This really seemed to be the key to success in the competition. The jury clearly preferred designs that associate fairness, hope, and justice with effectiveness and transparent functionality to spectacular and easily recognizable architectural icons. [fig. 4 & 5]

For example of the winning designs Wiel Arets Architects convey the most inventive image. But the Jury seem to be almost uncomfortable with this “powerful statement”,<sup>25</sup> as if there was a discrepancy between a strong image and the court’s aim for openness and efficiency. The cones which mark the courtrooms and rise high above the connective structure appear “rather introvert”. Whereas the architects wanted to create a contemplative working environment, the appearance of such an environment seems to interfere with the ubiquitous demand for transparency.

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<sup>23</sup> See note 2., p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> [www.icc-architectural-competition.com/pages/results/prize-winners/3rd.php](http://www.icc-architectural-competition.com/pages/results/prize-winners/3rd.php) [2009-07-01].

*Opposite Page:*  
*fig. 4: Design for the*  
*ICC's Permanent*  
*Premises: Wiel Arets*  
*Architects.*

*Right: fig. 5: Design*  
*for the ICC's Perma-*  
*nent Premises: Sprin-*  
*gall + Lira.*



“The area of the ICC premises that is open to the public must be perceived as secure (but not as a fortress), people-friendly, comfortable and accessible to all.”<sup>26</sup> Antithetical phrases like that are scattered throughout the text of the design requirements in numbers. Additionally, special security features such as extra accesses, detention rooms and other limitations clearly hinder the realisation of a transparent appearance. The boundaries within the site that separate the different areas have to be physically present and perceptible, but at the same time they should be made permeable for the mind: “The entrance cluster should make visitors feel welcome, despite the security checks. It should also serve as an educational space where the public can learn basic facts about the Court.”<sup>27</sup> This aims not at a disintegration of boundaries, but at their recognition and acceptance. One could recognize this to be a facet of transparency, which is also a key concept in most of the contributions to the competition. In order to prevent the barriers from creating an atmosphere of intimidation, it is particularly stressed that “the premises must be unobtrusive and on a human scale, while at the same time symbolizing the eminence and authority of the Court.”<sup>28</sup> How can this be achieved, when many people will experience eminence and authority as obtrusive?

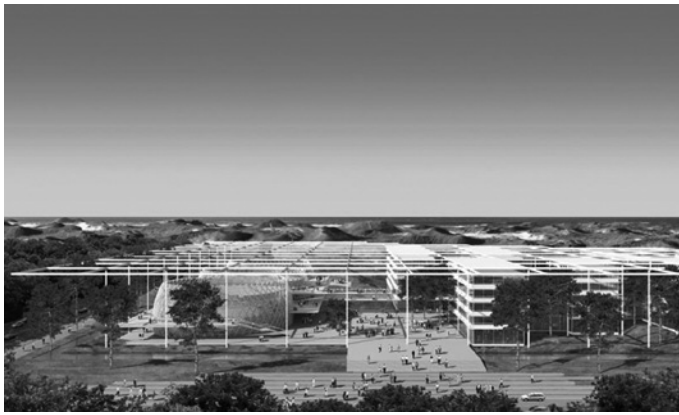
In this regard it is not surprising that the jury preferred Ingenhoven’s proposal to more iconic designs as for example Wiel Arets Dolomite range or Springall + Liras concept, which boldly allows to associate the tribunal with a sports arena.

The winner assembles all different sections and functions of the premises under one big roof which is an easily intelligible metaphor for the global community united by a universal understanding of justice. [fig. 6] Underneath, no part of the complex claims to be central or predominant. The biggest of the courtrooms stands somewhat aside from the agora-called square at the main entrance. But I think what really made the jury call the winning design a ‘happy house’ is the

<sup>26</sup> See note 2, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 6.



*fig. 6: Winning design for the ICC's Permanent Premises: Ingenhoven Architects.*

sublimation of the crudeness of matter, which is particularly highlighted in Ingenhoven's renderings. Here the stilt-like pillars and glassy facades produce spatial demarcations that seem to consist more of light than of matter.

The architect claims that he literally wanted to 'pull' the surrounding dunescape further towards the city so that "the new court building hovers above in a light and un-obstructive manner".<sup>29</sup> One might think, as many critics do, that his design would be so un-obstructive that it simply would slip everybody's mind. Yet questioning the decision of the Jury is not my interest here, but rather to inquire the preconditions of this decision. It seems to me, that in order to win the battle of attention some of the competing designs invent architectural icons which inevitably drift towards monumentality. However, monumentality lost its moral credibility in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A rather blatant iconography of power might still work as a trademark of finance, the hotel industry or serve the preposterous symbolism of totalitarian or half-democratic regimes, but setting up the corporate identity of the global community today would require a more sensitive handling of architectural representation. From this point of view Ingenhoven's unobtrusive composition and its careful inclusion of the landscape seems only appropriate. Without being transformed into gardens, nature - metaphorically speaking - may remain 'the other'. Thus the design interprets a quality of civilization which is implied in the call for tenders as well as in the Rome-Statute: that is, a culture of exchange on the basis of respect and preservation of the endangered.

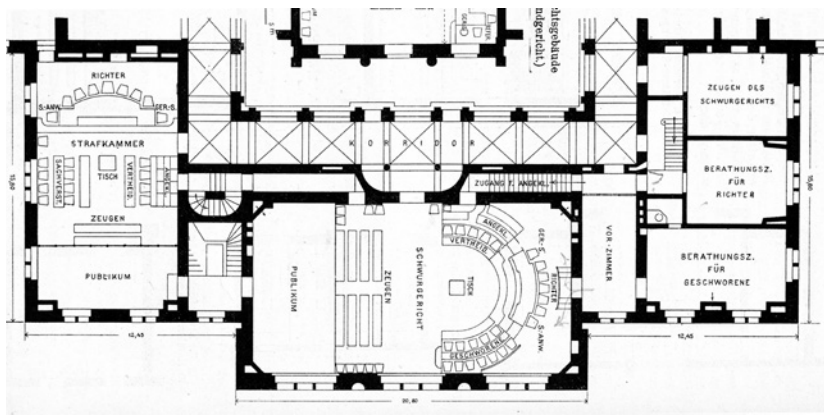
To understand the intellectual or rather cultural conditions that affect the architect's invention as well as the decision of the jury, I will now briefly review the political iconography of this building type.

Court houses developed into an autonomous type of building during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, alongside the process of judicial reform after the separation

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<sup>29</sup> See Ingenhoven's English website, description of projects: [www.ingenhovenarchitects.com](http://www.ingenhovenarchitects.com) [2009-07-01].

fig. 7: Exemplary floor plan of a jury court room and arbitrary court room, Higher Regional Court Cologne, 1896.



of powers was politically realized in the respective western countries.<sup>30</sup> Before that time most of the judicial proceedings were conducted in written form. As with many other activities of urban life before the social differentiation of the modern age, legal offices of the state were housed in the big-scale buildings of the community, mostly the local town halls or the palaces of the ruling nobility.<sup>31</sup> As it became necessary to attend criminal trials in person, a spatial structure was applied to the courtroom comparable to that of a theatre.<sup>32</sup>

This pattern of staging the trial continues up to this day, as does the general spatial programme that differentiates the distinctive areas: the areas of public access, i. e. the entrance hall, the stairways, vestibules, waiting rooms (“salles des pas perdus”); semi-public areas like the proper court room.<sup>33</sup> Their internal structure differs somewhat according to the type of the tribunal (e. g. a jury court or an arbitral court) as can be seen in figure 7. Then there are the non-public

30 Of course, history knows earlier examples of distinctive buildings for law courts like the Palais de Justice in Rouen (1499-1543), Rennes (1618-26) or Paris (which is in fact an architectural ensemble with its main parts deriving from the 18th to the 19th centuries). But as the other French term for denoting them – „parlement“ – indicates, their function was to house the council of the King, thus connecting the notion of Justice still directly to the political sovereign and not as a sovereign power itself.

31 Cf. Nikolaus Pevsner, who treats town halls and law courts in the same chapter of his “A History of Building Types”, London 1976, pp. 53–62.

32 Cf. Katherine Fischer Taylor: *In the Theater of Criminal Justice. The Palais de Justice in Second Empire*, Paris/ Princeton 1993. Piyel Haldar adds another derivation for this staging, which is yet, revealingly enough, related to the theatre: „from the seventeenth century onward English common law completely eliminates the medieval conceptualization of law as a form of ‚art‘. Yet the image of law remains one of splendid environments within which the arcane and esoteric rituals of trial procedure are conducted.“ Haldar: “The Function of the Ornament in Quintilian, Alberti, and Court Architecture.” In: Costas Douzinas /Lynda Nead (eds.): *Law and the Image. The Authority of Art and the Aesthetics of Law*, Chicago/London 1999, pp. 117–136, here p. 117.

33 Cf. Steven Flanders (ed.): *Celebrating the Courthouse. A Guide for Architects, Their Clients, and the Public*, New York/London 2006, pp. 81–109.

areas with the bureaus of prosecution, the judges, registry, protocol etc., and last but not least the detention units for the accused. In contrast to the stability of this spatial programme of court buildings, the means of symbolic representation changes remarkably throughout history. Although attempts to create a new building type have been made,<sup>34</sup> the majority of actually realized law courts lend their patterns of dignity on the representations of bygone authority, mostly on town halls, on castles or palaces like the Justizpalast in Munich (Friedrich von Thiersch, 1890–97) or the Palazzo di Giustizia (Guglielmo Calderini, 1886–1910) in Rome, even on monasteries like the Royal Courts of Justice in London (George Edmund Street, 1866–82). As has been said before, in this kind of buildings the institutions were formerly housed. Imitating their often-feudal archetypes, the design had mostly the effect to inform the individual of the sovereignty of the law equally reigning above all citizens. Lady Justice was thus visualized not only as the principle that one can rely on, but also as a power that has to be feared. In fact Boullée builds the solemn symbolism of his Law Courts design almost entirely from the combination of power and fear.<sup>35</sup> With very rare exceptions court house architecture follows this monumental iconography of intimidation throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Notorious is Brussels’ Palace of Justice (Joseph Polaert, 1868–83) whose pompous appearance even Pevsner leaves to a poet to describe (Paul Verlaine): “There is something of the Tower of Babel, plus Michelangelo, with a bit of Piranesi, and a dash—one may say—of madness... Outside, it is a colossus, inside a monster. It wants to be immense, and it is.”<sup>36</sup>

Comparable forms of representing the sovereignty of national law were also applied to the design of the first supranational institution, the Permanent Court of Arbitration, for which the so-called Peace Palace was built between 1907 and 1913 in The Hague. It later housed the Permanent International Court of Justice, a neutral place where the state parties could mediate the more serious conflicts of their foreign affairs. The architectural competition for this first International Court

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34 Of which Boullée’s design for a law court building might be the most ambitious. But despite its rigorous forms it is very hard to distinguish the ‘caractère’ of the Law Court from that of other buildings for public institutions which Boullée designed, as he points out himself. See Étienne-Louis Boullée: *Architecture. Essai sur l’art* (1793), Paris 1968, pp. 113–14.

35 „Il m’a semblé qu’en présentant cet auguste palais élevé sur l’antre ténébreux du crime, je pourrais non seulement faire valoir la noblesse de l’architecture par les oppositions qui en résulteraient, mais encore présenter d’une manière métaphorique le tableau imposant des vices accablés sous le poids de la justice,” *ibid.*, p. 113.

36 Verlaine translated by Nikolaus Pevsner, see note 30, p. 58.

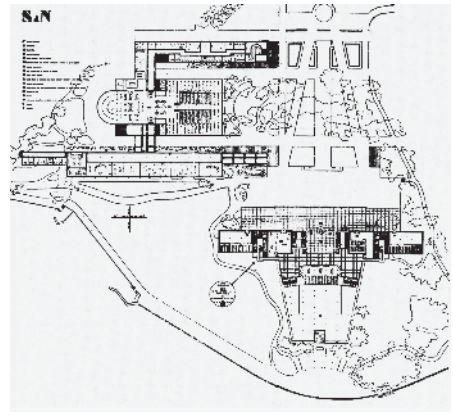


fig. 8: Design for the Palace of the League of Nations Geneva, Le Corbusier/Pierre Jeanneret, 1926.

produced designs that were immediately judged as being mediocre or as showing excessive pathos.<sup>37</sup> The more progressive architects of that time, such as Peter Behrens, Henry van de Velde, Auguste Perret or Adolf Loos did not participate in the competition. Of the more commonly renowned architects only Hendrik Petrus Berlage and Otto Wagner submitted designs. The winner of the competition was Louis Marie Cordonnier, an architect who worked mostly in the northern part of France. His design might have appealed to the jury because of its reminiscence of northern renaissance. With its two belfries it recalled the purlieu of European cities of the later Middle Ages and early modern period, thus bringing to mind an era when humanist ideas and ‘modern’ systems of trade and finance emerged. Despite its retrospective appearance it might have emanated some air of upheaval, of the onset of new times, but it failed to create a memorable and recognizable image fitting for the milestone the court truly was in the history of international law.

A similar and in some respect even increased pathos can be observed in the competition for the headquarters of the League of Nations in Geneva, which was held in 1926. Most of the submissions show variations on what Kenneth Frampton called crypto-classical monumentality.<sup>38</sup> What most of the entries have in common is the accumulation of masses towards the centre and how their decorum serves mainly to enhance this scheme of composition. Two designs stand out because of their radical modern appeal: that of Hannes Meyer with Hans Wittwer and the one of Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, for which the competition is now primarily remembered. [fig. 8] Le Corbusier’s approach is far less overtly monumental and places the complex sensitively into the landscape, thus overcoming

37 Cf. Ids Haagsma / Hilde de Haan: *Architekten-Wettbewerbe. Internationale Konkurrenz der letzten 200 Jahre* (orig. *Architecten als rivalen*, Naarden 1988), Stuttgart 1988, pp. 104–113.

38 Cf. Kenneth Frampton: “Le Corbusier in Genf: Das Debakel des Völkerbunds.” In: Haagsma / de Haan: see note 36, pp. 192–203; Sigfried Giedion: “Wer baut das Völkerbundgebäude? Teuere Stilarchitektur – neuzeitliche zweckmäßige Lösungen,” in: *Bauwelt* Nr. 44 (1927), pp. 1093–98; Heidede Becker: *Geschichte der Architektur- und Städtebauwettbewerbe*, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln 1992, pp. 237–41.

the quite alienating and empty monumentality of the competing designs. However, it is even more significant how Le Corbusier structured the space of the site. Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky analyzed the different meanings of the concept of transparency on the basis of Le Corbusier's project for the palace of nations.<sup>39</sup> Transparency, as one might summarise their study dating from 1955, can be perceived as a translucent quality of matter, most apparently through the use of glass. Furthermore, there is a concept of transparency quite distinct from any physical quality of substance. Rowe and Slutzky call it a phenomenal or seeming transparency, which should be understood as spatial ambiguity, an interpenetration of different spatial layers, that allows for alternative readings of the structure of space. For Rowe and Slutzky this ambiguity displays a particular aesthetic quality of Le Corbusier's work. However, they miss to conclude that there is an eminent political dimension attached to the aesthetic: the suspension of a dominant centre. The authors' observation that the central area of the site is not a *cour d'honneur* to the Auditorium, as might seem at first, is therefore doubly true. After the visitor would have passed the line of trees that form a semi-permeable barrier at the entrance of the site, he would become successively aware of the complex spatial relationships in which the terrace is engaged. The "lack of focus compels his eye to slide along this facade, it is again irretrievably drawn sideways, to the view of the gardens and the lake beyond."<sup>40</sup>

As Rowe and Slutzky put it, the complex would have been "a monumental debate, an argument."<sup>41</sup> Its different parts do not subdue one another or the surrounding open space. This is quite the opposite of the hierarchical order displayed by the competing designs and thus would have given an appropriate architectural symbol for the multilateral formation of the League of Nations. It should be added, however, that this experience requests an ideal observer, one that would not only be extraordinarily receptive, but also fully conscious of his perceptions.

Although I would not subsume Ingenhoven's design for the ICC under this same understanding of transparency (here the 'literal' transparency of transparent materials is predominant, not a spatial ambiguity), we see an effort similar to Le Corbusier's design to implement a polyvalent and unobtrusive composition in order to develop a suitable design for a multi-national institution. In both cases

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39 Colin Rowe / Robert Slutzky: *Transparency* (1955), Basel/Boston 1997.

40 Rowe / Slutzky: "Transparency. Literal and phenomenal." In: *Perspecta*, vol. 8 (1963), pp. 45–54, here p. 53.

41 Ibid.



this should be achieved through genuinely spatial experience rather than through imagery, and it is obvious that this experience is difficult to be captured in two-dimensional images. Since representation with the latter kind of imagery is predominant in our times, the adequacy of both compositions might be too subtle an aesthetic means to be communicated via global media.

Whereas in the realized palace for the League of Nations the traditional aesthetics of superelevation and intimidation are still present, more diverse interpretations of what the dignity of law shall look like evolve in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here we can observe very clearly to what extent the answers to this challenge depend on the local and historical context. To state just one example: In West-Germany after World-War II, many court houses were built or re-built of decidedly humble designs. This was not entirely due to economical reasons. Their mere functionality and total lack of pathos was widely recognized as “lucid dignity”,<sup>42</sup> a sort of purification after the climax of intimidating monumentality that Nazi-architecture stood for. In time the former palaces of Justice became “Justizzentren”—mere facilities for legal affairs, which in turn developed discouraging images eventually, namely that of bureaucracy and anonymity, as is the case e.g. in Hendrik Buschs Justizzentrum in Cologne (1977–81). Although it is self-evident it must be stated that building for justice never escapes the ebbs and tides of architectural styles. After all, this challenge continues to be an outstandingly prestigious task. “If justice needs to be seen to be done, if it has to be ostentatious, it is because law continues to demand faith. Law needs to stand out from the mundanity of other institutions and therefore needs an ornate architecture.”<sup>43</sup> Whether justice should be emblemized through an iconic architectural sculpture or through a reserved and ‘functional’ apparatus, whether it should allude traditional and regional forms or make a decidedly abstract or utopian gesture is a complex decision of a community and cannot always be linked as easily to a socio-historical realm as with the example of post-war Germany. With these rather simple oppositions in mind, Le Corbusier’s High Court in Chandigarh (1950–57) opposes Mies’ (et al.) Courthouse in Chicago (1964–73) or the Palais de Justice in Montréal (by Boulva/David, completed 1971); Jean Nouvel’s classicist Palais de Justice in Nantes (completed 2000) stands against Richard Rogers futuristic Eu-

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42 As local Berlin press described a county court building in Berlin by Walter Marksches (1953/54), which nowadays is widely regarded as a negative example of post-war-era’s architecture.

43 Haldar, see note 31, p. 135.



*fig. 9: Rendering of the design for the ICC's Permanent Premises: Ingenhoven Architects.*

ropean Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (1989–95); Ada Karmi-Melamede's and Ram Karmi's Supreme Court in Jerusalem (1986–92) opposes the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg (from Jamagne/Elst's first building of 1973 to Dominique Perrault's recently finished extensions).

Although these buildings and complexes are impressive monuments, a general tendency “to democratize the law, to flatten the hierarchical structure, and to disguise the alienating atmosphere of ‚super ordination’ in the courtroom”<sup>44</sup> can be observed. In order to balance the desire for outstanding architectural icons with the demand for making the democratic anchoring of justice visible, Madrid's immense project for a “City of Justice” (in construction since 2008) chooses to assemble 15 distinct buildings on a campus, each one dedicated to a special area of law.<sup>45</sup> Madrid's master plan obliges the architects (among them world-leading practices like Foster, Hadid, Rogers) to use circular designs, thus basing the diverse elevation of the complex on what is possibly the most universal symbol of order.

The point of this very brief and incomplete historical (de)tour was to demonstrate to what extent the representation of justice depends on the context. Even though the basic concept of justice might be universal and timeless, it is not justice itself which becomes emblematic but rather its attributes, accentuated by the respective temporal and local situation—may they be the rule or power of the law (monumentality/intimidation), its neutrality and effectiveness (transparency, display of structures/functionality), multilateralism (decentralized composition), etc. Therefore it seems quite impossible to create a “timeless image” of Justice as was the ambition of the ICC according to the design guidelines for its permanent premises—at least if one does not want to fall back on Justice's most primal at-

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. [www.campusjusticia.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=section&id=4&Itemid=27](http://www.campusjusticia.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=4&Itemid=27) [2009-07-01].

tribute, namely order that also comes as the primal characteristic of architecture even in the most deconstructivist composition. Ingenhoven describes his winning design as an attempt towards a ‘universal architectural language’, one that might be understood by all peoples, and he decisively rejects the concept of monumentality in western tradition.<sup>46</sup> What makes most sense here are the words “an attempt towards”, and that is already quite something to wish for. I doubt that there is an evolution towards the right architectural representation of justice, only a history of attempts to do so. Demonstration of the power of law has not simply ceased, but is nowadays replaced by something more subtle. Transparency, efficiency, fairness, intermediation even between humanity and nature—these are the attributes that become emblematic. At the same time, visual signs of firmness or physical power seem completely absent in Ingenhoven’s renderings [fig. 9] and thus erase the last traces of revenge for the violation of the law, which were still quite perceptible in the prior palaces of justice and the more monumental designs such as Le Corbusier’s High Court in Chandigarh. This refusal sketches an anticipation of a civilized world, where the essential values and the order of the Rome-Statute would be fully internalized in a Foucauldian sense. As it hauls the actors of the most dreadful imaginable crimes up into its own enlightened sphere, it demonstrates all the more the deep estrangement from the brutal nature of the deeds tried before the Court.

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46 Cf. [www.magazin-world-architects.com/de\\_09\\_03\\_onlinemagazin\\_podest\\_de.html](http://www.magazin-world-architects.com/de_09_03_onlinemagazin_podest_de.html) [2009-07-01].

# ARCHITECTURE AND THE SENSES

## *Workshop 3*

**Richard M. Shusterman**

Florida Atlantic University

**Olaf Pfeifer**

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

*Richard Shusterman received a B.A. and M.A. in Philosophy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and completed his doctoral studies in Philosophy at Oxford University. In Israel he taught at the Hebrew University and the University of the Negev, and then moved to the United States, where he was Professor of Philosophy at Temple University, and chaired its department from 1993-2004. He then was awarded the Dorothy F. Schmidt Eminent Scholar Chair in the Humanities at Florida Atlantic University, where he also directs the Center for Body, Mind, and Culture.*

*His authored books include Surface and Depth (2002); Performing Live (2000); Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life (1997); Sous l'interprétation (1994); T.S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism (1988); and The Object of Criticism (1984). His most recent book, Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics was published by Cambridge University Press. It provides the most detailed formulation of his project of somaesthetics.*

*Olaf Pfeifer is an Architect who teaches Architectural Theory and Design at the Chair for Theory and History of modern Architecture in Weimar since 2005, after having worked for Sauerbruch Hutton Architects and other Firms for a few years. He graduated from Pratt Institute's MArch Program in 2000 and from Berlin Institute of Technology (TU Berlin) in 1999. His research is focused on constructions of authenticity, places and atmospheres in and by means of architecture. A recent project and publication, 're-thinking home', involves interdisciplinary work in public space of a small town by Artists, Architects, and Urban Designers.*

Workshop 4, critically accompanied by the Philosopher Prof. Richard Shusterman (Florida Atlantic University) and Prof. Kari Jormakka, focused on the fascination for mood, atmosphere and sensual experience that is stimulated by architecture. The human body, without which no experience is possible, is central to all approaches, be it as etymological tool, as target to manipulative attempts, or as an destination for mimetic convergence.

In his contribution 'Three Notes Around the Baroque Sensation', Albert Narath makes an almost encyclopedic attempt to not only line up numerous recent examples for non-orthogonal architectural exercises centered around "mood, atmosphere, ornament, and sensation" and the theoretical writings that sustain them, but also to meticulously trace those theories back to their heritage of a late 19th century reception of the Baroque, namely by Wölfflin and his disciples. During the journey of this genealogy, starting with Reiser and Umemoto as well as Greg Lynn, proceeding among many others with Deleuze, and ending with Gombrich and Wölfflin, he also pinpoints where Giedion's modernist interpretation of the Baroque laid foundation to a very different understanding which focused on space rather than form or surface. He also draws a parallel where the shift towards Neo-Baroque in the late 19th century signifies a growing interest in effect and form, a shift away from meaning and politics, a step towards the autonomy of the discipline of architecture understood as art – paradigms that nowadays are associated with the 'projective' position in architecture.

In her talk titled 'Sensual is Political', the artist and urban planner Daniela Brasil brings to mind the interrelations of city-marketing and commodification of the individual and its body, as well as the commercialization of concepts such as multi-culturalism. At the same time, by showing an example of her own work, she demonstrates alternatives in the form of social and artistic practices of individuals and groups in public space, which, although limited to small

interventions, prove to be effective in questioning established cultural habits. "The idea of transient micro-ambiences that transform the city in a site for appropriation and play is an alternative to spectacularization" says Brasil. She points out that the key for activating the individual and its body lies in active participation.

Tobias Danielmeier sheds light on a special case, the architecture of wineries. His talk, titled 'The Architecture of Post-Consumerism' expresses the belief that in wineries (and consequently other sectors of high-end markets where quality, unaltered purity, and distinction are paramount) the architecture needs to convey these values, and thus cannot just go the mainstream way of appealing to commodified reflexes in order to stimulate buying. Instead, Danielmeier sees the re-development of an 'architecture parlante' that tells stories and delivers messages—which he calls an architecture of post-consumerism.

Another case-study of atmospheric architecture is discussed by Nathalie Bredella in her paper about the relations of technology and the concept of the body in Lars Spuybroek's '*H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion*' versus Diller, Scofidio + Renfro's '*Blur Building*'. Spuybroek describes his piece as an extension of the (senses of the) visitor's body, by means of an interactive yet pre-programmed spatial experience. Indeed, the question is whether the visitor gains control of his environment, or the environment controls the visitor—such as already described by Walter Benjamin for the cinematic experience<sup>1</sup>. Thus, Bredella notes, Spuybroek contradicts his own theory. In opposition, she sees a more critical approach to working with atmosphere in the *Blur Building*, because it is rather a place that creates awareness of our fixation onto the visual, and that disturbs by questioning established modes of experience, yet is open to other modes of sensual perception, and notions which have not already been pre-programmed. Bredella contextualizes her findings with Gernot Böhme's theories about the nature of at-

mosphere and the critical potential of working with atmospheres.

The same *'Blur Building'* is, next to many other examples, in the focus of Ingrid Böck's discussion of atmospheres in architecture, which she links to the means of technological control of atmosphere in her title: "Immersive spaces and the air conditioning project". Among the projects which she discusses are some by Philippe Rahm and Francois Roche, but also a fore-runner to the Blur Building, an exhibition installation by the Japanese artist Fujiko Nakaya and the Group E.A.T. from 1970. Böck discusses the projects on the background of canonical positions about presence and theatricality in art and architecture, starting from Giedion and Benjamin, Fried, McLuhan, and ending with Somol/Whiting, Koolhaas, and Lavin. Her conclusion is "that the most significant and vital issue of architectural space is the social dimension, embodied in the interference of the users." Thus, she deducts that the human body is the basis of spatial perception: „there is no concept of spatiality without presence of the body“. In the same vein Nathalie Bredella quotes the Workshop Tutor, Richard Shusterman: „.... we cannot get away from the experienced body, with its feelings and stimulations, its pleasures, pains, and emotions.“

In his talk "Sensory Tectonics—the Relationship between Sense and Sensuality", Ralph Brodrück analyzes, based on the Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, the principles of sensual perception of Joseph Beuys' artworks and the architecture of Herzog & de Meuron, which he describes as 'sensory tectonics', sensual experience of the tectonical. He concludes with the assessment that "Sensory perception, as the most private relation between user and building, constitutes the basis for this architecture's meaning to me."

Olaf Pfeifer

## Notes

- 1 Cf. Walter Benjamin: *Das Kunstwerk in Zeiten seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, Frankfurt/M 2007, S. 38f.





## **Tobias Danielmeier**

University of Otago Dunedin, Neuseeland

*Tobias Danielmeier teaches design at the Otago Polytechnic as well as at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. He holds a Masters of Arts in Architecture from the Münster School of Architecture and is currently completing his PhD at the University of Otago. His re-*

*search investigates the art, business and science of winery architecture and their interrelation with place and technology. Tobias Danielmeier's practical experience includes projects for Reichardt Architekten, Essen, and Bolles+Wilson, Münster.*



# THE ARCHITECTURE OF POST-CONSUMERISM

The refinement of retail spaces with the underlying aim to increase revenue has inspired and challenged architects and developers since the beginning of the Industrial Age. Today, extensive research on human behaviour, perception, and patterns of consumption enables designers, marketing strategists and architects to create environments of desire and temptation. While consumer value driven commercial architecture (e.g. Victor Baltard and George McRae) has seemingly disappeared over time, contemporary designs tend to employ strategies to optimise revenues. Subsequently, theories in the field of architecture that outline and explain design principles of consumerism have been developed and practised. This paper outlines significant developments in consumerism and its inherent implications for architecture. It argues that architects underestimate the role of consumer values in the design process. Using winery architecture as a case study, the author explores and evaluates the importance of the reintroduction of consumer values in retail architecture.

During the 1980s, the wine industry underwent a major organisational transformation. The advancement of production technologies, as well as rising public interest in the wine industry, demanded a re-conceptualisation of traditional approaches to winery programmes and designs. Architecture emerged as agent in the reinterpretation and reinvention of the industry and is recognised as an important factor in the creation and communication of values to consumers.

As a consequence of this organisational and conceptual shift, winery architects find themselves exploring notions of tradition and innovation, artefact and user, place and technology. This paper argues that architectural designs that incorporate *aesthetic experiences* and place specific values are

able to facilitate innovative artefact-based, consumer-oriented relationships; and provide approaches that differ from an architecture of consumerism.

### **The Architecture of Consumerism**

The principles of consumerism in American popular culture are best summarized in a statement by US-economist Victor Lebow<sup>1</sup>, who notes that “our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfactions, our ego satisfactions, in consumption [...] we need things consumed, burned up, replaced and discarded at an ever-accelerating rate”.

Lebow’s thinking inspired business and commerce schools<sup>2</sup>, as well as the arts (e.g. Independent Group). Encouraged and fascinated by the mechanisms of consumerism, product designers openly started discussion on how to deliberately manufacture faulty products without compromising customer’s brand loyalty.

Alongside a changing material culture, the 1950s also inspired architects to manipulate and narrate places and contexts. The Hilton Hotel in Istanbul by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, opened in 1955, allegorised an ‘All American’ experience. Visitors were given the opportunity to enjoy commodities they usually consume at home, making it a “home away from home”<sup>3</sup>. The resulting detachment of place experiences from a site-specific, spatial context introduced a paradigm shift in the understanding of place-based values<sup>4</sup>. Places became stages for events and, thus, commodities. Over the years, symbols, imagery and sign values, representation and brand values gain in importance<sup>5</sup> (e.g. Venturi). Inherently, not all narrated places satisfy the user and investigations of perceived voids that occasionally occur during a design process become of interest to various disciplines; most prominently featured are Relph’s concept of *placelessness* and Augé’s notion of *non-places*.

1 Lebow V.: *Price Competition in 1955*, Journal of Retailing 7, Elsevier 1955 p. 7.

2 Julier G.: *The Culture of Design*, Sage Publications, London 2001, p. 63.

3 Nickson D.: *A Review of Hotel Internationalisation with a Particular Focus on the Key Role Played by American Organisations Progress in Tourism*, Hospitality Research. Vol. 4. 1998, pp. 53–66.

4 Wharton A. J.: *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture*, The University of Chicago Press Chicago 2001, pp. 19–38.

5 Venturi R., Izenour S., Scott Brown D.: *Learning from Las Vegas: the forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, MIT Press, Massachusetts 1972.

At the turn of the century, Daniel Herman describes three primary conditions for the architecture of consumption that comprise place, placelessness and material culture<sup>6</sup>. Firstly, he argues that architecture is highly dependent on numerical demands of the market and mainly consumer driven. Secondly, he argues that it is essential for spaces of consumerism to be replicable. Markets follow patterns, hence consumer follow patterns; if a pattern cannot be established, a market cannot be developed. Finally, he described how both, retailers and consumers are continuously on the lookout for the 'Next Big Thing'. Consumption became a form of *societal practise*.<sup>7</sup> Based on assumption that these observations are veridical, they could be applicable for all forms of retail space. By means of case studies, this paper analyses winery architecture as one particular form of retail architecture.

### **Winery Architecture and Consumerism**

Before Robert Mondavi founded the Opus One vineyard in Napa Valley, California, in 1979, wineries were merely regarded as *elegant sheds*. The accompanying winery, designed by Scott Johnson, opened in 1991.<sup>8</sup> The design concept of Mondavi's winery overcame the traditional, mainly production focused approach and offered a revolutionary and unique consumer orientation. Opus One's architecture communicates values beyond functional and economic values by adding symbolic values and imagery. Soon, winery entrepreneurs became aware that wineries offer the opportunity to build and cultivate consumer relationships. Johnson's approach became a successful prototype and found numerous epigones. In addition to the explorations of spatial potentials for winery businesses, a new field of research investigating social dimensions of the wine industry emerged; the *Next Big Thing*.

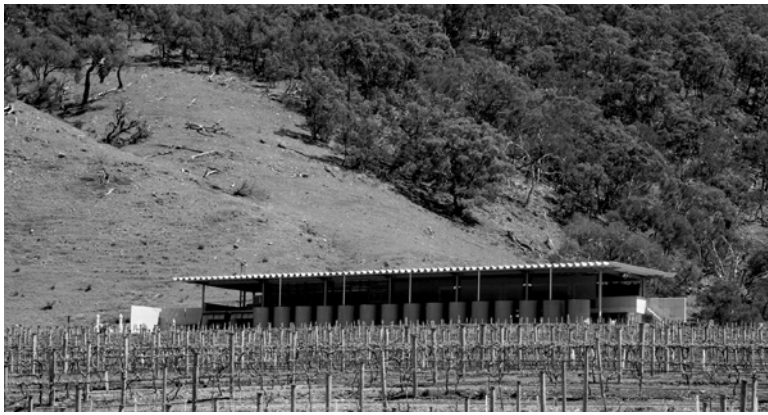
An example of the application of the *Next Big Thing*, is the winery Marqués de Riscal situated in the Rioja wine region in Spain. Due to legal frameworks in Spain, wineries are not open to the public. Nevertheless the winery owners wanted to create a unique experience and decided to commission Frank O. Gehry to build a 'City of Wine'. Since the showcasing of the production facilities is not feasible in the region, a 65 million Euro, 14-room hotel

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6 Herman D.: "Next Big Thing – Survival of the Fittest." In: Chung C. J., Inaba J., Koolhaas R., Loeng T.: *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping / Harvard Design School Project on the City 2*, Taschen 2002, pp. 526–541.

7 Julier G.: *The Culture of Design*, Sage Publications, London 2001, p. 70.

8 Kuzmany M., Gust K. (2008): *Wine and its Path to Architecture* in a+u Architecture and Urbanism 08:10 2008, pp. 50-54.



was build instead. Essential to the design brief was that Gehry was asked to outshine his museum design in Bilbao.<sup>9</sup> This strategy has been applied in faith that the utilisation of architectural design enables a high level of control over the representation of the wine brand and its wider image.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the assignment of well-known architects promises media attention and offers the potential for increase market shares. To date, eight Pritzker Prize winner have been appointed to design wineries. As a recent development, more and more wineries strive for attention and employ similar strategies to achieve this goal, causing increased competition.

The most prominent example for a supra-regional approach to manipulate people's perceptions is the Austrian wine industry. After a wine scandal in the mid 1980s, different wine regions agreed to strive for a new image by building a new reputation. Besides offering quality produce from now on to gain consumer trust, architecture was considered to be a key driver for the successful implementation<sup>11</sup>. With hundreds of wineries following a similar approach, differentiation became of utmost importance. The creation of a point of difference in the spatial narration became a requisite for wineries in Austria. Yet, the inability to replicate one successful winery model separates winery architecture from architecture of consumerism. The quest for architectural distinction often entails a design process that draws on meaning and pleasure, quality and precision, aesthetic as well as hedonic experiences. Unsurprisingly, the winery architecture comprises modernism and post-modern ideologies.

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9 Stanwick S., Fowlow L.: *Wine by Design*, Wiley-Academy 2005, pp. 24–27.

10 Hall C., Mitchell R.: *Wine Marketing: A Practical Guide*, Butterworth-Heinemann 2008, pp. 227–257.

11 Webb M.: “Building a Better Winery.” In: (2008) *a+u Architecture and Urbanism* 08:10, pp. 12–16.



### **Sensory, somatic and aesthetic experiences as approach to create distinctiveness**

Wine as sensory experience provides an enormous potential for bodily pleasures. The senses used in the appreciation of wine are primarily smell, but also sight and taste. Both, connoisseurs and winemakers look for colour, clarity, body, complexity and age in a wine and can with a little experience, not only identify the grape variety, but also the define where the vines are growing.

Unlike a label on a wine bottle, winery architecture is asked to communicate and facilitate experiences and to generate positive memories. But how can architecture enable pleasurable experiences and create enjoyable memories?

In the world of wine, distinctiveness is often described as *terroir*; a French term that embodies geographical and cultural, as well as human notions. Even so the term and its origins are debatable, it provides guidance for vintners and customers alike. Winery architecture is still missing a resilient conceptual framework that helps in the development of a place and user centred design approach, meaningful experiences and spatial distinctiveness. Hereby, places and artefacts are understood as two determining factors for spatial narration. Consequently, a concept that incorporates values of place and aesthetics has been chosen as source for inspiration. In the field of aesthetic experiences, philosopher Richard Shusterman identified four principal dimensions that are value and experience based. Shusterman identifies 'evaluative, phenomenological, semantic and demarcational-definitional dimensions' in his writings<sup>12</sup>. The evaluative dimension addresses pleasure or *jouissance*, the phenomenological dimension is described as being concerned with vividly felt emotions. Meaningful experiences are seen as part of a semantic dimen-

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12 Shusterman R.: *The End of Aesthetic Experience*, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 55:1. 1997, p. 30.



of the building in the landscape is, as well as the harmonic colour selections are important part of the demarcational-definitional dimension.

The analysis of Glenn Murcutt's winery design is based on a visitation, an interview with the architect and a study of the original drawings, is not trying to post-rationalise aesthetic experiences within winery architecture. Nonetheless, over the last couple of years winery architecture has managed to engage in *architecture parlante*, that focuses on the provision of enjoyable experiences and the creation positive memories in high hopes of consumer loyalty. The principles of the architecture of consumerism as identified by Herman cannot be found in winery architecture. Market demands, replicability and consistent novelty are not part of the design agenda, making winery architecture the architecture of post-consumerism.



## **Albert Narath**

Columbia University New York

*Albert Narath is a doctoral candidate in modern architectural history at Columbia University in New York and a Paul Mellon Pre-doctoral Fellow at the Center for Advanced Research in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washing-*

*ton, DC. He holds an MA degree from the Architectural Association in London. His dissertation concerns architectural and art historical debates surrounding the Neo-baroque at the end of the nineteenth century in Germany.*



# THREE NOTES AROUND THE BAROQUE SENSATION

*Now, however, we step further back and survey the general effect; ...there is less perception and more atmosphere.*

- Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*.

*With that, she hurtled toward her presoftware soul.*

- Bruna Mori and Florencia Pita, *Augmented F[w]orm*.

The fascination with mood, atmosphere, ornament and sensation within architecture over the last two decades encompasses a convoluted spectrum of positions and motivations. But nowhere, perhaps, was it more simplistically rendered than in the 2008 “Matters of Sensation” exhibition, held at the Artists Space gallery in New York.<sup>1</sup> The exhibition featured works by fourteen young studios based in the United States and was a celebration of techniques developed through the maturation of rendering and animation software and digital fabrication.<sup>2</sup> In a hyper-superficial display of textures, colors, surfaces and sensations, much more convincingly conveyed in the catalogue’s close-up views of single works than in the installation’s strikingly unaffectionate environment, one could detect a kind of Prozac architecture. Seemingly uninterested in the economic, political or even disciplinary stakes of digital practice, the featured architects’ work, according

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1 The exhibition was curated by Georgina Huljich and Marcelo Spina of the Los Angeles-based firm Patterns and the catalogue features essays by Sylvia Lavin, Jeffrey Kipnis, Peter Zellner and Benjamin Weil.

2 The exhibition included the studios david clovers with C.E.B. Reas, Emergent, Gnuform, Höweler + Yoon Architecture, IwamotoScott Architecture, mod, MOS, murmur, Ruy Klein, Sotamaa, SU11, and Xefirotarch.

to the exhibition brochure, “attempts to answer no questions, solve no problems, and broach no oppositions.” Architects are, for the curators, “bored by old debates.” In its happy pill effects, the show was, no more and no less, “about a fascination with architectural forms that induce sensation... and, above all, about experiencing pleasure.”<sup>3</sup>

This kind of architecture, it would seem, is in a late stage. It is no surprise that the emergence of this architecture of pleasure has been accompanied in both academic discourse and the popular media, almost ghost-like, by a vague appeal to the Baroque. This essay will begin to interrogate the Baroque as a received idea within architecture during the last two decades. Rather, however, than attempting to position an idea of the Baroque itself as a “source” of the recent return to sensation, the paper will use the discursive malleability and uncanny persistence of the style as a vehicle for charting the principles and limitations of the aesthetics of “projective practice.”<sup>4</sup> The essay will take the form of three extended notes: The first examines a series of installations and projects from 2008 in order to rehearse the character of recent interest in the Baroque amongst digital architects; the second hints at an unconscious historical genealogy for this return to the Baroque; and the third will sketch a link between this most recent “re-discovery” of the Baroque and the pioneering attempts by architects and art historians at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to define the style.

### **I. New Baroque**

In a short article entitled “What Will Our Skyline Look Like?” in a 2000 issue of *Time Magazine*, the critic Richard Lacayo suggests, “A very different future

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3 Press Release for “Matters of Sensation”, Artists Space, 25 September – 22 November 2008. Lavin, Sylvia. In her article “The New Mood or Affective Disorder, (*Assemblage*, 41, April, 2000, p. 40), one of the many prospective self-examinations of the discipline that made up the final issue of the journal *Assemblage* in 2000, Sylvia Lavin diagnoses what she calls the “almost hyperemotional state” of architecture. Stemming from architecture’s realignment with the categories of affect and emotion, hitherto admonished by the discourse of criticality, as well as its escape from the “repressive regimes” of regular geometry and Taylorist production and its closely related embrace of consumer desire and the “secret new pleasures” of advanced, soft materials, buildings, according to Lavin, could now be “animated, ecstatic, and rapturous.” Further, “If chemical engineers can design a happy pill, the building in ecstasy is a concept that takes on provocative significance and opens pleasurable new dimensions to the theoretical project.”

4 The “return to sensation” within recent architecture has been well-documented in a wide range of material. In addition to several articles, see, for example, the January 20-21, 2007 symposium at the Yale University School of Architecture entitled “Seduction: Form, Sensation, and the Production of Architectural Desire.”

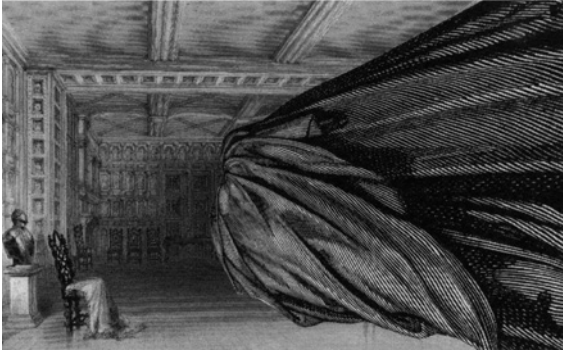
is visible today in a small outburst of buildings that repudiate the very notion of upright walls. Bellied-out sides, canted planes, solid walls that look like fluttering strips of ribbon, blade-edged triangular outcroppings and brassy materials that shimmer like something Cher would wear to the Grammys—what’s under way here is a rethinking of space and form as complete as any since the spirals of the Baroque overtook the spare symmetries of the Renaissance.”<sup>5</sup> Along the same lines, in his review of the ambitious exhibition “Triumph of the Baroque,” staged in 2000 by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the *New York Times* architecture critic Herbert Muschamp finds a striking affinity between the drawings and models of seventeenth century architecture displayed in the exhibition and the nascent products of a generation obsessed, as he says, with the effects of computer morphing. In his description of the show, Muschamp lists a family of operations that could easily translate into a playbook for digital form-making in the 1990’s: “Scrolls; spiral columns; ... gilded wave crests; cornices folded and refolded to distraction; facades drawn out horizontally to the vanishing point; arches, saints and topiary endlessly repeated as if produced by a malfunctioning keyboard: such devices easily outstrip most of what I have seen on the monitor screens of today’s design studios.” He concludes, “And they should give pause to those who think that computer-generated, so-called blob architecture has no place in the old bricks-and-mortar world.”<sup>6</sup>

Similar to Lacayo’s description of a new generation of buildings that look like they are “in the grip of a spastic seizure,” the “quivering, writhing shapes” on display at the National Gallery were, for Muschamp, a direct expression of panic (and we should remember here the major role of anxiety for the “Prozac Generation” and modernist descriptions of the Baroque alike). In this apparent mood swing between Baroque hysteria and the computer-morphed pleasure of “Matters of Sensation,” both are underpinned by a direct appeal to the emotions.<sup>7</sup>

5 Lacayo, Richard: “What will our Skyline Look Like?”

6 Muschamp, Herbert: “Architecture Review: When Ideas Took Shape and Soared,” *New York Times*, 26 May 2000.

7 Muschamp states, “Panic has broken out with particularly vivid style in ‘The Triumph of the Baroque’... A survey of European architecture from 1600 to 1750, the show reveals that buildings, like people, can be overtaken by mass-hysteria. For a century and a half, European walls, doors, roofs, windows and entire cities were contorted into quivering, writhing shapes.” (Muschamp, see note 6) Muschamp’s invocation of panic stems, albeit somewhat misleadingly, from a lecture by the historian Anthony Vidler on the spatial experience of the modern metropolis at a symposium at the University of California, Los Angeles. On Vidler’s reaction to Muschamp’s review, as well as a discussion of the Baroque in contemporary architectural culture, see: Vidler, Anthony: “From Anything to Biothing,” *Anything*, New York, 2000.



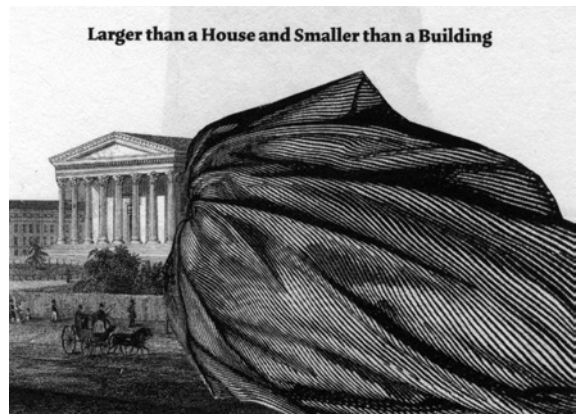
To illustrate architecture's emotional return, Muschamp cites the "Piranesian Turbine Hall" of Herzog and de Meuron's 2000 Tate Modern in London and the 1997 Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank Gehry, a project that other critics have dubbed "computer-baroque," "techno-baroque," "e-baroque," or more straightforwardly as "new baroque." In the face of shininess, complex undulating surfaces, and the destabilizing sense that shapes have been torn from their traditional rigor, the Baroque label holds the place of the "other" in these descriptions, deployed to convey a feeling of difference and even radicalness through its discursive vagueness.

The examples are too numerous to list here, but it will suffice to reference two reviews of UN Studio's 2006 Mercedes Museum in Stuttgart. In his assessment of the building, the critic Hanno Rauterberg contends, "Typical baroque characteristics are omnipresent; the building eludes quick comprehension, refuses to cut clear boundaries, even blurs its boundaries. It is impossible to detect the tremendous forces at work, and even this vehemence is easily concealed by absorbing it into one infinite motion."<sup>8</sup> According to the critic Aaron Betsky's description, "The classical forms and spaces are present, but have grown in scale, become heroic in appearance, and have been stretched and convoluted... Curved, creased, folded and faceted, the Mercedes-Benz is a baroque palace of automation."<sup>9</sup> Accompanied, as with Muschamp's review, by an unclear gesture at a shared "*Zeitgeist*" (Baroque palace = modern corporate museum), Betsky understands the Baroque, echoing Jacob Burckhardt's own influential treatment of the style in his famous *Cicerone*, as an outgrowth or mutation of the classical.<sup>10</sup> The Mercedes Museum's "liberating effects" and its ability to stimulate "emotion or affect," as Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos themselves put it, are based in malleability, transforma-

8 Rauterberg, Hanno: "Cognitive Baroque: The Digital Modern." *Log*, v8, Summer 2006, p. 44.

9 Betsky, Aaron: *Buy Me a Mercedes-Benz: Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos*, Actar, 2006.

10 For Burckhardt: "Baroque architecture speaks the same language as the Renaissance, but in a savage dialect of it." (Burckhardt, Jacob. *Der Cicerone*, I, Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1869, p. 366.)



tion and deformation.<sup>11</sup> This is the familiar fantasy of an architecture of emergence and becoming, where an appeal to the temporal dimension “animates” the evolution and perception of form. As the orthogonal becomes curvilinear, the regular becomes irregular and space becomes topological, difference in degree appears to become difference in kind. The reconfiguration of, or even violence to, the idea of architecture as stasis based in regular geometry (one might think here of Gordon Matta-Clark’s 1977 “Office Baroque” or Rafael Moneo’s suggested motto for today’s architect—“Delenda est geometria,” or “geometry must be destroyed”) creates the potential, according to van Berkel and Bos, for “new categories of surfaces and effects.”<sup>12</sup> Articulated through faddish catchwords like “sensation,” “emotion,” “atmosphere,” and “effect,” norm morphs into its functional opposite—form.

These are the poles that frame the art historian Ernst Gombrich’s influential 1966 essay “Norm and Form,” in which he shows that art historical labels like “Gothic” and “Baroque” were defined, and often rejected, as terms of exclusion rooted in the ideal classical norm they deviate from.<sup>13</sup> It is Gombrich’s essay, in turn, that structures Jesse Reiser and Nanako Umemoto’s 2006 *Atlas of Novel*

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11 Van Berkel and Bos describe effects as “manifestations of the phenom, which includes sensory experiences of the external world, experiences of the inner world, such as fantasies and ideas and, finally, experiences of emotion or affect.” (Van Berkel and Bos: *MOVE*, Goose Press, 1999, Volume 3, p. 15.)

12 Moneo, Rafael: “Geometry and the Mediation of Architectural Conflicts: Comments on the Work of Scott Cohen.” In: *Contested Symmetries: The Architecture of Preston Scott Cohen*, London: Laurence King, 2001. The full quotation from Van Berkel and Bos reads: “When the continuous deformation of a surface leads to the intersection of interior and exterior planes, the transformability of topological surfaces results in nonorientable objects. The perfect continuity of nonorientability initiates new categories of surfaces and effects.” (Van Berkel and Bos, see note 11, p. 15.)

13 Gombrich, E. H.: *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*. London: Phaidon Press, 1966. The essay is based on a lecture that Gombrich delivered at Turin University in April 1963.

*Tectonics*. For Reiser and Umemoto, the dialectic movement between norm and form marks a professed shift from the question “what does this mean?,” representative of a previous generation of “critical” architects, towards “what does this do?”<sup>14</sup> In the *Atlas*, architecture becomes “as much matter and structure as it is atmosphere and effects.”<sup>15</sup> It is rendered “ambient.” This argument develops in large part around the notion of “fineness,” which Reiser and Umemoto characterize as difference within overall coherence.<sup>16</sup> From squaring to projection, from the Cartesian grid to the unstructured grid, and from Chess, which they relate to the classical orders and proportional systems, to Go, which elicits “extreme elaboration,” the *Atlas* charts coordinates for an architecture that moves from norm to form and from the Classical to the Baroque.<sup>17</sup>

In Reiser and Umemoto’s *Vector Wall*, commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art in New York for the 2008 exhibition *Home Delivery*, this conception of fineness translates into a more general interest, held by numerous architects of their generation, in the aesthetics of surface.<sup>18</sup> The screen was fabricated using a laser cutter and standardized 4-by-4-foot sheets of aluminum. In its multidirectional patterning and manipulation of the z-plane, the *Vector Wall* embodies Reiser and Umemoto’s fascination in the *Atlas* with a variegated meshwork field that is “at once structural and atmospheric” and where “no clear distinction exists between ornament and structure.”<sup>19</sup>

Partitions have become a favored testing ground for experiments in mass customization and in CAD-CAM design more generally. They can act as spatial

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14 Reiser, Jesse, Umemoto, Nanako: *Atlas of Novel Tectonics*, Princeton Architectural Press, 2006, p. 23.

15 Ibid., p23.

16 Although Reiser and Umemoto reject “conservative architects and critics” for operating according to the exclusionary principle and side instead with Gombrich’s notion of “the principle of sacrifice,” which accepts a multiplicity of norm *and* form (the book is not, after all, an atlas of *a*-tectonics)...

17 The full quotation reads, “Where the classical model deploys the orderly alternation of columns and intercolumnar spaces (infill ornament), we deploy a continuous rod field with degrees of greater and lesser density, the denser areas acting in a column-like manner, displaying column-like traits. These areas shade off into zones that act predominantly as ornamental screens. In this model, no clear distinction exists between ornament and structure, as neither occupies distinct zones.” (see note 14, p. 40.)

18 For more information on the Vector Wall, see: Bergdoll, Barry and Christensen, Peter: *Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008, p. 186.

Numerous writings have dealt with the fascination with surface in recent architecture. See, for example: Lavin, Sylvia: “What you Surface is What You Get,” *Log*, 1, Fall 2003, pp. 103–106.

19 See note 14., p. 40.

interventions with little more functional obligation than dividing and with minimal structural responsibility. They are all skin, freeing architecture of traditional responsibilities so that it can become a surface for effects. In a way that shows the intimate link between built screens and the computer screens on which they are conceived, however, they maintain an ambiguous relation to scale. In a section of the *Atlas* dealing with the notion of the diagram, Reiser and Umemoto construct a montage in which a screen, derived from a portion of the etched drapery of a classical sculpture, contrasts with its decorous domestic setting. They note that at the scale of the interior, the alien object wavers indeterminately between furniture and partition. Further scenes show the same object blown-up to the scale of a small landscape feature and even to that of the urban infrastructural terrain itself. These architectures have the look, and even some of the logic, of the 1958 Steve McQueen movie and digital architecture cult-classic *The Blob*. Just as the blob morphs from the size of a human hand to a mass big enough to consume the town diner, Reiser and Umemoto suggest that these architecture mutants, seemingly authorless and undefinable, forsake the classical proportions of the human scale and landscape for the oversized and in-between. In Greg Lynn's words, "Essentially, a blob is a surface so massive that it becomes a proto-object."<sup>20</sup> The screens are, in this way, intended as a challenge to the traditional discourse of tectonics.<sup>21</sup>

Like the work of Hernan Diaz Alonso and many other contemporaries, they are monsters, but with precise art historical coordinates.<sup>22</sup> In the *Atlas*, a full-page illustration of an 18<sup>th</sup> century silver tureen designed by Juste-Aurèle

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20 Lynn, Gregg: "Blob Tectonics, or Why Tectonics is Square and Topology is Groovy." In: *Folds, Bodies, and Blobs: Collected Essays*. Brussels: La Lettre Volée, 1998, p. 171.

21 In the introduction to the *Atlas*, Stanford Kwinter proclaims the book as the first design manual that conceives of tectonics as "a form of reaction... that it is architecture's duty to deliver to human sensation." Kwinter, Stanford: "The Judo of Cold Combustion," p. 14. In: see note 14.

22 In the 2006 end-of-year exhibition at Columbia University, Diaz Alonso's studio displayed their renderings, together with a portrait of Diaz Alonso himself in the style of the Spanish Baroque, in elaborate gilt frames. Brett Steele suggests that the projects of Diaz Alonso's studio Xefirotarch are "mannered if not baroque." Further, "like Bacon's paintings, it is in the distorted agony of a surface where we most consistently find in HDA's architecture the kind of depth that too many architects still assign to old-school architectural properties like mass, volume, structure, or space." (Steele, Brett: "The Dark Surfaces of Hernan Diaz Alonso." In: *Xefirotarch*, HUST Press, 2007.) As Joseph Rosa notes, "For Xefirotarch, the subversion of scale as a generative device for architecture is closely tied to a propensity for monstrous, hybrid constructions." (Rosa, Joseph: "Monstrous Traits: The Architecture of Xefirotarch." In: *Xefirotarch*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 2006.

Meissonier is accompanied by a caption that relates its “surface/space implications” to its freedom from “the classical imperative to domesticate rocaille as decoration.”<sup>23</sup> A close-up picture of Meissonier’s signature on the object assures us that this soup bowl could indeed be architecture. Released from the dictates of scale and propriety and taking advantage of the rocaille’s ability, in Dalibor Vesely’s words, to resist becoming a definite art form, the tureen could be an (almost) house.<sup>24</sup> The Vector Wall partition, in turn, could be an (almost) façade.<sup>25</sup>

Understood as a further mutation of the strategy of the Baroque, the tureen might, in fact, even be an Embryological House. Lynn has described this 1997-2002 experiment in digital form-making and mass customization as “an unapologetic investment in the contemporary beauty and voluptuous aesthetics of undulating surfaces.”<sup>26</sup> Reiser and Umemoto’s category of “fineness” is, after all, kindred to Lynn’s notions of “intricacy” and “complexity.” For Lynn, intricacy implies that detail is everywhere, “distributed and continuously variegated,” as he describes, “in collaboration with formal and spatial effects.”<sup>27</sup> Similarly, in his comparison of the spatiality of the blob with the Baroque theories of Leibniz’s 1666 *Ars Combinatoria*, Lynn notes that complexity “involves the fusion of mul-

23 See note 14, p. 81.

24 Vesely, Dalibor: *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2004, p. 224.

25 The ubiquity of such comparison can be traced to the appearance of a similar Meissonier tureen, displayed alongside CAD-CAM pieces like Jeroen Verhoeven’s Cinderella Table, in the 2008 Cooper Hewitt Museum exhibition *Rococo: The Continuing Curve, 1730-2008*.

This understanding of the rocaille, taken as a further mutation of the strategy of the late-Baroque, is even more clearly and literally expressed in the studio Gagat International’s ongoing research project *Rococo Relevance*. For Gagat, “The parallels between the lack of scale in rocaille and in CAD programmes are significant.” (Merx, Luc and Holl, Christian: “Rococo Relevance,” *Verb Conditioning*, Barcelona: Actar, 2005, p. 45.) The project attempts, as they articulate it, to merge the “geometrical complexity of the Baroque... with the modeling capabilities of advanced computer software to produce hybrid forms of contemporary ornament.” Ultimately, the research “concerns itself with ornament and simulation, with effect.” (Ibid., p. 45.) In a similar way, the studio’s *Gartensaal 05* installation, sited in Balthasar Neumann’s *Gartensaal* in the Würzburg *Residenz*, was comprised by an inflatable structure shaped as the negative space of the room’s vaulting. The installation explored the rocaille space of Augsburg engravings as a potential model for architectural experimentation and sought to highlight the parallels between Neumann’s architecture and “the possibilities of designing double curved surfaces with the aid of a computer.” (Merx, Luc and Holl, Christian: “Gartensaal 05,” *ibid.*, p. 52.) For another comparison of recent architecture with the Rococo, see: Fausch, Deborah: “Rococo Modernism: The Elegance of Style”, *Perspecta*, 32, pp. 8–17.

26 From Bergdoll, Christensen, see note 18, p. 174.

27 Lynn, Gregg: “Introduction.” In: *Folding in Architecture*. Wiley-Academy, 2004.



tiple and different systems into an assemblage that behaves as a singularity while remaining irreducible to any single simple organization.”<sup>28</sup> In his recent *Blobwall Pavilion*, displayed in 2008 at the Southern California Institute of Architecture in Los Angeles, a twisting surface incorporated robotically cut rotationally molded polymer “bricks” custom fit into an interlocking pattern of countless varying shapes. According to Lynn, the project “recovers the voluptuous shapes, chiaroscuro and grotto-like textures of Baroque and Renaissance architecture.”<sup>29</sup> Generically Baroque polymer effects are derived from the continuous composition of formally disparate shapes, a strategy that aims at creating a spatial surface.<sup>30</sup> Both Reiser and Umemoto’s partitions and the *Blobwall* are monstrosities—in Lynn’s words, “bodies which seem to ‘deviate from nature’... both irreducible unities and collections of heterogeneous elements;... simultaneously a unified whole and freely associated parts.”<sup>31</sup> In this way, fineness, and along with it intricacy (related, as Lynn notes, to other terms like “complex”, “complicated” and “pliant”) are derived from what we might call the aesthetic of the fold—an architectural translation, in other words, of Leibniz’s concept of harmony as “unity in variety” and of the philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s Baroque.

The appropriation of Deleuzian terms like fold, striation and smoothness have long since joined the Baroque in the realm of cliché.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it is no doubt largely due to the influence of Deleuze’s book *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (appearing in an English-language edition in 1992) that Lynn could proclaim, not without self-congratulation, “the nineties started angular and ended curvilinear.”<sup>33</sup> Popularized in many venues by Lynn, as well as in Bernard Cache’s 1992 book *Earth Moves*, the figure of the fold marks the embrace by architects in the 1990’s of differential calculus, digital technology, and the spatial models that issue from it. Deleuze himself cites Cache’s theory of inflection in the second chapter of *The Fold*, dealing with Baroque geometry and the “new affection” it established. For Cache, an inflection resides at the moment when swirling movements are reversed, when a minimum follows a maximum. It corresponds to

28 See note 20, p. 173.

29 Rappolt, Mark (ed.): *Greg Lynn Form*, New York: Rizzoli, 2008, p. 363.

30 For Lynn, intricacy implies that detail is everywhere, “distributed and continuously variegated,” as he describes, “in collaboration with formal and spatial effects.”

31 See note 20.

32 There is not sufficient space here to rehearse the breadth and trajectory of this phenomenon or to elaborate the specific relation between Lynn and Deleuze, a theme already explored by historians like Anthony Vidler and Mario Carpo.

33 See note 27.

what Leibniz calls an “ambiguous sign” and is often accompanied by a kind of slippage, a stylistic motif expressed, for Cache, in the Baroque. Also exemplified in the tendency of the Baroque to ovalize the curve, he suggests that rather than representing a fanciful excess, this slippage reveals the formal characteristics of inflection itself and represents another register of images, an indeterminate zone, as Cache describes, like “a piece of rubber stretched beyond its normal usage but before it breaks.”<sup>34</sup> The indeterminacy of the inflection ultimately links Baroque geometry, for Cache, to the “Neo-baroque”, where surfaces “with variable curves and some volumes” are manufactured by nonstandard modes of production.<sup>35</sup> In Cache’s 1999 Semper Pavilion, four screens and a suspended ceiling demarcate an enclosed space meant to evoke the architect Gottfried Semper’s discussion of interlacing and textiles in his 1861–63 book *Der Stil*, itself a fundamental model for the spatial implications of articulated surfaces. Composed of an upper section with a latticework of continually curving lines and a lower section with a pleated form reminiscent of a hula skirt, the screens attempt to give shape to Deleuze’s description of “the line with infinite inflection that holds for a surface.”<sup>36</sup>

It is no surprise, therefore, that an inflection in the form of a Baroque volute ornament connects the upper and lower stories of Deleuze’s famous diagram in *The Fold* of Leibniz’s “Baroque House,” an allegory for the process of human understanding. Although there is not space here to discuss the full context of Deleuze’s conception of the Baroque, it should be noted that the house is an extension of John Locke’s model of the brain as a kind of camera obscura, with the addition of a “screen” or “curtain” that is diversified by a series of folds representing innate knowledge and that is in a constant state of oscillation related to the creation of complex ideas. In a process that Deleuze traces back to the Baroque, the façade of the house severs the exterior from this folded interior. (“Baroque architecture can be defined by this severing of the façade from the inside, of the interior from the exterior, and the autonomy of the interior from the independence of the exterior...”) The interior is rendered autonomous, and the

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34 Cache, Bernard: *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995, p. 38.

35 It is conceptually tied to the complicated projective transformations of René Thom, continuous surfaces like the Möbius loop, and the infinite variability of the Koch curve, obtained, as Deleuze notes, by means of rounding angles according to “Baroque requirements.”

36 In Cache’s 2001 De l’Orme Pavilion, this motif is extended into an investigation of the potential of projective geometry, used by Philibert De l’Orme in his drawings for trompe l’oeils, for the creation of complex curved surfaces driven by computer calculation and CAD-CAM production techniques.

surface of the screen vibrates away in an analogous way, the argument might go, as the autonomous operations of Lynn's Embryological Houses. Diverted from the realm of allegory to the paperless studio and from a diagram of idea-making to the stimulus for complexity in form-making, Leibniz's folded *Blobwall* becomes a prototype, perhaps all too easily, for the composition of what Cache would call "Neo-Baroque" effects. Like Deleuze's conception of the Baroque itself, this new Baroque "endlessly produces folds."

## II. Neo-Baroque

Having briefly outlined this Baroque of the computer screen, the partition screen, and the tureen, one can begin to situate it as a received idea. Every generation, after all, has its own Baroque. Whether it is Sigfried Giedion's evocation of "space-time" at *Sant' Ivo*, Robert Venturi's description of the contradictory ornamentation and "both-and" composition of the Baroque, Paolo Portoghesi and Christian Norberg-Schultz's celebrations of the phenomenological space of *San Carlo*, or the projective devices uncovered in Preston Scott Cohen's analysis of *San Carlo ai Catinari*, a history of architectural modernism could be traced according to successive attempts to express difference through some figure of the Baroque. To trace this history of recourse to the Baroque is to chart a genealogy that continuously folds back on itself, always, as a cliché, expressing divergence through repetition. At moments of perceived crisis, the Baroque becomes a vehicle for architectural self-examination. It bends its precedents to a point where they are no longer recognizable as themselves, all the while never completely concealing or breaking from them. As Deleuze notes, "It does not invent things."<sup>37</sup>

In this way, Lynn's articulation of *Le Pli* was not only bolstered by Deleuze's explication of the Baroque, but could also be aligned, as Lynn himself hints, with Colin Rowe's reading in *Collage City* of Borromini's façade for Sant'Agnese, which "continuously fluctuates between an interpretation of the building as object and its reinterpretation as texture."<sup>38</sup> In another instance, despite Lynn's argument in the 1990's for pliancy in architecture as an alternative to a perceived discord between "conflict" and "unity" and his concurrent distancing from Robert Venturi's description of "complexity" as a matter of composition, Venturi's use of

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37 Deleuze, Gilles: "The Fold—Leibniz and the Baroque: The Pleats of Matter." In: Lynn, Gregg (ed.): *Folding in Architecture, Architectural Design Profile No. 102*, London: Academy Editions, 1993, p. 17.

38 Rowe, Colin and Koetter, Fred: *Collage City*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1978, p. 77. Lynn refers to the passage on Sant' Agnese in his essay "Architectural Curvilinearity: The Folded, the Pliant and the Supple" (in see note 37, p. 15, n 2.

the German rocaille as an example of inflection in *Complexity and Contradiction* nonetheless anticipates the vocabulary and even some of the logic of fineness, intricacy and complexity as sketched out above.<sup>39</sup>

One could, after all, find a Baroque inflection in almost anything. This is especially evident in Joseph Hudnut's idiosyncratic review entitled "The Baroque Revival and its Clients" for the 1957 Museum of Modern Art exhibition *Buildings for Business and Government*. In the article, Hudnut describes Eero Saarinen's Technical Center for General Motors in Detroit as "A Versailles without Louis," compares Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's Chase Bank Building in Manhattan to seventeenth-century Madonna paintings, and suggests that the exterior screens of Edward Durrell Stone's project for the U.S. Embassy Building in New Delhi, representative of "structure transfigured by ornament," reveal the "essence of historical Baroque style re-emerging today."

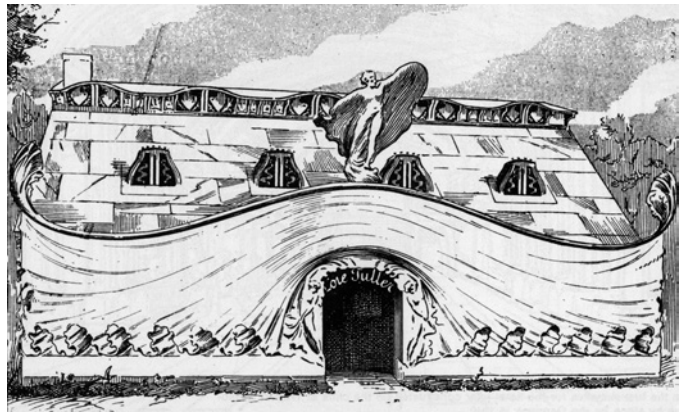
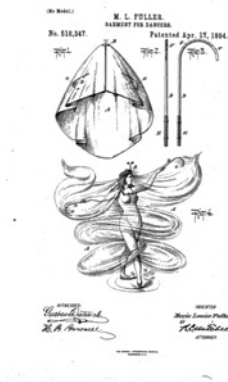
The surface of the Baroque insinuates itself into corporate and governmental modernism most perversely, however, in Hudnut's description of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 1954-58 Seagram Building, at that time still under construction. In addition to comparing the spatial flow from the building's "piazza" under and through its interior to the role of the portico in Bernini's Rome, Hudnut relates the Seagram's famous curtain wall to what he describes as the transition of Le Corbusier's early style into "a steel-and-glass baroque." "A curtain of glass forty stories high," he points out, "is a daring, not to say sensational, conception which has much of the brio and extravagance of a Borromini."

The Seagram's façade functions, according to Hudnut, as a vertical envelope of draperies that disguises the building's structural anatomy. As Louis Kahn famously expressed, the Seagram Building is like a lady in corsets: "She is a beautiful bronze lady but she is all corseted inside. She wears corsets from the first to the fifteenth story, but you can't see the corsets. She is a beautiful bronze lady, but she is not true. She is not that shape on the inside."<sup>40</sup> Hudnut, in contrast, is

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39 In the section entitled "The Obligation Toward the Difficult Whole," Venturi notes that "on the side altars at Birnau, and on the characteristic pairs of sconces, or andirons, doors, or other elements, the inflection of the rocaille is part of an asymmetry within a larger symmetry that exaggerates the unity yet creates a tension in the whole." (Venturi, Robert: *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977, p. 90.) In a more general way, Venturi defines inflection in the following way: Inflection in architecture is the way in which the whole is implied by exploiting the nature of the individual parts, rather than their position or number...Inflection is a means of distinguishing diverse parts while implying continuity." (Ibid., p. 88.)

40 Kahn, Louis: "Talk at the Conclusion of the Otterlo Congress (1959)." In: Twombly, Robert (ed.): *Louis Kahn: Essential Texts*, New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2003, p. 51. Robert Ven-



mesmerized by the building's outer garments and their Baroque effects. He compares the Seagram's drapes to those of the Charioteer of Delphi, which are not long enough to reach the ground plane, and also to Madame Récamier, certainly a reference to portraits of the famous beauty by François Gérard in 1802 and, unfinished, by Jacques-Louis David in 1800. The building's feet are left naked, peaking out from under the exquisite folds of its dress. It is as if, Cinderella-like, the Seagram Building were all dressed up and ready to attend the Beaux-Arts Ball. In its separation of "self-sufficing surface" and "veiled structure," the façade employs, for Hudnut, a kind of scenic rhetoric that draws the activities of commerce, and perhaps even the modern subject, into its bronze folds. Hudnut's reading transforms the façade—not only Venturi's primary example of modern architecture's "unbending rectangular forms" but also what would become the privileged site, as it were, for the critical accounts of Manfredo Tafuri and K. Michael Hays—from silence and "refusal" into the realm of empathy, the delirious New York of Rem Koolhaas, and, by extension, the atmosphere of post-criticality.<sup>41</sup> The minimalist geometry of Mies's design might even become the kind of "cool" minimalism—participatory and entropic—outlined by Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting in their programmatic *Doppler Effect*.<sup>42</sup>

In this way, Madame Seagram's ancestry would lie not within architecture, but in the realm of performance and theater. One point of reference in this genealogy would be the famous Serpentine Dance of Loïe Fuller, whose "imaginative weavings," according to one account, were "poured forth like an atmosphere."<sup>43</sup>

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turi also references Kahn's description in his comparison of the Seagram Building with Kahn's project for an office tower in Philadelphia in his 1966 book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*.

41 See note 39, p. 50.

42 Somol, Robert and Whiting, Sarah: "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism." *Perspecta*, 33, p. 76.

43 From Kermodé, Frank: "The Dance Medium." In: Copeland, Roger and Cohen, Marshall: *What is Dance?*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 154.

Fuller became a sensation in Paris at the end of the nineteenth century by virtue of her dynamic performances involving a large swirling costume driven by the coordinated movements of the dancer's body and an armature constituted by two curved handheld sticks. At popular events like her performance at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, staged inside a specially-designed pavilion by the architect Henri Sauvage whose façade mimicked the quivering folds of Fuller's dress, a series of changing colors and even biological imagery was projected onto the garment using state-of-the-art techniques.<sup>44</sup> After his first experience of Fuller at the Folies-Bergere in 1893, the poet Stéphane Mallarmé described her performance as "at once an artistic intoxication and an industrial achievement." "In that terrible bath of materials," he marveled, "swoons the radiant, cold dancer, illustrating countless themes of gyration." As Fuller was transformed by the technology of costume and light projection into pure surface, the dance itself became a kind of animate form or, in the poet's words, "multiple emanations round a nakedness."<sup>45</sup> For Deleuze, the fold was Mallarmé's most important notion, making him a "great Baroque poet." Indeed, Mallarmé's analysis of the Serpentine Dance could just as well stand in for Deleuze's description of Baroque costume as "broad, in descending waves, billowing and flaring, surrounding the body with its independent folds, ever-multiplying, never betraying those of the body beneath."<sup>46</sup>

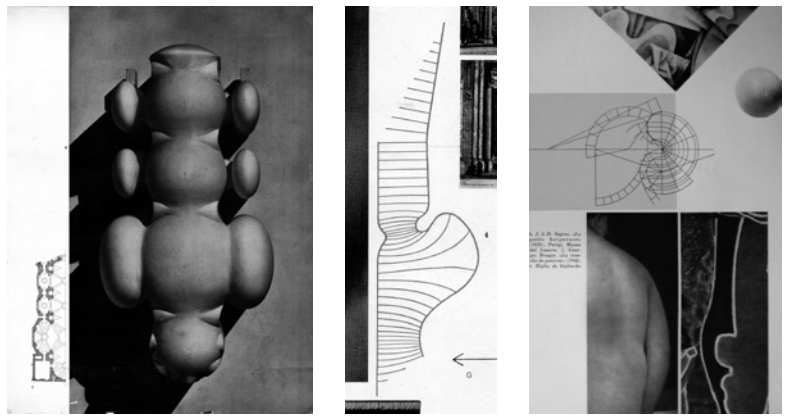
Fuller was a particular obsession for Art Nouveau artists, since her dances resonated with their own desires to convey qualities of restless movement. One year after Mallarmé's encounter with the Serpentine Dance, the American illustrator Will Bradley famously depicted Fuller engorged by her billowing garment, with only two diminutive feet, like Hudnut's Charioteer, providing evidence of her body beneath. Other popular Art Nouveau representations of the dancer include Pierre Roche's sculpture of Fuller that adorned the 1900 exposition pavilion, Theodore Louis-Auguste Riviere's 1896 sculpture of the "Lily Dance", and the artist François-Raoul Larche's 1901 "Loïe Fuller Lamp," in which the effect of electric

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44 Sauvage designed the pavilion in collaboration with the decorator Francis Jourdain and the sculptor Pierre Roche. According to Jourdain, "The walls, which seem to quiver like the light-weight clothing of the divine ballerina who has given us some unforgettable emotions in art; the ventilators with their copper grills worked in serpentine spirals; the laughing women, bathed in light; the stained glass windows with their wonderful flashes of color, representing the many-colored dance of this admirable artist, whose statue, undulating and alive, be the sculptor Pierre Roche, crowns and dominates this little building; the entire exterior of the construction serves as an opening and frontispiece to the performance in the interior." (*From Henri Sauvage, 1873-1932*, Bruxelles: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1978, p. 105.)

45 See note 43, pp. 154–155.

46 See note 37., p. 121.



light on the dancer's cast bronze garment attempts to reproduce the intersection of lighting technology and movement in Fuller's performances. Not surprisingly, the lamp was displayed in the 2008 Cooper Hewitt Museum exhibition *Rococo: The Continuing Curve, 1730–2008* alongside a Meisssonier tureen and CAD-CAM pieces like Jeroen Verhoeven's 2004 Cinderella Table.

The Fuller lamp is also featured prominently in a review for the 1952 exhibition *Um 1900: Art Nouveau und Jugendstil* (held at the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Zurich) by Gabriele Fantuzzi in the Italian architecture magazine *Spazio*.<sup>47</sup> *Spazio* was an important forum in the 1950's for architectural investigations into the Baroque, especially through the writings of the magazine's editor, the architect Luigi Moretti.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps most famously, Moretti's 1952 essay on the "Structures and Sequences of Spaces" uses a series of models representing the negative space created in buildings to examine the ways in which interior space, from Andrea Palladio to Guarino Guarini, bears upon perceptive experience.<sup>49</sup> Surface, in this research, simultaneously conditions space and is generated by it. As a result, Moretti's analysis of what he calls the "pressure" or "energetic charge" arising from the spatial sequence of St. Peter's, a phenomenon embedded in the exchange

47 Fantuzzi, Gabriele: "Mostra d'Arte Floreale a Zurigo", *Spazio*, 4:7, December 1952–April 1953.

48 Illustrated in his analysis of the abstract forms of Bernini's sculpture in "Abstract Forms in Baroque Sculpture", his description in "Structure as Form" of how structure can generate multiple patterns and surface effects, his discussion of the expressive function of mouldings and cornices in "Values of Moulding", and his comparison in the essay "Discontinuity of Space in the Works of Caravaggio" of the chiaroscuro lighting effects of Roman Baroque architecture with the articulation of body parts in Caravaggio's paintings, Moretti's vision of the Baroque is in many ways focused on the fold. Moretti, Luigi: "Forme astratte nella scultura barocca", *Spazio*, 1:3, pp. 9–20. Moretti, Luigi: "Struttura come forma", *Spazio*, 3:6, December 1951–April 1952, pp. 21–30. Moretti, Luigi: "Valori della modanatura", *ibid.*, pp. 5–12. Moretti, Luigi: "Discontinuità dello spazio in Caravaggio", *Spazio*, 2:5, pp. 9–14.

49 Moretti, Luigi: "Strutture e sequenze di spazi", *Spazio*, 4:7, December 1952–April 1953, pp. 9–20.

between a subject and the building's walls, emerges as yet another mark in this family tree of inflections.

In the same issue of *Spazio*, the critic Stanislas Fumet aligns the complex geometry of one of Guarini's geometric exercises from his 1671 *Euclides adauctus* with a close-up image of the bather's back from J.A.D. Ingres' 1828 painting "The Little Bather in the Harem."<sup>50</sup> Both illustrations are abstracted from their distinct media and historical contexts and both become inflections driven by the dynamism of surface and line. Ingres and the Baroque are evoked in a similar way at the beginning of the critic Karl Scheffler's 1947 book *Verwandlungen des Barocks in der Kunst des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*. Explaining his inspiration for writing the book, Scheffler recounts: "One night in a dream I saw a vertically striving ornament form that would not yield. In my effort to locate it, it developed itself into the line that expressively circumscribes the facial profile and neck of "Thetis" in the picture "Jupiter and Thetis" by Ingres... This contour then transformed itself again into an ornament of specifically Baroque character."<sup>51</sup> Like Paul Klee's illustrations of an active line on a walk from his Pedagogical Sketchbooks (diagrams that Deleuze utilizes in his analysis of Baroque inflection) or indeed Lynn's description of the short film "Kitchen Sink", involving a housewife who finds a hair in her sink which turns into a fetus which in turn grows into the man she falls in love with, the striving ornament form in Scheffler's hallucination seems to develop autonomously by forces beyond control.<sup>52</sup>

Scheffler's book traces the metamorphoses of the Baroque throughout the nineteenth century, ending with what he calls the "Jugendstil-Barock." Characterized by an omnipresent "restlessness of movement," this category is illustrated by Fuller's dances and architecture like Hermann Obrist's 1912 *Krupp-Brunnen* in Munich and the façade of August Endell's 1896-97 Elvira Photo Atelier in Munich.<sup>53</sup> As early as 1996, Lynn detected an element of Art Nouveau in his own work. More, however, than an uncanny visual correspondence with Obrist's mod-

50 Fumet, Stanislaus: "Un nouveau Concret, But de L'Abstraction," *Spazio*, 4:7, December 1952–April 1953.

51 Scheffler, Karl: *Verwandlungen des Barocks in der Kunst des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Wien: Gallus-Verlag, 1947.

52 This family of inflections includes the bather's back, Guarini's descriptive geometry, Moretti's energy diagram, Fuller's dress, Deleuze's fold, Cache's sketches, Reiser and Umemoto's meshwork diagram, and even the ending credits of *The Blob*, where "the end" transforms itself into a question mark.

53 See note 51, p. 194. This trajectory is also explored in Stephan Tschudi Madsen's book *Sources of Art Nouveau* (New York: George Wittenborn, 1955).



els, Endell's wall pieces or even Hans Poelzig's almost Neo-Rococo decorative elements for the 1921 *Ausstellung von Porzellanen Volkstedter Modelleure* in Mannheim, Lynn recalls that his projects, like those of Cache, utilized ornamentation as a way of articulating surfaces. This is especially evident in Lynn's collaborations with the painter Fabian Marcaccio on projects like their 2001 installation "The Predator" at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio. The installation was a modulated CNC-milled skin aimed at producing what Lynn calls "painterly effects."<sup>54</sup> Fittingly, the first iteration of this collaboration was "Tingler," a 1999 installation that folded through Josef Maria Olbrich's Secession Building in Vienna, another of Scheffler's examples of the *Jugendstil-Barock*.

### III. Neubarock

In their 2005 contribution to the journal *Log*, the writer Bruna Mori and the architect Florencia Pita (principle of the firm mod and a contributor to the "Matters of Sensation" exhibition) concoct a parable in which a shining, undulating bridge with a "candy-colored continuous husk" called "F[w]orm" is decommissioned and subjected to a process of what they call "augmentation."<sup>55</sup> The structure, illustrated by one of Pita's seductive figure-on-black background digital renderings, is torn apart by a CNC milling machine. As F[w]orm enters a state of anesthesia-induced reverie, she begins to dream of her own predecessors. As visions of "Kant, Goethe, and Schmarsow" come to her one after another, the genealogical connection between the architecture of pleasure and late-nineteenth century architectural culture becomes clear.

In a similar way, Lynn's fascination with "painterly effects" in *The Predator* highlights the link between notions like fineness, intricacy and complexity and central aspects of the Baroque as it was articulated by architects and art historians at the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time that German architects in the 1880's and 1890's "re-discovered" the Baroque as a way of examining the role of their discipline in the context of late-historicism, new building technologies, the rapid growth of metropolises like Berlin, and the complex political dimensions of a unified German Empire, the Baroque provided a stage upon which architectural and art historical discourse shifted away from the political and religious determinants of style towards the cataloging and explanation of architectural effects—a shift, as the *Atlas* might put it, from "what does this mean?"

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54 The goal of these experiments was, as Lynn describes, to use "surface geometry to emit texture information so that, like an animal skin, the pattern and relief is intricate with form."

55 Mori, Bruna and Pita, Florencia: "Augmented F[w]orm", *Log*, 6, Fall 2005, pp. 96–98.

towards “what does this do?” As can be seen in the closely interrelated writings of Heinrich Wölfflin, August Schmarsow, Alois Riegl and Adolf Göller (“Göller,” F[w]orm cries, “are you waiting?”), the convoluted category of the “*malerisch*” lay at the center of these Baroque debates.<sup>56</sup> In the first lines of his 1888 book *Renaissance und Barock*, Wölfflin notes, “It is generally agreed among historians of art that the essential characteristic of baroque architecture is its painterly [*malerisch*] quality. Instead of following its own nature, architecture strove after effects which really belong to a different art-form: it became ‘painterly.’” Although the characteristics of the *malerisch* would prove just as difficult to pinpoint as those of the Baroque, in the chapter that follows, Wölfflin establishes a list of painterly effects—implied movement, spatiality, the dissolution of the regular, curves, non-symmetry, elusiveness, etc.—that drives his attempt to describe the transition from Renaissance *concinnitas*, where “nature is consistent in all its parts,” to the dynamic and sometimes monstrous formal innovations of the Baroque. Famously, Wölfflin contends that these effects are universal. They are just as applicable to the Pergamon Altar, the Reichstag Building in Berlin, or, for that matter, to the *Blobwall* as they are to 17<sup>th</sup> century architecture in Rome. In this way, the exercise of defining the Baroque facilitated a more general exploration of the nature of change in style and of architecture’s autonomy as a form of art. Like Wölfflin’s fundamental query in his 1886 “Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture,” “How is it possible that architectural forms are able to express an emotion or mood?,” or Schmarsow’s underlying question “how can architecture become *malerisch*?” in his book *Barock und Rokoko* (itself in large part an interrogation of Wölfflin’s categories), the Baroque facilitated efforts to rethink what architecture can and cannot do.<sup>57</sup>

At a time when architectural itself was in a moment of self-examination, the Baroque, as a figure of difference, also became the tool through which Wölfflin, Schmarsow and others interrogated the idea of newness in architecture. For Wölfflin, in contrast to the Renaissance, with its characteristics of “moderation and

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56 Lynn’s use of the term “painterly” in his description of the “Predator” project is best aligned with the German notion of “*malerisch*.” For Panofsky, “The ubiquitous adjective *malerisch* must be rendered, according to context, in seven or eight different ways: “picturesque” as in “picture-sque disorder”; “pictorial” (or, rather horribly, “painterly”) as opposed to “plastic”; “dissolved,” “sfumato,” or “non-linear” as opposed to “linear” or “clearly defined”; “loose” as opposed to “tight”; “impasto” as opposed to “smooth.” (Panofsky, Erwin: “Three Decades of Art History in the United States.” In: *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, The University of Chicago Press, 1955, p. 330.)

57 Schmarsow, August: *Barock und Rokoko. Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung über das Malerische in der Architektur*, Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1897.

form, simplicity and noble line, stillness of soul and gentleness of sensibility,” the Baroque represents a shift towards turgidity and turbulence, disturbance and complexity—the Baroque signals a “new mood” in which “there is less perception and more atmosphere.”<sup>58</sup>

This conception of the new, not one of novelty but rather of constructing conditions where the discernment of newness becomes possible, underlies Sylvia Lavin’s description of Lynn’s 2002-03 *Ark* project, an ecological center planned for Costa Rica, as “the current version of Wölfflin’s exaggerated Baroque style.”<sup>59</sup> In another recent essay, three of Lavin’s five points for what she calls a “newer modernism”—free skin, artificial light and intricacy—could just as easily stem from late-nineteenth descriptions of the Baroque.<sup>60</sup> The resonance between the common terminology of digital form-making and both Wölfflin’s list of painterly effects and his evocation of “atmosphere” and “emotion” is perhaps not a question of coincident vocabulary alone. For example, Deleuze’s understanding of Baroque architecture, so influential in digital circles in the 1990’s, is derived entirely from Wölfflin. In a section of *The Fold* reprinted in the influential 1993 volume *Folding in Architecture* that was edited by Lynn, Deleuze describes, “Wölfflin noted that the Baroque is marked by a certain number of material traits: horizontal widening of the lower floor, flattening of the pediment, low and curved stairs that push into space; matter handled in masses or aggregates, with the rounding of angles and avoidance of perpendiculars; the circular acanthus replacing the jagged acanthus, use of limestone to produce spongy, cavernous shapes, or to constitute a vortical form always put in motion by renewed turbulence, which ends only in the manner of a horse’s mane or the foam of a wave; matter tends to spill over into space, to be reconciled with fluidity at the same time fluids themselves are divided into masses.”<sup>61</sup> Many of these formal characteristics, in addition to Wölfflin’s description of the severing of the exterior from the interior as discussed above, show up in Deleuze’s diagram of the Baroque House.

Importantly, however, Lynn’s embrace of “Baroque” effects, received by way of Deleuze and, direct from the source, the calculus of Leibniz, entails a rejection of Wölfflin’s student Sigfried Giedion. Giedion was the most influential of all modernist re-interpreters of the Baroque, and his vision of a proto-modernist Baroque stripped of the style’s historical ties to absolutism and religious power

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58 Wölfflin, Heinrich: *Renaissance and Baroque*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964, pp. 84–85.

59 Lavin, Sylvia: “Freshness”, in see note 29, p. 20.

60 Lavin, Sylvia: “Toward an Even Newer Architecture”, *Log*, 4, Winter 2005, p. 21.

61 Deleuze, Gilles: “The Pleats of Matter.” In: see note 27, p. 17.

focused, as a reflection of his advisor, on carved and interpenetrating space. Giedion's comparisons between Borromini's Sant' Ivo and modernist works like the sculpture of a head by Pablo Picasso or, more famously, Vladimir Tatlin's Monument to the Third International stresses the "newness" of the Baroque and its resonance with a renewed interest in space in modern architecture. Similarly, the undulating façade of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane "persists," for Giedion, "in a somewhat altered way, in contemporary architecture."<sup>62</sup> According to Lynn, however, although spaces like Quattro Fontane are highly continuous and differentiated, they are defined by multiple radii and therefore retain multiple spatial centers.<sup>63</sup> In addition, Giedion's spatio-temporal Baroque, like Charles and Ray Eames' own cinematic tribute to Vierzehnheiligen in their 1955 film *Two Baroque Churches in Germany*, treats motion in architecture as multiple static frames perceived in what Lynn calls (with reference also to Colin Rowe) "indexical time."<sup>64</sup> In contrast, a topological surface, envisioned as a "flow that hangs from fixed points that are weighted," is all inflection and skin. It facilitates an architecture of emergence and intricacy. Lynn's analysis of Borromini is therefore crucial to his project, since he uses the Baroque to distinguish himself from the dominant narrative of modern architectural space initiated in the Baroque writings of Wölfflin and Schmarsow and spread through Giedion. Whereas the "shifting, flexing, and jumping" geometry of Eric Owen Moss's buildings at Culver City are rooted, at least in Anthony Vidler's account, in the logic of Giedion's Baroque-Modern synthesis, Lynn's Baroque aligns him with the aesthetics of surface and the trajectory of inflections outlined above. It is important to note, however, that the countless possible iterations of the Embryological House, imagined in built form, are themselves essentially composed of still-shots. The same Baroque curve can be conceived with tangents or splines. Transgression here is an effect, and like Gombrich's comment in his discussion of Wölfflin in *Norm and Form* that "Prepared in a different way the toadstools are not toadstools, but make a wholesome dish," Lynn's effects can have an uncanny similarity to the ones they are different from.<sup>65</sup>

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62 Giedion, Sigfried: *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941, p. 45.

63 They are, as Giedion notes, "the natural accompaniment to the flowing spaces of the flexible ground plan." See note 62, p. 47.

64 Lynn has, after all, always been conscious of his relation to architectural predecessors, whether it be Wölfflin, Rudolf Wittkower, Colin Rowe or Peter Eisenman.

65 Gombrich, Ernst, see note 13, p. 91.

By way of conclusion, it should be noted that the presence of the Baroque assumes a role in recent “post-critical” accounts as well. In their distinction between a “plastic strategy” and animate approaches—which they refer to as “the dynamic”—Somol and Whiting unconsciously employ the precise terms, subsumed under a common interest in empathy and effect, employed in late-nineteenth century Baroque debates. This may indeed be coincidence, but if the post-critical plan, as illustrated in the journal *Log*, unfolds alongside the mad-cap car chase of the movie *The Italian Job*, it unwittingly retains the specter of the Baroque.<sup>66</sup> After all, the famous sequence takes place on the Baroque staircase of Filippo Juvarra’s 1718–21 Palazzo Madama in Turin, a theatrical addition that was itself all façade. Through the separation of the building’s monumental exterior from its grandiose interior staircase, a space that Christian Norberg Schultz describes as a “Baroque interior world full of surprises and expressive details,” Juvarra created a kind of scenographic architecture of surface fit not only as the backdrop for royal pageantry, but also for Somol and Whiting’s own plea for an architecture of emotion and effect. A more detailed study of this connection may be worthwhile, not only as a way of exploring the atmosphere of post-criticality, but also in order to see if the “untimely” arrival of *The Doppler Effect* is merely a “Matter of Sensation”—in Nietzsche’s definition of the Baroque, a forbidden fruit, a delight that hangs too long on the tree. After all, in Mori and Pita’s tale, when F[w]orm hears Adolf Göller proclaim “Form, you are the only one!” in her vision, she evokes not only Göller’s idea of architecture as pure form, but also his argument that changes in style—the emergence of newness in architecture—are advanced through a process of jading. In a way they shows the complex connection between style and fashion, her newness is inseparable from her outmodedness. As is the case in Göller’s understanding of the Baroque, the slick delight that constitutes the basis of her appeal is at the same time the sign that she will immediately become obsolete.

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66 Somol, R.E. and Whiting, Sarah: “Okay, Here’s the Plan...”, *Log*, 5, Spring/Summer 2005, pp. 4–7.



# Nathalie Bredella

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# ARCHITECTURE AND ATMOSPHERE

## *Technology and the Concept of the Body*

According to Gernot Böhme, architecture produces atmospheres in spaces which evoke emotional effects in viewers and users of these spaces. The atmosphere of court buildings, churches and castles influences the users emotions and attitudes. They are supposed to be impressed by what these buildings represent. This indicates that architecture is political and that architects as well as designers and artists may be experts who know how to create atmospheres. Since these atmospheres are produced to influence people's feelings, they are not merely subjective projections of the viewers. With reference to Hermann Schmitz, Böhme points out that the traditional belief in atmosphere being a projection is misleading.

„Atmospheres fill spaces; they emanate from things, constellations of things, and persons. The individual as recipient can happen upon them [*sic.*], be assailed by them; we experience them, in other words, as something quasi-objective, whose existence we can also communicate with others. Yet they cannot be defined independently from the persons emotionally affected by them; they are subjective facts (H. Schmitz).“<sup>1</sup> Hence atmospheres emanate from things and can assail the viewers, they are not only in the subject, but outside in the world. Yet, it would also be misleading to understand them objectively without reference to the experiencing subjects. Atmospheres create a new reality in which the perceiver and the perceived are inherently related to each other. Böhme writes: “Atmosphere is

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1 Gernot Böhme, “Atmosphere as an Aesthetic Concept,” *Daidalos*, No. 68, June 1998, p. 114.

something between the subject and the object; therefore, an aesthetics of atmosphere must also mediate between the aesthetics of reception and the aesthetics of product or production.”<sup>2</sup>

For Böhme, atmosphere plays an essential role in perception. When we enter a room we do not perceive objects first and later attribute atmospheric attributes to them, but feel the atmosphere first and identify individual objects later: “Wenn ich in einen Raum hineintrete, dann werde ich in irgendeiner Weise durch diesen Raum gestimmt. Seine Atmosphäre ist für mein Empfinden entscheidend. Erst wenn ich sozusagen in der Atmosphäre bin, werde ich auch jenen oder diesen Gegenstand identifizieren und wahrnehmen.”<sup>3</sup> This implies that perception is more than identifying objects or sense data. It comprises emotions and affects. And this insight directs our attention to the body since it is the presupposition for experiencing them: “The aesthetics of atmosphere shifts attention away from the ‘what’ something represents, to the ‘how’ something is present. In this way, sensory perception as opposed to judgement is rehabilitated in aesthetics and the term ‘aesthetic’ is restored to its original meaning, namely the theory of perception. In order to perceive something, that something must be there, it must be present; the subject, too, must be present, physically extant.”<sup>4</sup>

Whereas Böhme stresses the significance of the body, radical media theorists claim that we live in virtual spaces and leave our body behind. In cyberspace we can invent our own bodies. Thus the new media make us independent of bodies.<sup>5</sup> The insight that we spend a large amount of time in virtual spaces is correct but it is wrong to assume that we are no longer dependent on our body. Even if we invent our own bodies in cyberspace it is our body outside of cyberspace that feels what the invented person is supposed to feel. Without the real body the virtual body could not experience anything. Richard Shusterman stresses that the body is indispensable for our experience: “We may substitute computerized holograms or screen images for our external forms, we may even develop machines to punch our keyboards for us and read our screens. But we cannot get away from the experienced body, with its feelings and stimulations, its pleasures, pains, and

2 Ibid., p. 112.

3 “Whenever I step into a room, my mood will be set (tuned) in some way or another by this room. Its atmosphere is crucial for my feelings. Only after having moved into the atmosphere I will eventually recognize and identify one object or another.” Gernot Böhme: *Atmosphäre: Essays zur neuen Ästhetik*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1995, p. 15. [translation by the author]

4 Böhme, see note 1, p. 114.

5 Cf. Florian Rötzer (ed.) *Digitaler Schein: Ästhetik der elektronischen Medien*, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1991.



emotions. In the highest flights of mediatic technology, it is always present. Virtual reality is experienced through our eyes, brain, glands, and nervous system.”<sup>6</sup> Shusterman also stresses that we live in an age which is obsessed with the body. We only have to look at fashion industries, fitness centres, cosmetics, beauty surgery, health care and the protection of our environment in our society. We protect our environment because our bodies cannot live in a polluted world. For Shusterman, a further reason for the significance of the body consciousness in our age lies in Freud’s insight that we are influenced by unconscious forces: “We once could identify ourselves with our conscious mind and rely on its transparent introspection to tell us who we are, but since Freud, this confidence is no longer possible. As the conscious mind loses its singular authority over the self and is to be deeply driven by unconscious psychosomatic forces, so the body reemerges as site of self-definition through which even consciousness can be refashioned.”<sup>7</sup> These reasons can make convincingly clear that the body has not lost its significance in an age of virtual spaces.

In our context the insight is important that the experience of atmospheres presupposes the existence of the body. Böhme states: “der Mensch muß wesentlich als Leib gedacht werden, d. h. so, daß er in seiner Selbstgegebenheit, seinem Sich-Spüren ursprünglich räumlich ist: Sich leiblich spüren heißt zugleich spüren, wie ich mich in einer Umgebung befinde, wie mir hier zumute ist.”<sup>8</sup> We can only say that we are tuned in certain places because we have bodies.

Böhme develops a concept of aesthetics which is based on the creation and reception of atmospheres. In our everyday life, especially in traffic and at work, we cannot pay attention to our emotions (“unseren Befindlichkeiten”) because we must concentrate on what we do. When we drive a car we better pay close attention to the traffic signals. Hence art is needed as a realm where we can pay attention to atmospheres and feelings without an obligation to act.<sup>9</sup>

These introductory remarks about architecture, atmosphere, and the body indicate the context in which I shall discuss Lars Spuybroek’s “H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion” and Diller Scofidio + Renfro’s “Blur Building.” The interpretation of these two

6 Richard Shusterman: *Performing Live. Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000, p. 152.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 162.

8 “Human kind must be thought of as body, that is, in its self-given-ness, its self-sensing primordially spatial: to corporally sense oneself means at the same time to sense one’s being in an environment, means to sense how one feels here.” Gernot Böhme, see note 3, p. 31. [translation by the author]

9 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 17.



fig. 1: "H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion".

projects will show that they are based on different conceptions of the relationship between body and its environment and use technology for different purposes.

### 1. Lars Spuybroek's "H<sub>2</sub>O-Pavilion"

In 1994 Lars Spuybroek was commissioned by the Ministry of Transport and Waterworks to design a permanent pavilion installation in Neeltje Jans, Netherlands. The pavilion can be seen as a piece of architecture that seeks to level the distinction between inside and outside and make the observer merge with the environment. The form of the interactive installation is shaped by the fluid deformation of 14 ellipses spaced out over a length of more than 65 meters. The basis of the geometry is the vector-based deformation of splines linking the ellipses. Spuybroek refers to the method used in naval design: a curve is created by a wooden spline bent by the positioning of several weights at the "control points." The line is not separated from the points but every vertex is based on a vector. If one changes the position or direction of the vector, the others change in accordance with their mutual dependency. Applying this method he states: "the line becomes an action, and not the trace of the action [...] Not one part of the building is horizontal, not one slope stays within the same gradient."<sup>10</sup> This concept is translated in the "H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion" where visitors move over slanted and uneven floors and are confronted with water in all forms of aggregation: ice, cold water, flowing to boiling water, and steam. In addition, there are numerous interactive computer simulations of waves, light, sounds, and the like, in the form of projections supplementing this animation (fig. 1–2).

According to Bart Lootsma, the idea of the construction of the interconnected bent surfaces creates an architecture that postulates to speak to all senses and "affects us physically, draws us into itself, allows us to fuse with it, and even represents the ultimate hallucination."<sup>11</sup> Everything is inseparably connected with

<sup>10</sup> Lars Spuybroek: 'Motor Geometry', *Architectural Design*, 68, 5/6 (May-June 1998), p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> Bart Lootsma: "En Route to a New Tectonics," *Daidalos*, No. 68, June 1998, p. 38.

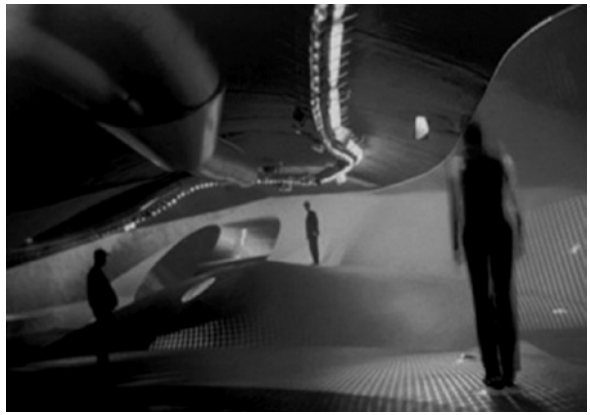


fig. 2: "H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion".

each other. Different modes of interactivity operate together in order to produce an interior that is constantly modified by lighting, sound, and image projection. The freshwater systems respond to the movement of people within the space. An array of sensors and trackers is coupled to multiple distributed processors, which produce interference in the continuous processing of a virtual-real-time model of water. Changes in the environment produce changes in the virtual water system.

Spuybroek's "H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion" suggests that new technologies enable us to create an environment that is responsive to the visitors and to the people who live in it. This architecture promises to affect the visitors physically so that they fuse with the environment. This seems to confirm what Böhme says about atmosphere: perceiver and perceived are inherently connected. Yet Spuybroek seems to understand the fusion differently. The viewers are no longer seen *in* an environment but the environment becomes part of the body.

In "Motor Geometry" Spuybroek refers to his installation "H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion" and points out that in his opinion technology enables us to use our environment as an instrument. We no longer live inside of it and interact with it, but instead we control it.<sup>12</sup> He illustrates his view of technology, body, and environment with the following example: When we drive a car we do not merely sit *in* it, but the car becomes a natural extension of our body. When we park the car, so Spuybroek, we feel that its end is part of our body. This example seems convincing, but it ignores that we drive the car *within* an environment that has an atmosphere affecting us, and we do not control this environment. His belief in technology ignores a basic anthropological insight, namely that we live *within* an environment which demands our close attention. We misunderstand it if we regard it as a mere instrument.

Spuybroek believes that technology allows us to overcome essential aspects of our bodily experience. Phenomenology has described in detail how the upright body has to overcome gravitas and how the body determines the concepts of in

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<sup>12</sup> Lars Spuybroek, see note 9, p. 49.



fig. 3: "Blur Building",  
exterior.

front of / behind and above / below. The literal and metaphorical meanings of these concepts are essential for our orientation in the world and the understanding of experiences.<sup>13</sup> Spuybroek, however, claims that technology can overcome these basic concepts which are inherently connected with the body. He writes: "When dealing with a haptic, three-dimensional body—a body without the distinction between feet and eyes—the difference between floor and ceiling becomes irrelevant. With this kind of topological perception action is no longer ground-based, with your eyes transported blindly."<sup>14</sup> This description makes only sense if we regard our environment as a mere extension of our bodies. But as long as we assume that our bodies move in an environment, we cannot get rid of gravitas. We may lose balance if we move on slanted floors which make it difficult to stand upright, but this does not imply that we have overcome gravitas; it only indicates that we have to find new ways in order to cope with it.

Since, according to Spuybroek, our environment is an extension of the body he can say that there is nothing in the environment that is not within the body: "everything starts inside the body, and from there on it just never stops. The body has no outer reference to direct its actions to, neither a horizon to relate to, nor any depth of vision to create a space for itself. It relates only to itself."<sup>15</sup> The belief that the body relates only to itself makes sense, if we regard the environment as part of the body, yet to believe this we have to ignore a basic insight – namely that we do not create our environment, but are born into it and that this environment will be experienced as friendly or hostile, cold or warm, etc.. It also ignores Böhme's insight into the structure of atmospheres: Viewers do not only project their feelings into the environment but atmospheres emanate from it and can assail them. It is misleading to assume that we have complete control over our

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13 Cf. Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and Bernhard Waldenfels "Architektonik am Leitfaden des Leibes," *Wolkenkuckucksheim*, 1.Jg. Heft 1, Okt., 1996.

14 Lars Spuybroek, see note 9, p. 50.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 49.



fig. 4: "Blur Building",  
interior.

environment by regarding it as mere extension of our bodies. Architects, designers and artists produce atmospheres that enable the perceiver to experience emotions. If our environment were only an extension of the body it could not irritate and challenge us. By creating the "H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion" Spuybroek contradicts his own theory. If the viewer's body relates only to itself, he or she could not be influenced by the atmosphere of the pavilion. Hence Spuybroek's concept of technology and the relationship between the body and its environment seems problematic. In the next part of my paper I will refer to a different use of technology and a different concept of the body.

## **2. Diller Scofidio + Renfro's "Blur Building."**

The lightweight structure of the "Blur Building" houses 35.000 high-pressure mist nozzles; they create a fog mass that defines the building. Water is pumped from Lake Neuchâtel, filtered and shot as a fine mist through high-pressure nozzles. The technology creates an artificial cloud that prevents the visitor from seeing the surrounding (fig. 3–4). The exhibition pavilion built for the Swiss Expo in 2002 uses water not only as a context, but also as primary building material.

In her lecture "Architecture is a special-effects machine" Liz Diller characterizes the "Blur Building" with the following words: "Aside from keeping the rain out and from producing some usable spaces, architecture is nothing but a special effects machine that delights and disturbs the senses."<sup>16</sup> For Diller the concept of architecture as "a special effects machine" addresses the relationship between atmosphere and emotions: "we wanted to make an architecture of atmosphere, a mass of atomised water." The building should remind us of the etymology of the term 'atmosphere' that derives from meteorology and comprises synonyms that likewise connote the airy, cloudy or indefinite.

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16 Talk by Liz Diller, TED, [http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/liz\\_diller\\_plays\\_with\\_architecture.html](http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/liz_diller_plays_with_architecture.html), last opened 21.06.09.

Diller Scofidio + Renfro use new technologies differently from Spuybroek. They do not expect the visitors to believe that they can liberate them from gravitas and the concepts of in front of / behind and above / below. The “Blur Building” makes us experience that we do not control our environment. We can lose orientation in it. The produced fog blurs our sight. Hence we become aware of how strongly we rely on our sight and that we have to activate other senses to regain orientation. The “Blur Building” creates an environment where the visitors encounter the unpredictable.

In an age where emergent technologies promise to increase immediacy and simultaneity, Diller Scofidio + Renfro use technologies to deliberately produce interruptions and hesitations in order to heighten our awareness of the dependency on the senses of our bodies. We may be disembodied and un-situated, yet live *within* an environment that challenges our senses.

### 3. The Possibility of a Critical Theory of Architecture

According to Böhme, aesthetics based on atmospheres is critical of an aesthetics that is mainly interested in value judgements and in separating good art from bad art. It is “Kritik des ästhetischen Hochmuts”<sup>17</sup> and recognizes all products of art that satisfy human needs as important. “Sie [die Ästhetik der Atmosphäre] verlangt zunächst eine gleichberechtigte Anerkennung aller Produkte ästhetischer Arbeit, von der Kosmetik bis zum Bühnenbild, von der Werbung über das Design bis zur sogenannten wahren Kunst. Das bedeutet auch eine Rehabilitierung des Kitsches und eine Befreiung der ästhetischen Gestaltung der Lebenswelt aus dem Verdikt des ‚Kunsthandwerks.‘ Diese Rehabilitierung ruht einerseits auf der Anerkennung der ästhetischen Bedürfnisse des Menschen als eines Grundbedürfnisses und andererseits auf der Erkenntnis, daß Sich-Zeigen, Aus-sich-Heraustreten, *Scheinen* ein Grundzug von Natur ist.”<sup>18</sup> These words seem to indicate that the aesthetics of atmosphere cannot develop a critical perspective. It accepts everything as legitimate. Yet, Böhme points out that the aesthetic of atmosphere has a critical function. For Böhme the creation of atmospheres has to be criticized if they manipulate people and prevent them from changing reality: “Das reicht von

<sup>17</sup> Böhme, see note 3, p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> “Aesthetics of Atmosphere require as prerequisite to equally honor all products of aesthetic labor, be it cosmetics, stage design, advertisement, industrial design or fine arts. This also means to rehabilitate kitsch, as well as to liberate aesthetic design of the human environment from the verdict of being merely decorative handicrafts. This rehabilitation is based on the acknowledgement of aesthetic needs as basic human needs, and on the insight that to show oneself, to come-out, to shine is a main feature of nature.” Gernot Böhme, *ibid.*, p. 41. [translation by the author].

der akustischen Möblierung, die eine freundliche und entspannte Einkaufsatmosphäre erzeugen soll, geht über die fantastischen Scheinwirklichkeiten unserer Malls und Einkaufszentren und reicht bis zur Suggestion und dem immateriellen Verkauf von ganzen Lebensstilen.”<sup>19</sup>

If works of art should not create atmospheres which make us surrender our critical faculties, Spuybroek’s “H<sub>2</sub>O Pavilion” becomes problematic: It suggests that we should believe in the most advanced technology that will create an environment that is an extension of the body so that we can control it. There is nothing outside the body that can threaten it. Diller Scofidio + Renfro’s “Blur Building,” however, uses technology in a critical perspective. It does not promise to restructure our environment in such a way that it becomes an extension of our body but rather encourages us to pay attention to the effects of our environment on our bodies in unforeseen situations.

Analyzing how atmospheres are produced is in itself a critical act because it allows us to distance ourselves from them. This critical function is necessary because of the aestheticization of politics (Walter Benjamin) and the enormous economic power of advertising. Yet within Böhme’s aesthetic of atmosphere the distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate use of atmospheres is difficult to find. There are no given criteria. We can only pay close attention to effects of the atmospheres of our environments and examine the needs they satisfy or fail to satisfy.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 47.



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# IMMERSIVE SPACES AND THE AIR CONDITIONING PROJECT

## **Airborne collectives**

While Marx argues that all criticism begins with the critique of religion, Peter Sloterdijk claims all criticism begins with the critique of gravity. For him, the essential now dwells in lightness, in the air, in the atmosphere.<sup>1</sup> This idea, presented in *Foams*, the final volume of Sloterdijk's *Spheres* trilogy, can be seen as a reversion of the Western conception of substance that associates the essential with the heavy and solid. For him, the essential today has transformed itself in light, mobile, even formless configurations, and so "what we need today is an 'air-conditioning project' for large social entities."<sup>2</sup>

A decade earlier, Rem Koolhaas had already suggested that infrastructural devices such as "air conditioning—invisible medium, therefore unnoticed—has truly revolutionized architecture. Air conditioning has launched the endless building. If architecture separates buildings, air conditioning unites them."<sup>3</sup> By creating an artificial climate, it makes possible that the interior becomes entirely independent and disconnected from the exterior conditions, so that the building expands almost unlimited. Thus, for Koolhaas, a single shopping center now is the work of space planners, repairmen and fixers, like in the Middle Ages; "air

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1 Peter Sloterdijk: *Sphären*, vol. 3, *Schäume*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004. pp. 27f.

2 Bettina Funcke: *Against Gravity. Bettina Funcke talks with Peter Sloterdijk*, 2005, in [http://www.bookforum.com/archive/feb\\_05/funcke.html](http://www.bookforum.com/archive/feb_05/funcke.html) (March 21, 2009).

3 Rem Koolhaas: "Junk Space." In: Rem Koolhaas, *Content*, edited by Rem Koolhaas, AMOMA, Brendan McGetrick, Köln: Taschen, 2004, p. 162.

conditioning sustains our cathedrals.”<sup>4</sup> Thus the building becomes a vast artificial *bubble*, an autonomous sphere forming a new social organization, held together not by structure, but by skin, like a bubble.<sup>5</sup> In *Great Leap Forward* Koolhaas again uses this notion for new cities, as “bubbles© are connected usually by Potemkin corridors©—but not integrated. The city is not understood as the product of common interests, but rather as a new form of centrifugal coexistence of divergent interests.”<sup>6</sup> Besides applying it to buildings, he also extends the metaphor of polyspherical structures to urban scale.

Koolhaas also maintains that air conditioning, as the *sine qua non* of Typical Plan, imposes a regime of sharing that defines invisible communities, aligned in powerful wholes like the iron molecules that form a magnetic field.<sup>7</sup> The idea that technology generates new architectural shapes as well as new forms of social life is central to the ideology of modern architecture. For example, Le Corbusier already linked the architectural revolution to new building techniques when he argued in 1927 that reinforced concrete automatically endows us with the ribbon window.<sup>8</sup>

In *Building in France* of 1928, Sigfried Giedion similarly connected the lineage of modern architecture and the emergence of new forms in the nineteenth century to the work of French structural engineers and ingenious industrial constructions, such as bridges, railway stations, exhibition halls, and department stores.<sup>9</sup> Arguing that in the 19th century, construction plays the role of the subconscious, Giedion implies that the modernism will finally uncover that which has been repressed.<sup>10</sup> Walter Benjamin refers to Giedion’s book more than twenty times in the *Passagenwerk* or *The Arcades Project*, which he started in 1927 and continued to work on until his departure from Paris in 1940.<sup>11</sup> In a letter of February 15, 1929, Benjamin even thanks Giedion for his book and explains that he is pursuing a similar purpose, exploring the Parisian arcades as an embodiment of

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Rem Koolhaas, Sanford Kwinter, Stefano Boeri: *Multiplicity, Mutations*. Bordeaux, France: ACTAR, 2000, p. 334.

7 Rem Koolhaas: “Typical Plan.” In: Rem Koolhaas, Bruce Mau, *S, M, L, XL*. New York: Monacelli Press, 1995, p. 339.

8 Le Corbusier: *Une maison, un palais*. Paris. Éditions Crés et Cie, 1927, p. 100. See also Le Corbusier: *Vers une architecture*. Paris. Éditions Crés et Cie, 1924, p. 47.

9 Sigfried Giedion: *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete*. Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Center, 1995.

10 Ibid, p. 3.

11 Walter Benjamin: *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, Mass., London: Belknap, 1999.

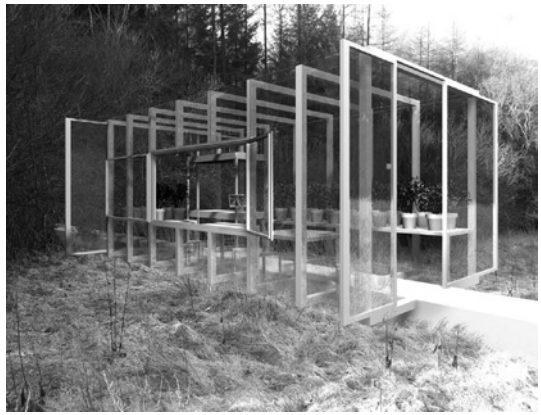


fig. 1: Philippe Rahm,  
*House Dilation in Cum-*  
*bria, England, 2006.*

atmosphere, manners, language and fashion in the Capital of the 19th century. Taking iron to be the first artificial building material in history, Benjamin says it took a hundred years before the social conditions existed for its extensive use in construction. In Scheerbart's 'Glasarchitektur' of 1914, iron still appeared in the context of a Utopia.<sup>12</sup>

In line with this tradition, Koolhaas speaks of an "unacknowledged utopia, the promise of a post-architectural future," ushered in by air conditioning and the typical plan.<sup>13</sup> "The plan without qualities" combines standard repeatable elements—column grids, facade modules, ceiling tiles, lighting fixtures, partitions, electrical outlets, flooring, furniture, color schemes, air-conditioning grills. Because of the sheer rationality and efficiency of such a pragmatic system, the typical plan becomes relentlessly enabling, ennobling background: architecture as mantra, or "aleatory playgrounds (interior Elysian fields) accessible in anyone's lifetime."<sup>14</sup> In this way, the air-conditioned bubble is *zero-degree architecture*. Echoing Roland Barthes' concept of *writing zero-degree*, Koolhaas describes the typical plan as almost free of architecture, since it makes no choices that curtail possibilities but instead keeps *all* options open forever.<sup>15</sup>

### **Physiological architecture**

In a lecture in Vienna, 2008, Philippe Rahm spoke about his idea of an architecture that only consists of air conditioning, sound, light, and humidity within a closed, controlled and artificial environment. His recent projects explore the interface between the material, yet elusive, microscopic dimensions of the ambiance. This kind of *physiological architecture* is conceived as an active, sensi-

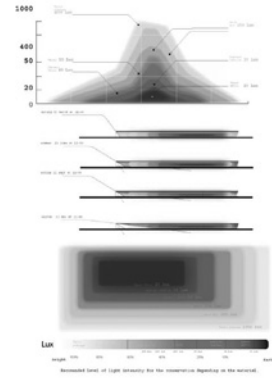
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12 Walter Benjamin: "Paris: Capital of the 19th Century" (1935). In: *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, Mass., London: Belknap, 1999. See also Kenneth Frampton: *Modern Architecture. A Critical History*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1980, p. 29.

13 Rem Koolhaas, see note 7, p. 336.

14 Ibid, p. 343.

15 Ibid, p. 344.



tive territory in the process of perception by addressing multiple modes of awareness of the senses, in the retina, by breathing, the enforcement of orientation, views. A case in point is Rahm's 2006 project House Dilation in Cumbria, England (fig. 1).

The idea goes back to Georges Perec, French author, filmmaker and member of the Oulipo group, who dreamt of having his living room in the Latin Quarter, his study near Champs-Élysées, his bedroom in Montmartre, and his bathroom on the Île de la Cité.<sup>16</sup> Instead of collecting all the functions of a dwelling into a single, continuous layout, he preferred to sprinkle parts of his apartment across the city of Paris. This way one would get the optimum conditions for each activity, just like one would choose the café on the sunny side of the street in the morning, and the one on the opposite side in the late afternoon. As a consequence, the rooms of the apartment will be separated by hundreds of meters, so that the inhabitants of the dwelling live together on an urban scale.

Similarly to Perec's concept, Rahm's projects dislocate borders and structures and rearrange the limits between inside and outside, or between physical space and the physiological response of the user. He addresses a conscious enhancement and exaggeration of architectural singularity in time and space. These specificities take in local characteristics of topography, context, orientation, views, or season. Dealing only with invisible entities such as temperature stratification, humidity rates, the movements of air via controlled pressures, and the route of the steam, the architecture aims at revealing the close relation between human body and built environment. The particular climatic theme of the work infiltrates and provokes a sensual apprehension of space. This kind of atmospheric environment is thus immersive, confronts the beholder with the presence of his or her body.

Another project proposing physiologically responsive environments is Rahm's new National Museum in Estonia, 2005 (fig. 2–5). Architecture here is nothing more than an envelope for certain climatic values: the intensity of light, in parti-

16 David Bellos, Georges Perec: *A Life in Words*. London: Harvill Press Editions, 1993.

Opposite page, left:

fig. 2: Philippe Rahm, *National Museum in Estonia, digital model, 2005.*

Opposite page, right:

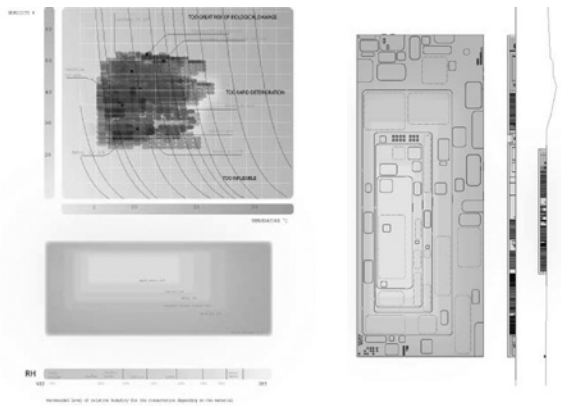
fig. 3: Rahm, *National Museum in Estonia, diagram lux.*

Left:

fig. 4: Rahm, *National Museum in Estonia, diagram humidity.*

Right:

fig. 5: Rahm, *National Museum in Estonia, floor plan.*



cular UV rays, the humidity of the air. A museum needs to preserve the artworks under certain physical conditions in order to prevent dehydration, photochemical deterioration and other adverse effects. Rahm organized the Estonian museum as a series of concentric glass layers, so that there are five successive climates with progressively different humidity levels that follow each other in succession from the exterior to the heart of the building. This way, the entire layout of the ground level is derived from various diagrams passing from 76%, to 60%, then 55%, next 35% then 30%, and finally 20% humidity, and the natural light intensity descending progressively from 5000 lux to 10 lux. The plan is arranged according to this progression, as a gradual immersion in the physical parameters of the artworks, through a descent into obscurity in combination with drier and drier air.

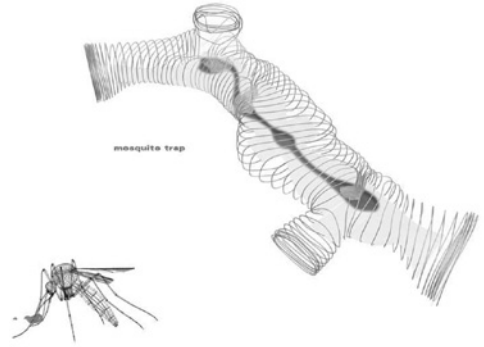
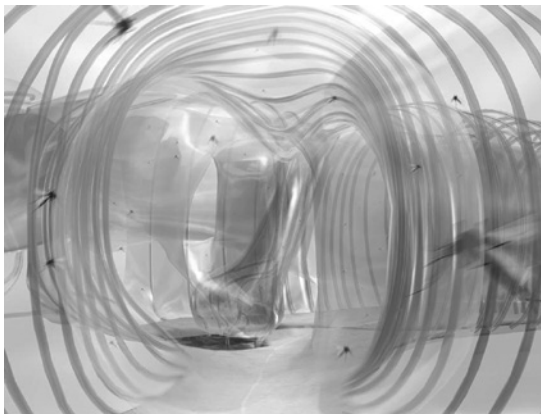
The 2003 project *Mosquito Bottleneck* by Francois Roche of R&Sie is a different kind of environmental intervention that focuses on emotional responses (fig. 6–8). It exemplifies how formless, highly sensual material operates across and through a surface disabling the imposition of form. The paradise-like environment of a tropic island is threatened by two dangers, giant hurricanes and microscopic mosquito viruses. Instead of creating a well-equipped safety bunker, R&Sie want to combine the objective paranoia with a desire for safety by twisting the surface of the house into a Klein bottle.<sup>17</sup> Roche proposes that “what is needed therefore is a new kind of angst-management that *frames the dangers* instead of blocking them out, not to senselessly offer us up as victims but in order to accept the presence of dangers and get used to them.”<sup>18</sup>

### Presence, atmosphere, and the conditions of theatre

Like the notion of shape, the idea of atmosphere stresses the performative properties of spatial immediacy and presence. The central concept of shape is to

17 Andreas Ruby, Benoît Durandin (eds.): *Spoiled Climate, R&Sie... architects*. Basel Boston Berlin: Birkhäuser, 2004, p. 140.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 142.



capture the virtual, a condition that is said to bring forward alternative realities, enable new social events, and actuate the potential for change in architecture. In their essay “Notes on the Doppler Effect” Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting argue against the oppositional strategy of critical dialectics and outline the new conditions of shape and projective practice by applying the binary model of *form* versus *shape*, *criticality* versus *projection*, *representation* versus *performativity*, *index* versus *diagram*, *autonomy* versus *instrumentality*, *hot* and *cool media*, *dialectic* versus *atmosphere*.<sup>19</sup> Somol further lists twelve attributes of shape, stating it is *illicit*, *easy*, *expandable*, *graphic*, *adaptable*, *fit*, *empty*, *arbitrary*, *intensive*, *buoyant*, *projective*, and *cool*.<sup>20</sup>

The reference to a measurable scientific phenomenon, such as the Doppler effect, is intended to explain the effects of the virtual in architecture, its multiple contingencies and overlaps with politics, economics and theory; unfortunately, the analogy remains vague as there is no indication which terms precisely should be related to each other. The authors contrast Peter Eisenman’s highly articulate forms with Rem Koolhaas’ diagrammatic and non-specific shape projects. In Eisenman’s indexical reading of the Maison Dom-Ino frame, the substantial architectural elements are not understood in terms of structural requirements, but interpreted as self-referential signs, which Eisenman defines as the minimal conditions for any architecture.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, in Koolhaas’ diagrammatic reading of another frame structure, namely the steel skeleton of the typical Manhattan skyscraper, is the most potential architectural *diagram* by projecting a multiplicity of virtual worlds on a single metropolitan site. The diagrammatic section of a skyscraper becomes an instrument of the spatial discontinuity for producing new events.

19 Robert E. Somol, Sarah Whiting: “Notes around the Doppler Effect and other Moods of Modernism,” *Perspecta* 33, pp. 74–75.

20 Robert Somol: “12 Reasons to Get Back into Shape.” In: Rem Koolhaas, AMOMA et al., *Content*. Köln: Taschen, 2004, pp. 86–87.

21 Peter Eisenman: “Aspects of Modernism: Maison Dom-ino and the Self-Referential Sign.” In: K. Michael Hays, ed.: *Oppositions Reader*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998, p. 191.

*Opposite page, left:*  
fig. 6: Francois Roche,  
Mosquito Bottleneck,  
interior.

*Opposite page, right:*  
fig. 7: Roche, R&Sie, Mos-  
quito Bottleneck, Klein-  
bottle twist, 2003.

fig. 8: Francois Roche,  
R&Sie, Mosquito Bottle-  
neck, Trinidad, 2003 .



Besides adopting Marshall McLuhan's distinction between "hot" and "cool" media, Somol and Whiting draw on Michael Fried's polemics against minimal or literal art.<sup>22</sup> In Fried's opinion, "art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre."<sup>23</sup> Shape in minimal art decisively depends on the effect of presence, because it implies both a specific environment and the beholder moving in it. Hence, it is incurably theatrical, the shape objects are seen as actors on a stage deriving meaning from their singular effectiveness as *mise-en-scène*. When one perceives the shape object in its spatial context, in the expanded field of the architectural conditions, it significantly promotes an awareness of the physical presence, and thereby theatricalizes the viewer's body, putting it endlessly on stage.<sup>24</sup> This effect of theatricality is subversive, defiant, and to his mind, fundamentally inimical to the essence of sculpture.<sup>25</sup>

Fried's ideas have been co-opted also by another contemporary architecture theorist, Pier Vittorio Aureli, who uses them against Somol and Whiting. Paraphrasing Fried's notion of the objecthood of minimal art, Aureli charges that OMA, Herzog & de Meuron, or Diller + Scofidio are merely concerned with "contenthood."<sup>26</sup> He opposes the concept of shape to that of form. Whereas form claims to be essential, abstract, and immaterial, shape is contingent and situational. In contrast to the abstract and immaterial realm of form, shape as a covering surface to volumes depends decisively on the material. But although it only exists in correlation with matter, "shape must float," according to Somol. Similar to mere size – or Bigness, as Koolhaas calls it – the vagueness of shape has mainly

22 Michael Fried: "Art and Objecthood." In: *Artforum*, vol. 5, no. 10 (June 1967), reprinted in: Gregory Battcock, ed.: *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968, pp. 116–47.

23 Ibid.

24 Pier Vittorio Aureli: "Architecture and Content: Who's Afraid of the Form-Object?" In: *Log*, Fall 2004, pp. 29–30.

25 Ibid., pp. 29f.

26 See note 19, pp. 74f.

performative properties that operate with the immediacy of sensual experience, superficiality, and emptiness.

As theorized by Somol and Whiting, the projective position challenges architectural criticality that underscores the autonomy of the arts as the precondition for engagement, enabling critique, representation, and signification.<sup>27</sup> The original avant-garde movement always had a political dimension, calling for resistance against the system in which architecture is stripped of its social tasks and rendered as a pure economic factor. In *Architecture and Utopia* Manfredo Tafuri argues that unlike avant-garde art, architecture is able to reprogram the environment as a social machine because it operates in real space. Inversely, however, this view entails that architects should be held responsible for all the disturbing changes in the environment that he criticizes. Indeed, Tafuri's view arrogates to architects the omnipotence of which they have always dreamed. But it is far from clear that architecture would provide the one and only adequate physical description of social space, or really constitute a sufficient account of all forces at work that invent and mold social relations.

### **Immersive spaces**

In contrast to Fried's modernist reduction of art to its very essence, Sylvia Lavin postulates the concept of plastic material that goes across the borders of art forms. Its plasticity produces "a multivalent sensibility in which the clarity of view at the core of the Enlightenment project gives way to the density of experience."<sup>28</sup> For Lavin, Diller + Scofidio's Blur Building works with the plasticity of a solidifying atmosphere, probing the sight of the visitors with opacity (fig. 9). According to Liz Diller, the Blur pavilion was intended to present an anti-spectacle as a reaction to the insatiable hunger for visual stimulation by displaying the complementary visual effect of low definition, an optical white-out of erased visual references with only blurred images.<sup>29</sup> Yet, seen from the shore the artificial fog form, as Diller admits, presents a visual icon—while from within it promotes bodily presence via blurry vision and "blushing brain coats" (smart raincoats) indicating the affinity between visitors by changing colors.

27 Sylvia Lavin: "Plasticity at Work." In: Jeffrey Kipnis, Annetta Massie, eds.: *Mood River*. Columbus, Ohio: Wexner Center for the Arts, 2002, p. 80.

28 Elisabeth Diller: "Blur Building, Yverdon-les-Bains, Swiss Expo.02." In: *Information zur Raumentwicklung*, 1.2005, pp. 15–16.

29 Elisabeth Grosz: "Architecture from the Outside." In: Cynthia Davidson, ed.: *Anyplace*. New York: Any Corporation, 1995, p. 21.



fig. 9: Diller + Scofidio, 'Blur Pavilion' Swiss Expo, Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland, 'hyperblush,' 2002.



The idea of a fog building that rejects any conventional concept of space stems from the Japanese artist Fujiko Nakaya who created the first fog sculptures in the late 1960s. Nakaya envelopes people and constructive elements in a fog environment, transforming them into impalpable beings of fog stripped of their materiality.

At the Osaka Expo in 1970 Nakaya covered the entire Pepsi Pavilion by the New York based group Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T., organized by Billy Klüver) with artificially generated water fog (fig. 10–11).<sup>30</sup> According to the ideals of E.A.T., the artist makes active use of the inventiveness and proficiency of the engineer, such as the adoption of the existing technology of fog simulation, and thus seeks to bring the artistic medium more in touch with new materials and technological transformations.

Instead of a fixed narrative of events, the theatrical, interactive environment of the installation, with its spherical mirror, fog atmosphere, a surround-sound system, and kinetic sculptures called “floats,” was designed to encourage live-programming that involves an experience of choice, freedom, participation. The pavilion is one of the first projects of an immersive space that predates the virtual reality operating through electronic and digital media. By extending and transforming physical space, it gave visitors the freedom of shaping their own reality and sequence of events.

### **The radically new**

Architecture today is increasingly evolving towards the invisible and atmospheric sphere beyond the reality of bricks and mortar. The virtual world of digital technologies has changed the design practice by blurring the boundaries between fictitious and real space. Means of combinatory design for algorithms, layering, folding, and programmed randomness, enables the visual representation and realization of hybrid architectural visions. These changes provoke the question how such innovations effect, shape and interact with the experience of space.

<sup>30</sup> Sanford Kwinter: “The Reinvention of Geometry,” in *arch+ 117*. 1993, p. 83.

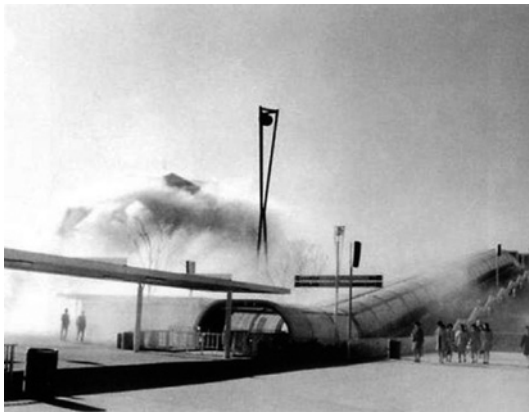


fig. 10: *Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.)* with Fujiko Nakaya, 'Pepsi Pavilion' Osaka Expo, image, 1970.

Applying theories of chaos and complex systems, and experimenting with non-linear and topological geometries, architects have reformulated the discipline and redefined its role and functions. Another major influence in the past two decades has been the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze whose concepts of lines of flight and segmentarity, fold and rhizome, diagram and abstract machine, smooth space, and the event are settled as a whole in a vagueness and indiscernibility where events, or processes which, however temporarily, share a common milieu.<sup>31</sup> They create a field of emergence where the radical new being can unfold in a pre-conditional state. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze names this “plane of immanence of radical experience” as the ‘virtual’ that refers by definition to something non-representational and a-signifying.<sup>32</sup> What will be unfolded presents itself in a plane of continually shifting interconnections, intensities, forces, flows, events and spaces. This elaborate and complex concept of the virtual does not proclaim “pre-formed spaces, objects, or functions but... pure potentials or virtualities, morphic resonances as variable densities of space-time, activity, or action.”<sup>33</sup>

Deleuze rejects representations of the world that are either correct or incorrect, and instead proposes theories that function as “abstract machines” in the process of architectural design, because “the abstract of diagrammatic machine does not function in order to present something, even something real, but rather constructs a real to come, a new type of reality.”<sup>34</sup> For him, creative evolution is not the movement from the possible to the real, because the process of realization would offer nothing new and would not bring more reality and difference to come into existence. Since the possible is just like the real with the only difference that it does not exist, this movement would not be creative but rather means that other possibilities would not be realized. Within Deleuze’s understanding, the virtual

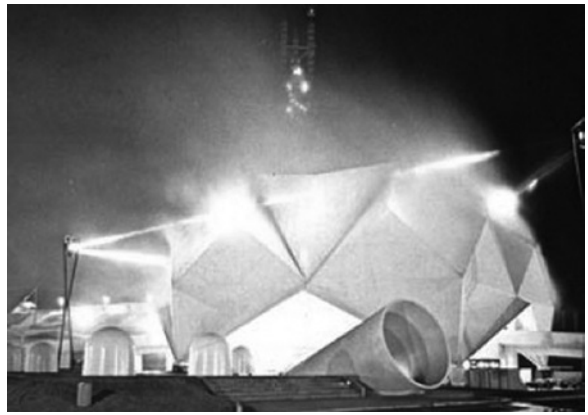
31 Gilles Deleuze: *Bergsonism*. New York: Zone Books, 1988, p. 142.

32 Brian Massumi: “Sensing the Virtual, Building the Insensible.” In: *Architectural Design*, vol. 5/6, no. 68: Hypersurface Architecture, p. 20.

33 Sanford Kwinter, “The Reinvention of Geometry,” in *arch+ 117*. 1993, p. 83.

34 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*. New York: Zone Books, 1988, p. 142.

fig. 11: *Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) with Fujiko Nakaya, 'Pepsi Pavilion' Osaka Expo, animation, 1970.*



becoming actual is the true creative evolution, because the actual does not bear a resemblance to the virtual that it embodies. Hence, while the realization of the possible is characterized by likeness, preformation, and restriction, the actualization of the virtual makes the radical new emerge, the unfolding and revealing of unpredictable differentiation.

This danger of petrification of the virtual through representation is also addressed by Brian Massumi who reintroduces questions of perception, bodily experience, and a transformative effect of architecture by shifting the point of view from the physical properties to the performance and lived-in processes of the built space. Though the virtual cannot be seen or even felt, “in addition to residue in static form, the formative process leaves traces still bearing the sign of its transitional nature.”<sup>35</sup> Instead of focusing on the design process he gives attention to the afterlife or architecture, its interference with the users that may implicate the potential for further change. Similarly, this idea of the new realities resonates with Rem Koolhaas’ theory of Bigness that links unprecedented size, rather than unpredictable geometries, to the creation of “programmatically alchemy,” maximum possibility, intensity, freedom, and entirely new social interaction.<sup>36</sup>

Projects by Philippe Rahm and Francois Roche, Diller and Scofidio as well as E.A.T. with Nakaya rely on a kind of physiological architecture that involves synaesthetic immersion. They involve a “psycho geography” of space, expanding the “event structure” as a kind of constructivist “social condenser” for generating new forms of presence and interaction. It seems that the most significant and vital issue of architectural space is the social dimension, embodied in the interference of the users. The atmospheric qualities and the emotional effects they produce depend on a physiological response which can be elicited in different

35 Brian Massumi, “Sensing the Virtual, Building the Insensible,” in *Architectural Design*, vol. 5/6, no. 68: Hypersurface Architecture, p. 20.

36 Rem Koolhaas, “Bigness, or the Problem of Large,” in Rem Koolhaas, Bruce Mau, *S, M, L, XL*. New York: Monacelli Press, 1995, pp. 506-507.

ways. Thus, independent of the architectural means applied, the body remains a *Nullpunkt*—to use Husserl’s term—a dynamic and malleable center, to be sure, but a foundation nonetheless for the constitution of space.

Maybe one of the most vital aspects of change is the interference between architecture and the user. Virtual space, too, intertwines space with bodily presence, it can be experienced as sphere that creates an emotional response in the viewer. For there is no concept of spatiality without presence of the body, or, as Adolf Hildebrand suggested in 1893, the individual objects exist not as something within external boundaries but rather as parts internally animated by their own capacity to evoke and stimulate our idea of space.<sup>37</sup>

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37 Adolf Hildebrand: “Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst” (1893), (The problem of form in the fine arts). In: Adolf Hildebrand: *Gesammelte Schriften zur Kunst*, Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1969, reprinted in: Mallgrave, Eleftherios Ikononou, ed.: *Empathy, Form and Space, Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873–1893*, Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994, p. 239.





## **Ralph Brodrück**

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# SENSORY TECTONICS

## *The relationship between sense and sensuality*

In the traditional definition the tectonic most of the time is described as a metaphorical representation of the physical forces at play in the structure of a building. Influenced by Modernism, accompanied by the morals of purity in construction and use of materials, this representation gets more and more abstract. This paper sets out to explore the possibilities of the tectonic not based on a symbolic representation, but as an appeal to the user on the primary level of sensory perception.

In this original layer of perception, according to Merleau-Ponty, my body is receptive to the World and in this receptivity “every thing speaks to my body and to my life.” In this dialogue the quality of the thing opens itself to the qualities of other senses. All of these qualities confirm the same view of that thing and reveal the relation between us and the thing. For Merleau-Ponty the most important aspect about art is not what it actually represents, but to make the visible.

In the light of the work of Joseph Beuys we become conscious of the body’s latent knowledge and of the possibility of rationalizing that knowledge. Through the structure of his work, concealed material properties become visible, revealing our relationship with the world. In Herzog & de Meuron’s architecture there is the same principle of arrangement as in Beuys’ artwork. It is the structure of architectural elements in H&M’s work, through which the material properties are made immediately perceptible. Finally, it turns out that sensory perception, as the most intimate relationship between user and building, constitutes the very foundation for a private meaning in their architecture.

### **Embodied knowledge**

In accordance with the basic principles of phenomenology the basis for meaning is not implied in the things themselves, but comes about through our relation with them. Before we are fully conscious of the World, according to Merleau-Ponty, the World already has meaning for us as we have built up, from the very beginning, a bodily relation to it.

By quoting a simple sensory experience by Sartre, Merleau-Ponty explains that a singular sensory-experience is as mysterious as the whole spectacle of perception.

*This red patch which I see on the carpet is red only in the virtue of a shadow which lies across it, its quality is apparent only in relation to the play of light upon it, and hence as an element in a spatial configuration... Finally this red would literally not be the same if it were not the 'woolly red' of a carpet.<sup>1</sup>*

The sensation of a specific sensible quality, such as red, is not determined by my experiences of that quality. This quality is not definite or objective. In the natural attitude of my seeing, I give way to the spectacle, and do not perceive 'red' but in fact I see the 'woolly red of the carpet'. Perception achieves a synthesis because of the fact that the embodied senses are in constant communication with each other by opening onto the structure of the thing. According to Merleau-Ponty, the thing's unity does not come about through a synthesis of different qualities by thinking, "we are given over to the object and we merge into this body which is better informed than we are about the world, and about the motives we have and the means at our disposal for synthesizing it."<sup>2</sup>

This knowledge my body has about the world, forms the foundation for meaning. We have to break through our natural familiarity with things to penetrate the primary layer of perception. According to Merleau-Ponty the most important purpose of art is not to reflect or imitate the visible but to make the visible.

### **Joseph Beuys: The structure of perception**

In her attempt to approach the basic principles of Beuys' art, Theodora Vischer concludes that the activation of the spectator's perception is a central theme for

1 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice: *Phenomenology of perception*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1976, p. 5 ; Merleau-Ponty is quoting J. P. Sartre, *L'Imaginaire*, p. 241.

2 Ibid., p. 238.





Beuys.<sup>3</sup> To bring this about, Beuys reduces the expressive means he uses, to their materiality and correlates them, so that concealed material properties become visible in a provocative way.

Beuys: *“There is a visible world and an invisible world. The non perceptible coherence of forms, forces and flows of energy belong to the invisible world. These invisible forms are invisible as long as I have no eye, no organ which has the capacity to perceive this plastically. For those providing themselves with such a perceptual organ, for them, these forms are perceptible.”*<sup>4</sup>

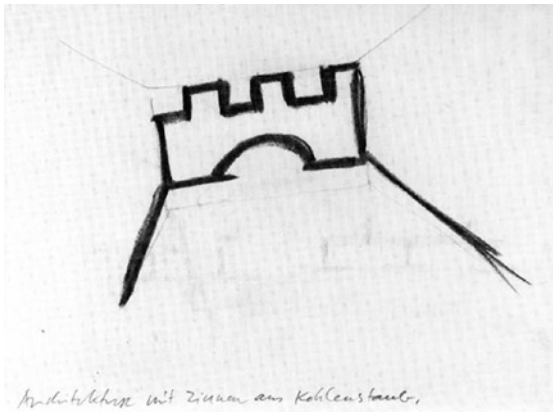
According to Vischer this approach is already recognizable in Beuys’ early drawings. Beuys understands colour not as a material from a tube, but as a substance which is characterized by chemical or organic properties. He widens the traditional palette with all sorts of paintable substances. These substances appeal to the other senses as well, such as smell. A drawing, originally painted in aquarelle, has a second image superimposed upon it using oils. Between these different layers there is no dialogue, but they are in contrast. The oil paint’s heavy materiality contrasting with the aquarelle’s soft materiality raises an interplay of forces by which the weight of the oil paint becomes tangible. The materiality of both substances comes to the fore through this contrast. Painting becomes a plastic event in which the colour reveals it’s ‘plastic potential’. Vischer: “The perception registering the optical circumstances, fail if colour put into action as a substance, cannot be perceived.”<sup>5</sup>

In the sculptural work this plastic process finds further development. Beuys adds several materials such as fat, felt and honey to the traditional materials used in sculpture. Freed of form-principles the materiality of these expressive

3 Vischer, Theodora: *Joseph Beuys Die Einheit des Werkes – Zeichnungen, Aktionen, Plastische Arbeiten, Soziale Skulptur*. Walther König, Köln, 1991, S. 181–185.

4 Vischer, Theodora: “Zum Kunstbegriff von Joseph Beuys.” In: Bastian, Heiner: *Joseph Beuys Skulpturen und Objekte*, Schirmer/Mosel, München, 1988, p. 39.

5 See note 3, p. 103.



Architektur mit Zinnen aus Kohlenstaub.

means attracts immediate attention. But, besides reducing this expressive means to their materiality, Beuys developed several principles of arrangement by which he elaborated the materials' 'plastic potential'. Through the work's structure, through the relationship between the expressive elements, certain of the materials' qualities come to light. The principle of contradiction will be illustrated with a work of Beuys called 'Plight'.

In this installation the acoustic qualities of felt as a material are revealed through the structuring principle of contradiction. The gallery's walls are covered with rolls of felt up to the ceiling. Because of the size of these rolls, the passages between the spaces are lowered to below eye level. In the middle of the space there is a grand piano.<sup>6</sup> The piano is not played; it is closed and the player's chair is missing. The sound material, which is latently stored in the instrument, becomes perceivable through the presence of the felt rolls. Silence reigns, and in this silence the felt's muffling acoustic quality comes to the fore.

### **Herzog & de Meuron: Sensory tectonics**

In the text accompanying the book "*Herzog & De Meuron: Zeichnungen Drawings*"<sup>7</sup> Vischer writes about the marked sensory qualities revealed in the architect's drawings. "Architecture with merlons of coal dust" can be read on one of the drawings. About this drawing Vischer writes that it is really the materiality of the charcoal, the metallic density of the lead pencil, and not the representation of a possible piece of architecture, that lend the drawing its plasticity and spatiality. At the same time some of the annotations to the drawings make it clear that Herzog & de Meuron specifically look for sensory qualities and the material's plastic potential at a very early stage of the design process. "*A reddish orange handmade tex-*

<sup>6</sup> The installation 'Plight' contains a thermometer and a plate which I leave aside.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Blum. *Herzog & de Meuron: Zeichnungen Drawings*, Peter Blum Edition, New York, 1997, Drawing suspends thinking, Text by Theodora Vischer.

*tile surface that radiates warmth*” one of the notes says. According to Vischer in these drawings not only visual but also tactile and acoustic qualities are present.

Similar to Beuys’s art, the provocative effect is not just explained through the material’s presence but is grounded in the work’s structure as a whole. In Herzog & de Meuron’s tectonics, perception is activated by the relationship between the building’s elements through which concealed properties become visible. In an interview with Vischer, Herzog states that a concrete image, which often constitutes the point of departure for a project, transforms into an idea about structure. During the design process of the house in Therwil their image of the shed slowly was reduced to the form of wooden boards. The image of the shed fades to the background, giving way to the idea of the relationship between the constitutive elements. According to Vischer the shift from the anecdotal image to an architectural structure itself evokes no immediate associations. However, the relationship between the different elements thus becomes more important. Herzog & de Meuron’s tectonics create a system of sensory relations and establishes a straight and immediate experience with the spectator.

Herzog: *“It is not a matter of reproducing what is already known, but expanding again a reduced culture of sensual awareness” and further on: “It should be such an unmediated language that it is comprehensible to everyone, so that it is elementary, not precoded.”*<sup>8</sup>

Comprehensive in this context must not be conceived as grasping the meaning through a process of reasoning, where meaning is transferred from building to user. It works the other way around: it is my body that comprehends the building’s tectonics and brings about the synthesis between my perception and my body’s latent knowledge which remains forever anterior to my perception.

### **To conclude**

Herzog & de Meuron’s contribution to the Fifth Architecture Biennale in Venice in 1991 was entitled: *“Architecture is not only the original idea, nor is it what is built, but rather it is the infinite variety of perceptions.”* The exhibition consisted of photographs of Herzog & de Meuron’s buildings taken by three artists and an architectural photographer. The Architects and their actual work were absent. The photographs on the biennale do not show architecture like it is designed or seen by Herzog & de Meuron. It is another architecture that is exhibited; it is the architecture in the way that the photographers perceived and experienced it.

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8 Widder, Lynette: *Für eine intuitive Verständlichkeit, Towards an Intuitive Understanding*, Daidalos, special issue, August 1995, pp. 56–63.

To induce a sensory experience is not Herzog & de Meuron's primary aim. Their attitude expresses a conviction that fits in with the principles of phenomenology, that is, that meaning comes about in our relation with an object and is not implied in the object itself. Architecture is perception. Sensory perception, as the most private relation between user and building, constitutes the basis for this architecture's meaning to me.





## **Daniela Brasil**

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*Daniela Brasil is currently a PhD candidate at the professorship of Spatial Planning and Research at Architecture Faculty of the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, where she has also been teaching since 2007. Her seminars foster bodily experiments and critical thinking on “city’s sensuality”, where discussions on city marketing and affectivity are central. She was educated in architecture and urbanism in Brazil and Portugal and holds a Master of Fine Arts in Public Art*

*and new artistic strategies. Idealizing and realizing artistic-oriented projects that intervene in relations between bodies and cities is her main concern since the mid-nineties; where she preferably works in transdisciplinary groups, as in “Lisbon Capital of Nothing: create, debate and intervene in public space, Marvila 2001”. Daniela currently runs the project “Baustelle M10 > gallery for contemporary experiments” within a collective of artists and students in Weimar.*

# SENSUAL IS POLITICAL

In this paper I wish to put at stake the contemporary compulsive obsession with appearance and therewith politicize the discussion of sense and sensuality. The sensual will be understood as what is appealing to the senses and what is experienced by the senses. On one hand it will be seen as what seduces and creates desire, and on the other hand, as a sensory experience that sensitizes the body, questioning the visual hypertrophy of postmodern society.

The dictatorship of iconic images (star-system architecture, celebrities, or cities' marketing and branding) commands the spectacularization of public spaces. It not only directs peoples' desires, but also shapes them, creating standardized life-styles for the benefit of capitalist power. Marketing strategies tantalize urban life, bombarding it with sexy places and sexy people, where the lived-ordinary-bodies end up being commodified, excluded and/or anesthetized. Citizens are rendered into passive audiences, "product-bodies"<sup>1</sup> that happily promenade in city-sceneries. Countering these "modern technologies for desensitizing the human body"<sup>3</sup>, in the second part of this paper we will look at sensorial and participatory experiences as an alternative to sensitize and empower people and how these can generate awareness of the roles our gestures, attitudes and life choices play in the construction of the city.

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1 She argues that the increasing pace of individualism and consumerism is reflected by fashion and life-style industries. These industries are constantly "emitting" new values and identities, embodied in the commodities that finally shape bodies into products.

2 Torres Ribeiro, Ana Clara: "Corpo e imagem: alguns enredamentos urbanos." In: Torres Ribeiro, A.C. and Bernstein Jacques, P.: *Resistências em espaços opacos. Caderno PPG-AU*. Ano 5 – número especial. Universidade Federal da Bahia/CAPES, 2007. pp. 105–117.

3 Sennett, Richard: *Flesh and Stone: the body and the city in western civilization*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.

### **The Abuse of Seduction: Marketing Strategies to Transform Cities Into Sceneries and Bodies Into Products**

First of all, it has to be underlined that sensuality is primarily cultural. Sensory perception is not only cognitive, nor merely a physical sensation shaped by personal subjectivities. The tendencies and the intensities of selective perception, i.e. what is perceived and how it is perceived are also variable according to the values and practices of different cultures and societies. “Every domain of sensory experience is also an arena for structuring social roles and interactions. We learn social divisions, distinctions of gender, class and race through our senses. Sensual relations are also social relations”<sup>4</sup>. His critique on Marx builds on the fact that he “never challenged the sensory status quo, whereas without sensory transformation there can be no social transformation. (...) By analyzing commodities exclusively in terms of their use- and exchange-value, Marx elided what could be called their sign-value—namely the sensuous contrasts that set one commodity off from another and give expression to cultural categories as well as express differences in social location”<sup>5</sup>.

However it seems that Empire has already understood what Marx didn’t predict: “postmodernist thinking—with its emphasis on concepts such as difference and multiplicity, its celebration of fetishism and simulacra, its continual fascination with the new and with fashion—is an excellent description of the ideal capitalist schemes of commodity consumption and thus provides an opportunity to perfect marketing strategies. (...) Postmodern marketing recognizes the difference of each commodity and each segment of the population, fashioning its strategies accordingly. Every difference is an opportunity.”<sup>6</sup> Empire has not only captured symbolic value and cultural differences, but it has already developed the most variable set of marketing strategies to commodify perceptions and desires everywhere: in the city and in the body. In the fight of places and concentration of wealth, city marketing campaigns sell images and life-styles in a highly competitive international setting. “City marketing” and “revitalization strategies”—done with celebrities and iconic architecture—consolidate cities’ corporate identities to guarantee their position in the new geopolitics of international networks. To be multi-cultural is a trend and every metropolis wants to be sexier than the other. The big stars have their set of slogans, T-shirts and other wearable souvenirs,

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4 Howes, David: *Sensual Relations Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2006, p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 204.

6 Hardt, Michael, Negri, Antonio: *Empire*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000, p. 270.



attracting tourists and engaged citizens who madly drive through gift-shops and become the cities free-mobile-propaganda tools.

After public demonstrations of feelings as in the old and well known “I love NY”, now you should not only love and dress your city, but also embody it. “I Amsterdam” or “Be Berlin” are examples of cities’ campaigns that are investing hard on capturing people as if in a fan club, so that they can better advertise the diversity and of their engaged citizens. Directing people’s desires through fashion definitely makes citizens and tourists happy and money go round. These citizens and tourists—seduced by the on-going spectacularization of the cities and of themselves—must belong to certain social classes who have a minimum economic right to pursue the pleasures offered by the marketing campaigns. Cities need, in Milton Santos words, the “more-than-perfect-consumers”<sup>7</sup>. Please note that we will exclude of this analysis the people who are already excluded from the system, a system which does not allow access to many, but which equally bombs them with the same or even higher amounts of symbolic violence. The “more-than-perfect-consumers” are constantly seduced to do a certain amount of tourism per year, to consume fashionable objects, as much as fashionable clothes and fashionable architecture, according to the more or less privilege position they have to access credit. Pleasure is dislocated to the actual action of buying: “I buy, therefore I am”. The body is instrumentalized, becoming a product itself: wellness, beauty and fashion are the main industries able to decompose the product-body in images created through technological and marketing techniques. The anesthetized body loses all its dimensions, its subjectivities are compacted, and it ends up flattened in a car-window or in a home-theater screen. The product-body itself becomes a sexy object: it is rendered into a seductive form to be offered as an image, to be an image.

As Sennett argues, the body that Torres Ribeiro defines as a product-body, is historically constructed through technologies of desensitization that actually precede capitalism. In “Flesh and Stone” he analyses the relations of bodies and cities in Western civilization, pointing out that throughout the trajectory of systems of social control, pain and fear, we have arrived at a historical moment “where order means lack of contact”, and the “modern technologies for desensitizing the body” lead us to passivity. Even when conducted through over-stimulation of media sensationalism, it accomplishes to anesthetize us. Passivity and anesthesia are induced from all sides: the technologies of information, the use of mass-spectacles, wild consumerism, and also contemporary design. “Design turned to the shaping of pleasure, in the form of comfort, originally to compensate for fatigue,

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7 Torres Ribeiro, Ana Clara: *Corpo e imagem: alguns enredamentos urbanos*, p. 108.

to lighten the burden of work. But these powers of design, which rested the body, came as well to lighten its sensory weight, suspending the body in an even more passive relation to its environment. The trajectory of designed pleasure led the human body to an ever more solitary rest.”<sup>8</sup>

Which are the flight-lines that can allow the product-body to become a sensing-body? How can people be capacitated to rescue consciousness of their roles as citizens, as active producers—and not only products—of their societies and of their cities? This is a question that is difficult to answer; flight-lines may be captured as they are produced. But we shall give it a try.

### **Emergency Exits**

Flight-lines should be ephemeral, transitional, situational. Preferably contagious, viral: with micropolitical contaminations, mentalities also change. It is not casual that Lefebvre, Debord and the Situationists have been revisited in recent years. “The Right to the City”, “The Society of Spectacle” and the idea of “Unitarian Urbanism” are now the order of the day. The idea of “transient micro-ambiences” that transform the city in a site for appropriation and play is an alternative to spectacularization. The creation of unusual situations and changeable atmospheres that rupture with the logic of a given urban setting can be stimulation for questioning sedative consumption of life-styles and embalmed city sceneries.

Blurring the frontiers between political and poetical, alternative urban practices—such as the *dérive* (purposeless but sensorial walks in the city), or *détournement* (re-appropriation or re-contextualization of a given object/space) interfere in the relations between body and environment, opening up spaces for sensible experiences. They can point out exits: sensorial awareness, moments of liberation, and intensities in the pursuit of pleasure in everyday life. Shifting from small gestures to globally articulated activist campaigns, these practices have the potential to foster social change. Through a variety of labels—such as public art, socially-engaged practices, direct democracy processes, connective and relational aesthetics, guerilla art, everyday, sensorial, instant and do-it-yourself urbanism—new strategies of re-enabling active participation within urban life, as well as more sensitive modes of being are spreading out of the last decade. Artists, performers, architects, geographers, as well as social scientists, ecologists, psychologists and philosophers have deliberately blown the frontiers of classical disciplines and work in playful and ephemeral mixed practices. These practices tend to be highly specific, reacting to the given cultural, social, economical and politi-

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<sup>8</sup> See note 3, p. 375.

cal contexts. They try to disassemble systems of perception, thought and action, deconstruct forms of power. Providing tools for active participation they enable to react to the tantalizing seductions of capitalist consumption, and contribute to a more democratic construction of the city.

### **Empowering the Body: Sensitizing Experiences**

These actions interfere in the micropolitical level, by offering sensible experiences they can challenge established or anesthetized patterns of perception. They can create a rupture in the flattening process engendered by the hegemony of the spectacle, or allow a consciousness to emerge that is liberating in itself. A sensorial experience can affect participators' sensorium. I mean affect in Deleuze and Guattari's sense,<sup>9</sup> i.e. not of a personal feeling, but an alteration of the affected body's capacity to act, either potentializing or diminishing it. Either in the passive, product-bodies, or in the active and sensing-bodies, the intensity of affection is central. Change is in affection, and in intensity.

The intensity of a "sensorial-corporal participation" can lead participators to become conscious of their own bodies, their everyday gestures and attitudes. I would like to call attention to the word "participator"- instead of participant, as introduced by Hélio Oiticica in his artistic writing of the late sixties. This term can be interpreted in direct relation to the word "spectator"—the participator is part of the artwork as much as the spectator is part of the spectacle. To be the "participator" implies an action—the participant as an actor, and not merely as audience or passive member of a group. (...) The artist position himself as an "instigator for creation", generating a "process (that) completes itself through the dynamic participation of the 'spectator', now considered as 'participator'."<sup>10</sup>

To apply this terminology further, I would now like to discuss a particular experiment done in this field. It took place in Lisbon, Portugal, between the years of 2003 and 2005, in a collaborative and complex process that involved various institutions and groups of society. It was a participatory project that directly altered/restricted participants' senses, evolving to a process of mapping the found barriers in public space. It culminated in the implementation of a walking bus line, where the found barriers were removed by the City Hall.

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9 Cf.: Deleuze, Giles and Guattari, Felix: *A thousand Plateaux: capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Continuum, 2004.

10 Dervon, Chris, Figueiredo, Luciano, Sentis, Catherine (org.): *Hélio Oiticica*. Rio de Janeiro: Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica, 1996, p. 100.

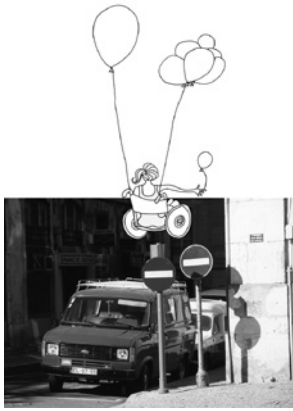


fig1: photomontages from “A book for ballerinas, tightrope walkers, trapezists and all the children.”, distributed to workshop participants. The obstacles were addressed as generated by public administration and individual behaviour.

Opposite page:  
fig 2: inclusive design workshop

### **Metropolitan Lisbon, 2003-5**

“Em trânsito: mobility and urban life” was a transdisciplinary festival initiated by a team of artists and architects in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut and the Monumental Art Gallery.<sup>11</sup> To create a platform of action and question towards the mobility and accessibility problems of Lisbon, the team worked in collaboration with, geographers, designers, engineers, sociologists, musicians, school children and teachers, university students, urban planners from the city hall, transport operators, politicians. The program consisted of various activities: documentation centers, artistic interventions, debates, round tables, games, workshops, concerts and parties. This variety aimed to bring a wide range of guests together: crossing the publics was a key strategy. The intention was to allow people not only to acknowledge each other, but also to become aware of their different choices and daily roles as citizens.

For the discussion in this paper, I will highlight three workshops: “Inclusive design” (1), “The yellow mark”(2) and “Pedibus”(3). They were intended to make school children and teenagers sensitive to the problematic of traffic in Lisbon by critically observing certain structures and behaviors in the city and therefore questioning established habits. Participators were invited to: (1) Experience the problems of mobility and accessibility in Lisbon’s metropolitan region; (2) Mark and map the problems in an explored area; (3) Create a pilot-project (as one possible solution to one of the acknowledged problems). We first invited them to experience the city as people with mobility constraints, which was done with the support of the Association for the Blind and Weak-sighted and the National Cooperative for the Aid of Disabled People. Having their eyes covered, their ears blocked, or having to circulate in a wheelchair, participators had the chance to discover new levels of sensory urban experiences. Addressing the problematic of individual behaviors and city administration, we pointed out the concepts of

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11 Cf.: Brasil, Daniela and Galvão Lucas, Marta (eds.): *Em trânsito: mobilidade e vida urbana*. Lisbon: Goethe-Institut Lissabon, 2005.



“physical, communicative and cultural barriers”. Using the technical information given by the workshop monitors and a printed booklet, plus the sensorial experience of the space itself, they were invited to mark the obstacles found (fig. 1).

Within these workshops, some simple questions were asked: how is the city designed, how can it be used, who can use it, which mode of transportation do I use? If I drive my car, how do I drive it, where do I park it? In Lisbon it is still common to find cars parked over all sidewalks, and if they do not find a place on the sidewalk, cars are left on the street, disregarding the tram tracks, with emergency-flashers on. The tram might be blocked, but the owner thinks it is fine—it is just for a few minutes. So he/she disappears quickly—just to pay a bill at the bank or to deliver a package to the aunt on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor somewhere. Meanwhile dozens of passengers get stuck in the tram, plus a traffic jam is formed; the street flux is stopped. Half an hour later the driver arrives, excuses himself as if it were nothing and drives away. Parents also tend to drive their children to school and due to the narrow sloppy streets of the city center, this habit normally generates traffic jams during school’s entrance and exit hours. In order to attenuate that, the Em trânsito Team invited several institutions and partners to implement a “pedibus”<sup>12</sup> pilot-project in Escola Básica nº1 da Pena, the elementary school of the neighborhood that “em trânsito” chose as the epicenter of its activities. The participatory-mapping of school-routes that came out of the workshop “yellow-mark” was applied to the area, resulting in an official document, inducing City Hall to remove the physical barriers found in one proposed route. They also agreed to produce traffic signage that was designed after the children’s mind maps and drawings. These signs were installed to mark the “bus stops” throughout the neighborhood (fig 2–4).

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12 Pedibus is a walking bus, first invented in Australia in 1992, which has been disseminated worldwide as an environment-friendly activity, fostering children’s physical activity and community involvement.



fig 3: yellow mark  
workshop

Through a collaborative process and political associations a pedestrian bus line was implemented in 2005. School monitors became “bus walkers”: they picked-up children at the designated “Pedibus-stops” and walked them to school. This project wanted to foster the choice of walking, not driving, of going to school together, not one parent driving one child. But within an individualistic society, where the transport system is not yet well integrated and riding a bike is seen as a sport activity for the weekends, a proposal like “walking bus” is not so easy to initiate. It requires a change in mentalities, and that requires a change in sensual perception. As we have discussed before, to interfere in patterns of perception that are constructed culturally and socially throughout history is not an easy task. However, if those children were affected by those experiences, their patterns of perception and action will become another. Inviting them to experiment with the territory differently—where invisible barriers become visible, mapped, and changed—new cities might be created in their heads. By being “participators”, acknowledging actual mobility and accessibility problems through a shift in sensual experience, a step towards active citizenship is made. Not only, by involving various sectors of society (i.e. the primary school, the City Hall, the Traffic and Planning departments, the Association for the Blind, National Cooperative for the Aid of Disabled People, the Portuguese Road Prevention Foundation and the Center of Urban and Regional Systems), the political range of the project is expanded. The project becomes a space of agency; collaborations spread the initiative in micro and macro-political levels. “Activist and artistic actions have in common the fact of constituting two manners of confronting the tensions of social life at the points where its dynamics of transformation are blocked. Both aim at the liberation of life’s mobility, which makes them essential activities for the health of a society – that is to say, the affirmation of its inventive potential for change, when it becomes necessary”<sup>13</sup>.

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13 Rolnik, Suely: “The Body’s Contagious Memory. Lygia Clark’s Return to the Museum.” In: *Extradisciplinaire, Transversal* / EIPCP multilingual webjournal: 05/2007. <<http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/0507/rolnik/en>> (accessed December 2009).

fig 4: pedibus route and sign



The experiments of “Em Trânsito” were published in a catalogue that reached other urban-planners of the City Hall. Parallel, international policies were increasing their support for sustainable mobility practices. In 2007, Lisbon City Hall implemented the Pedibus in another two neighborhoods, co-financed by European funds. In the City Hall records, only these three attempts were implemented in Lisbon, but they were discontinued, due to the lack of engagement from parents and teachers. The infrastructure of traffic signs and lowered pavements remain, but the practice lost its power after the initiators stopped following the initiative. The discontinuity of the project triggers further questions. In any case impulses were given, and a process of bringing people and institutions together was initiated. The debates, engagements and experiences accomplished there might be part of the slow process of constructing new mentalities.

It is not expected that the deeply rooted acceptance for things as they are, parallel to the individualist “smartness” of Portuguese society—cultivated throughout the years of dictatorship and not yet properly dissolved by democracy<sup>14</sup>—will all of the sudden change. But a short flight out of the usual may bring new perspectives; not only to the ones primarily involved in the experience, but also to the ones around it. If these school children were affected by the workshops described here, for instance of experiencing the city in a wheelchair or blindfolded, they might become less tolerant towards negligent car parking on the sidewalk. If they were affected by the experience, their bodies will gain potential to act and to question. If city-campaigns instigate citizens to embody their cities through mediatic approaches, hopefully these projects might sensitize them to act in an active construction of citizenship. Processes of people’s empowerment are slow and encompass a complex constellation of factors. However, the alteration of patterns of behavior requires an alteration of the sensual patterns of perception. Particularly in Portugal, to perceive the public space as a common and collective

14 Gil, José: *Portugal, hoje. O medo de existir*. Lisboa: Relógio d’água editores, 2004.

space, moreover as a space that is constructed by each one of us in the everyday - was, and still is, a challenge.

The aim of these workshops was to deconstruct rooted habits and therefore to contest existing sociopolitical structures. By inviting people to become active participators, the project hoped to foster a type of consciousness that is learned not only by the mind but also by the body. Through sensual experience, what is experienced by the senses remains in the body. Body memory learns and incorporates new gestures and attitudes. And perhaps other modes of perceiving and being in the world can emerge.





# DESIGN INTELLIGENCE

## Workshop 4

**Michael Speaks**  
University of Kentucky

**Philippe Schmidt**  
Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

*Michael Speaks is the dean of the University of Kentucky College of Design, former founding director of the Metropolitan Research and Design Postgraduate Program at the Sci-Are in Los Angeles. Speaks also heads Big Soft Orange, a Dutch-American urban research group based in Rotterdam and Los Angeles. He was the founding editor of the cultural journal Polygraph and a former editor at Architecture New York and a+u (Tokyo), and currently serves as a contributing editor for Architectural Record.*

*An educator, researcher and editor, Speaks has served numerous institutions in the U.S. and abroad, such as the Technological University at Delft in the Netherlands, Yale School of Art, Harvard University, Columbia University, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, The Berlage Institute in Rotterdam and University of California - Los Angeles.*

*Outside the classroom, the influential Los Angeles based writer and critic has published and lectured internationally on art, architecture, urban design and scenario planning. More recently, Speaks has been at the center of debates about the role innovation and prototyping plays in design and has written a number of influential essays that argue for the importance of what he calls "design intelligence".*

*Philippe Schmidt is an urbanist, teaching at the Bauhaus University Institute for European Urban Studies. As coordinator of "Model Projects" in the master's program 'European Urban Studies' he cooperates with international partners in practice and applied science. Main research topics are communicative planning processes, focused on urban rehabilitation, waterfront development and brownfield revitalization. Recent study projects and publications include "New Ideas for Media Spree" and "Heimat neu denken". He recently organized the model project forums „Whose city? Participatory strategies and current practices in urbanism“ (2010) and „Changing Urban Images. Planning and developing strategies from neighborhood to city scale“ (2011). Visiting scholar at Columbia University Graduate School for Architecture, Planning and Preservation (2004); Center on Organizational Innovation at Columbia Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (2007); and John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at FU Berlin (2003).*

The contributions in this chapter address the issue of information based “architectural knowledge”, revealing that this knowledge can not be captured as a whole, but as a complex system that builds on reference, codes and objectives that go far beyond *one* discipline. Chaired by Michael Speaks (University of Kentucky), and co-chaired by Philippe Schmidt (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar), the workshop considers to what extent the designer’s mind, with his tools and his intellectual plan, is embedded in a reflexive continuum between stipulation, stimulation and simulation, and also expands the understanding and reception of architecture as a profession as such. Speaks relates to “a phenomenon of ‘Design Intelligence’ as a combination of architecture and information technology, [...] producing unconventional forms and functions, and also expanding the scope of architectural profession” (a+u 387, 12/2002, p. 10–18). The workshop session looks for relations between the creator of architecture as an alleged genius and the available common knowledge with its corresponding techniques, in an aim to trace and question insights in the design process, which lead to the emergence of an architectural object and the determination of spatial conditions based on innovative practices, the phenomenon of ‘Design Intelligence’.

Michael Speaks’ opening text about his “Design Intelligence” interview series, which appeared in the December 2002 edition of ‘architecture and urbanism (a+u)’ magazine, is worth taking a closer look at, as it refers to the conference title about “Architecture in an Age of Empire”. A year after the attacks of 9/11, Speaks reflected the impact of the tragic event on the premises of the design community. Based on a global understanding, the creative society was induced, as a reaction and opposition to the primarily offered proposals, to re-building attempts that were calling for ‘visionary’ and more ‘intelligent’ designs, when compared to the unpretentious proposals that were first made public. Speaks refers to the parallels between organizational forms with a

global impact and their “operational athleticism” and daily learning compared to national interests that would themselves become more and more global. Knowledge particles of the *orgware* (Crimson) become glued to “the implementation of ideas (software) and the deployment of physical elements (hardware)” in a *soft* approach, where “practitioners at every level can approach even the most small scale design problem as a problem of urbanism” (cp. Speaks, M: Big soft orange. In: Thesis 46, No. 4/5, Weimar 2000: p.107-109). “Constraints and limitations of a global market [...] (are not seen) as an evil to be resisted but as a new condition of possibilities” (ibid.). Sticking with the Dutch scene, this is finally leading to a ‘Snooze’ between a given environment, the “stim” and the “dross“, being the lack of it, in a moment of transition and uncertainty (cp. Studio Sputnik: Snooze, Rotterdam 2000).

The focus is on how emerging architectural practices are developed to “confront the challenges presented by globalization and the changing nature of architectural practice from around the world.” (id. a+u 388, 01/2003, p. 150). The offices that were chosen in the a + u magazine series distinguished themselves through strong research, whether formal, material, technological, organizational, or data-driven, because “doing has become research and research has become doing” (George Yu, In: ibid: p. 151). Referring to this amalgam of the profession, “it is design intelligence, that ‘unseen’ array of techniques, relationships, dispositions and other intangibles, that enables post vanguard practices to innovate by learning from and adapting to instability, and in so doing to distinguish themselves from their vanguard predecessors.” (a+u 387: p. 16).

While several of the previous chapters of this conference reader are predominantly oriented towards critical philosophical or sociological questions, the following contributions refer explicitly to fundamental questions of architectural practice and design-oriented thinking that is often based on “thinking by doing”

(cf. Michael Speaks' article is in this volume). Tools of design and forms of expression, as well as forms of organization and representation, of buildings are key issues, as is the context of particular architects or specific design offices.

The papers, presented during the 11<sup>th</sup> Bauhaus-Colloquium, not only opened a discussion about why architecture becomes iconic but also elicited questions about the insemination of architecture, as well as the role of architects as creators or as servers of systemic complexes. Which are the images created by architects and what do they refer to? Which role do architects take and which means does architecture serve as a mirror of cultural as well as social power? Which processes in the production of architecture lead to the achievement of a designated meaning and what does this meaning aim to do? As Mark Wigley outlines, architecture can be understood as the prosthetics of the human body, a prolongation of human needs, a spatial self-positioning and self-realization in a built environment. But what are the steps and tools that contribute to an architect becoming creative in that extension of an idea of space he has in mind? What can be found and what reaches out between the mind and the architectural realization?

As an opening contribution of the workshop, Dr. Joachim Huber (Berner Fachhochschule) presented different theses on the role of the globally influenced and steadily learning architect titled the „Globalization after the T-Square“ (not published in this volume). Beyond his craftsmanship and armamentarium around the T-square, the architect provides an intercultural mission, that finally also finds expression in his design world. International actors and networks share this armamentarium in teams that work in a transcultural and transdisciplinary mode. These are becoming part of a global orientation in the negotiation of architecture, which is also leading to a changed image of the profession.

As Peter G. Rowe has shown in a systematic approach in his book "Design Thinking" (MIT

Press, Massachusetts 1987), the evolution of sketches plays a central role when it comes to understand the designer's intellectual activity in problem solving for architecture and urban design. The relevance of architectural drawings as a development tool for multidisciplinary decisions, from the design idea in planning, to the detail that leads to construction processes, is presented in Sabine Ammon's (TU Berlin) article "Transforming tacit knowledge: The example of architectural drawings." Stages in the design process, from the involvement of the sketch, to the technical drawing, in tandem with "modes of drawing, knowledge of drawing, and practical knowledge" are connecting implicit knowledge to an explicit form. The question is in which form the drawing develops as an external tool to manipulate bricks and how far successful codes manage to integrate tacit knowledge. These codes are being shared and established by a network of agents, who act on an international level as forces that influence design.

Nicole Stöcklmayr (Universität für Angewandte Kunst Wien), in her text "Diagrammatische Visualisierung als ästhetische Information," focuses on the role of diagrammatic design as a component of the design model. It is not the understanding and aesthetic desire towards an ideal of design as beauty, but as a form of expression, as a description and representation that allows a view and an understanding of comprehensive coherence in graphic interpretations. The author here relates to UN Studio and their design techniques as an interaction of analysis, synthesis and evaluation as part of a research process, where an 'after image' not only communicates a building, but at the same time the concept of the architectural design as such. The author shows that design intelligence reaches from a strategy of architectural expertise to the instrumentalization of concentrated information.

Katharina Richter's (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar) article, "Transforming to Expert—On the Role of Experiential Knowledge in Ar-

chitecture,” focuses on the central question, what value is attached to referential objects in architecture along with the development of computer-based design processes. Understanding and decoding previously existing buildings and plans provides an important basis in the professional’s practice, as well as orientation in architectural education. These objects serve as references while they are repeatedly provided as prototypes to create a referential system. Here, the architectural objects are an initial point to build up continuous development and innovation, interpretation, formation and cross references. Widely ramified explicit knowledge is generated and gained through experience between the design process and project.

In her paper about “Generic Realism—Knowledge-Based Design Practice in AMO Identity Studies,” Bettina Schürkamp (Köln) focuses on concepts of the AMO Think Tank, created by Rem Koolhaas, and on works of Koolhaas’ OMA office. On the basis of emblematic iconographic presentations of OMA’s exhibition “The Image of Europe,” the author explains a complex image framework of Europe and relates this to the question about architectural knowledge.

Ralf Hennig (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar) debates fundamental reflections about the identification of the role of architects in his paper “Oída ouk eidós”. The mystical aspect of a hidden, secret knowledge of the architect is scrutinized in a series of motives related to the topic of habitation. The question about materiality in architecture mutated into a question of belief and a question of creation, where non-knowledge is formulated as a perpetual challenge of the creative, contesting immanent antagonisms, which the author identifies between inside—outside, private—public, individual—community, etc.

Concerning the comprehensive process of architectural design and the intellectual forces behind these processes, the question quickly arises (and arose at the colloquium’s discussion), to what extent these aspects about

knowledge develop as a part of architectural education, which role they play and how they are transmitted as a tool beyond the strata of a personality cult and star architecture. The investigation and insemination in architectural knowledge through referential objects, as well as the integration of the learner in a role model of personalized knowledge between master and student, are surely practiced as well as highly debatable. These two factors finally culminate when it comes to the critical discussion about the overemphasized cult model of iconic “star architecture” as successful architecture, and its weight to influence the on-going reception and creation of prototypal architecture in a expanding empire of knowledge.

Philippe Schmidt



## Sabine Ammon

TU Berlin

*Sabine Ammon studied architecture and philosophy at the Technische Universität Berlin. Study and research visits led her to the University of London, Harvard University and ETH Zürich. Furthermore, she practised building design as a freelance architect. Her dissertation Wissen*

*verstehen. Perspektiven einer prozessualen Theorie der Erkenntnis, Weilerswist 2009, develops a theory of knowledge, based on the philosophy of symbols.*

*In her current research project she explores the epistemic dimension of architectural design processes.*

# TRANSFORMING TACIT KNOWLEDGE

## *The example of architectural drawings*

There is a commonly held, but limited view of architectural drawings. Drawings are usually seen as a means of representing buildings: they depict what is to be constructed. Through the elaborate modes of projection and refined notational systems used in architectural drawings, they relate to buildings, whether planned or existing.<sup>1</sup> We undoubtedly find in this view an important function of architectural drawings. They convey information that is essential to the construction process and that identifies the specific features of a building. However, when concentrating on how a drawing refers to a potential or actual built structure, many other important functions of drawings remain concealed. By using the example of transforming tacit knowledge, this article aims to expand this narrow view. Drawings do not only depict and represent; they also serve as an important tool to develop the building. They are used as a means to create, to think, and to imagine. To a great extent, drawings perform this broader function by making tacit knowledge explicit. In so doing, drawings trigger important transformations that occur throughout the design process.<sup>2</sup>

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1 An influential account of a theory of notation can be found in Goodman, Nelson: *Languages of art. An approach to a theory of symbols*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill 1968. In the following, the expression “notational system” will be used in a broad sense relating to any established notation.

2 I concentrate in the following on drawings as a case study. Nevertheless, there are other elements in the design process such as models and descriptions that have a comparable function. Additionally, novel techniques of building information modeling (BIM) are leading to an increas-

In order to identify and understand these additional roles of drawings, we have to shift our focus of investigation in several directions. First, we have to extend the investigation from the products of the design process to the design process itself. It is important to note here that the notion of “design process” is used in the following in its broader sense. Often, “designing” is used to describe a very early stage in which the architect decides on the overarching idea and how to develop it into a spatial concept. However, when the notion of “design” is used here it characterizes a more comprehensive process, including the whole evolution of a project from its commencement to its conclusion, usually starting with sketchy ideas and demands and leading to the planning and revision of details, which usually lasts all the way through the actual construction process.

Second, as a consequence of this broad understanding of the design process, we also have to extend our notion of “architectural drawings.” When we look at design as a comprehensive process we find many different forms of drawings: not just the detailed final technical plans used on the building site or the elaborate illustrations showing potential investors the future appearance of a building. When we ask what plays an active role in the design process, suddenly anything that is scribbled or written down starts to matter: sketches, early technical drawings, and the range of detailed technical drawings that make the design and construction process possible. Many different forms of notation are used in these, with elements ranging from the very rudimentary to the highly differentiated and abstract, from graphical and symbolic to verbal and numerical.

Third—and this is crucial for the present investigation of the transformation of tacit knowledge—to understand the additional roles that drawings play, we have to introduce a novel perspective on the design process. Design is usually equated with the creation of artifacts. As a consequence, drawings are only perceived in their relation to future or existing artifacts. However, design is, at the same time, an epistemic process. In the design process, creating and knowing go hand in hand.<sup>3</sup> Out of this interplay the new emerges, which can be investigated from two perspectives: the design process gives rise, on the one hand, to artifacts, and on the other, to knowledge. This novel perspective on design, contained under

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ing dissolution of these categories. The investigation of these interrelations will be left for further research. For a taxonomy of design tools, see Gänshirt, Christian: *Werkzeuge für Ideen. Einführung ins architektonische Entwerfen*, Basel u. a.: Birkhäuser 2007.

<sup>3</sup> For an early account of this view see Goodman, Nelson: *Ways of worldmaking*, Indianapolis: Hackett 1978, p. 22; recently: Banse, Gerhard et al. (Ed.): *Erkennen und Gestalten. Eine Theorie der Technikwissenschaften*, Berlin: Edition Sigma 2006.





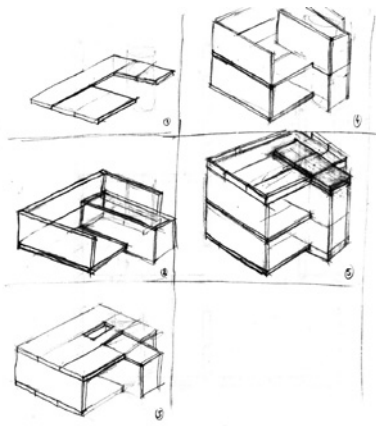
*Fig. 1. Watergy building  
in Berlin Dahlem.*

the umbrella of the theory of knowledge, clearly show that existing knowledge is used, modified, recombined, and structured through design to generate new knowledge.

If we want to explore these processes of transformation in more detail, important but as yet overlooked aspects of drawings come into focus. A determining feature of design is its procedural character, which remains largely ephemeral. Most of the knowledge involved is therefore tacit knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Looking at the design process, we have to distinguish two major fields of tacit knowledge. On the one hand, there is practical construction knowledge. In order to design a new building, the designer needs to know how it is to be constructed. He or she needs a great deal of knowledge about materials, construction techniques, and the construction process. On the other hand, knowledge about the design process is needed. Designing means evaluating and weighing alternatives. It is a decision-making process. Therefore, the architect needs to know how to apply the relevant knowledge and when to call on experts from other fields for assistance. Additionally, knowledge about how to evaluate and weigh alternatives is important. Both fields of tacit knowledge are crucial for the design process. Moreover, both fields of tacit knowledge are made—at least to certain extent—explicit. This is crucial for the design process: when knowledge is rendered explicit, it becomes easier to handle, which in turn makes it possible to check the evolving design. Architectural drawings are an important means of transforming tacit knowledge into more explicit forms of knowledge. In this way, they become a crucial means for generating new ideas and objects in the design process.

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4 For a common notion of tacit knowledge see Delaney, C. F.: “Knowledge, tacit”. In: E. Craig (Ed.): *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, London: Routledge 1998. Retrieved October 30, 2009, from <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/P048>. In the following, the notions of tacit and implicit knowledge will be used synonymously to describe the realm of practice, embracing experience, skills, and expertise. This has to be seen in contrast to the notion of explicit knowledge, which is set down in any form of notations—be it graphic, numerical, symbolic or verbal.



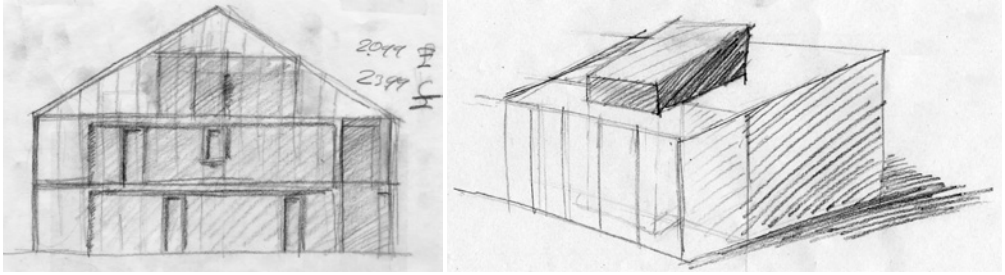
*Fig. 2. Planning of the construction sequence. Opposite page: Fig. 3 and 4: show the changes during the design process from a conventional greenhouse-inspired architecture to a novel combination of heating system, greenhouse, and living environment.*

To explain this rather general claim, I propose six theses. They explore the complex relation between knowledge and architectural drawings in more detail, making the transformational potential of architectural drawings visible. The examples chosen to illustrate the argumentation originate in the design process for a research building in the Berlin district of Dahlem. This prototype is part of the research project Watergy<sup>5</sup> in the Department of Architecture at the Berlin University of Technology that deals with solar heating and cooling systems as well as with closed water cycles (fig. 1). The seasonal solar heating system is based on energy transport via steam. For this reason, the greenhouse, with its humidifying function, plays an important role in the design. The planning process started in the year of 2003, and construction of the building was completed in 2006. In the following years, the prototype was operated successfully as a zero-energy building.

*Thesis 1: Architectural drawings are an external tool for thinking that makes it possible to develop complex construction projects.* Architectural drawings constitute a tool for developing spatial constellations. Complex three-dimensional forms cannot be developed exclusively in the architect's head. Of course, there are significant differences here between the beginner and the professional. With more training and experience, the architect can imagine a wider variety of constellations. In this case, the drawing becomes more a means of conveying information. However, it is only possible to design complex buildings with the help of tools for visualization. To understand them as mental representations would be a major mistake, since visualizations do not merely depict future buildings. Only by using and modifying these techniques—say, by sketching, drawing, and calculating—does the design evolve.<sup>6</sup> The sketches in figure 2 develop the construction sequence for a building. In addition to the use of two-dimensional

<sup>5</sup> For detailed information see [www.watergy.de](http://www.watergy.de).

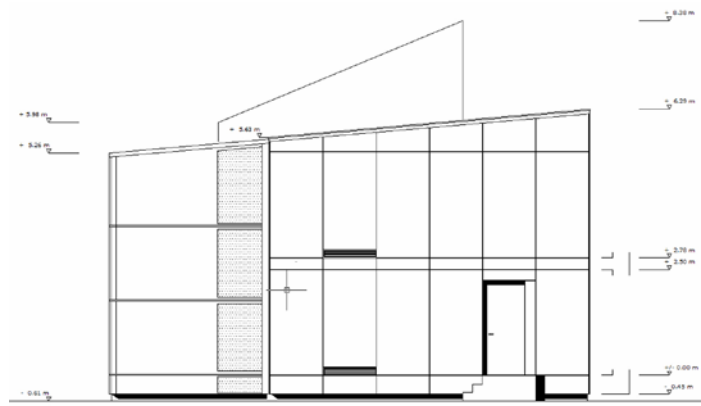
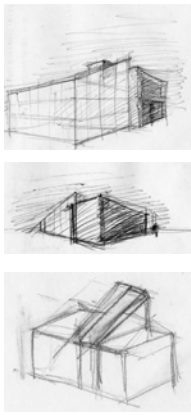
<sup>6</sup> See Ferguson, Eugene S.: *Engineering and the mind's eye*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1992, p. 96, who distinguishes among thinking sketches, prescriptive sketches, and talking sketches.



drawings, other techniques are often used that open up further dimensions for exploration. There are complementary three-dimensional techniques like models, mock-ups, and prototypes, and even four-dimensional techniques if we consider simulations, which give information on the construction sequence, studies on illumination, and virtual on-site inspections.

*Thesis 2: Architectural drawings explore the tension field between novel creations and established knowledge practices.* Design is a creative activity performed by individuals. On the one hand, the design has to adhere to rules, laws, and principles. It is bound to established practices and established knowledge. On the other hand, design is about creating something new that goes beyond anything that existed before, and this requires a framework that provides latitude to violate existing rules and challenge established knowledge. As a consequence, architectural drawings need to serve two functions: they must express existing rules, practices, and knowledge, but they must also provide the latitude for creating something new (see fig. 3 and 4). Notational systems provide the framework for developing a new design. They set the limitations on what can be depicted and described explicitly. In so doing, they restrict the design. This does not mean that it is impossible to design something that cannot be depicted with the existing notational systems, but it is very difficult. At the same time, the characteristics of the drawing tools and drawing practices influence the emerging design. To give just one example: the stencil plate or, more recently, the algorithm for calculating the curve influence the shape of the building.

*Thesis 3: The typological sequence of architectural drawings enables the evolution from fuzzy constellations to an unambiguous product in the design process.* If we look at the design process, we see an initially blurred imagination that gradually comes into focus. Often, the effect is described by a vicious lack of definition. Yet describing it in this way overlooks a crucial aspect: that the blurriness is important for this stage of the design. Design must be understood as a process that starts with a rough outline of something that will only much later come into being. It is not blurry just with respect to the shape of the building, but



also with respect to its general structure, conditions, constraints, and objectives. Gradually, all these components come into focus. This is a complex process of evaluating and weighing in which numerous features are systematically specified and clarified. Parameters are defined and approximate values are determined. At the end of the planning process, a thoroughly detailed building emerges. Traditional modes of drawing support this process. The architect usually starts with rough pencil sketches. Here, the geometry and outer surfaces are sketched out with a few lines. Through the design process, these sketches evolve into the precise technical implementation plans that will be used to construct the building. The numerous decisions and parameters that emerge along the way are conveyed in the final plans (see fig. 5–8). Interestingly, the use of computer-aided design (CAD) has a significant effect on this process. CAD is being used at ever earlier stages in the design process. Through the use of this tool, the important vagueness of the initial drawings is lost in several respects from the outset. A discrepancy emerges between the detailed drawing methods used and the still-hazy parameters of the design. This in turn leads to problems in flexibility and variability, which are crucial for testing a design.

*Thesis 4: Architectural drawings transform implicit knowledge of building practices and make it available for the design process.* Architectural drawings convert certain aspects of practical construction knowledge into notational systems. By representing and exemplifying these aspects, this knowledge can be employed throughout the design process. The transformation that takes place can be regarded as a form of translation. In order to manage this difficult task, the practical knowledge needs to be structured, ordered, and parameterized. The notational system highlights certain aspects while ignoring others. If we look at an architectural drawing of a wall, for example, we obtain information about its width and height, but none on how to lay the bricks.

When we look at the notational system used in technical drawings, the system seems to be comprised of different elements (see fig. 9). First, there are graphic elements: for example, geometric lines, circular elements, curves, and hachures.



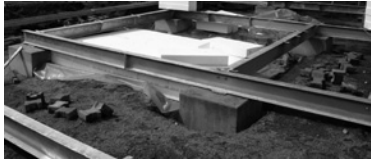
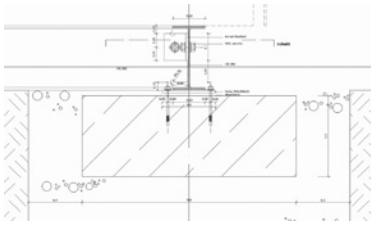


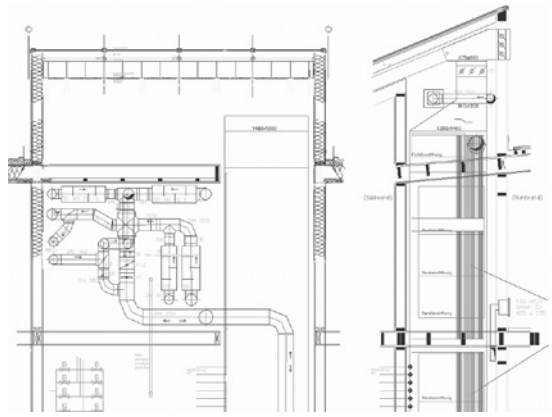
Fig. 10 (top) and 11 (bottom): show a detail drawing of the foundations with instructions for the construction and its later realization.

words are not enough, gestures come into play. The fact that architectural drawings do not stand alone tells us a lot about how tacit knowledge is transformed into notational systems.

*Thesis 6: Architectural drawings visualize a multi-criteria and multi-disciplinary decision-making process and enable its verification.* During the design process, many criteria must be incorporated, structured, and assessed. This does not only apply to questions about the shape of the building; it also goes for the needs of the client and future users of the building. Numerous demands have to be satisfied: requirements of urban planning, structural analysis, building physics, fire protection, legal regulations, and aspects of sustainability among others (see fig. 12). In order to bring all these aspects together, the most important factors need to be singled out. Multidisciplinary decisions have to be made. In order to achieve a result, a balance must be found. The process involves extended negotiations as well as intensive testing and optimizing. During the process of reaching a decision, comprehensive knowledge sources have to be searched and adapted to the case at hand. The knowledge can again be implicit or explicit; it can be the possession of experts or made available in textbooks, journals, catalogs, or electronic resources. The architectural drawings help to find a solution through testing. By sketching several options, advantages and disadvantages can be explored and defined. By incorporating the information into the drawing, a vast amount of information is managed. Solutions can be visualized and, in the course of visualization, verified.

Further research needs to be done to show whether the six theses I have proposed here hold. If they do, then drawings are not just representations; they do not just put on paper what architects already have in their heads. Rather, what we observe taking place in the design process are substantial processes of transformation that embody implicit construction knowledge and implicit design knowledge, giving this knowledge explicit form. If proven, these findings will lead to a much stronger claim: the thesis that certain explicit forms of knowledge are crucial preconditions for the design process. We can even put this conclusion into more straightforward terms: design is only possible through certain means of

*Fig. 12: shows a section of the installations room and shaft integrating demands of building construction, building services, solar technology, energy, and the heating system.*



rendering knowledge explicit. But one needs to be careful here: it would be a mistake to conclude that more explicit forms of knowledge are always better for the design process. It is important to differentiate carefully according to the phase of the evolving design. Interestingly enough, the process of turning implicit forms of knowledge into explicit ones is more important at some stages than at others. We have seen that the impact of information conveyed in the drawings increases with the development from rather unspecific plans to very detailed ones. Whereas too much explicitness hampers the evolving design in the beginning, at the end of the process one needs as much explicitness as possible.

Besides its systematic implications, the assertion that certain means of rendering knowledge explicit are required during the design process gives also rise to an interesting historical dimension of the problem. For centuries, architectural knowledge was handed down mainly as practical and implicit knowledge. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, this knowledge became more and more mediated by notational systems—on the one hand, as civil and structural engineering became increasingly scientific, and on the other, as industrialization demanded new means of transmitting information. The need for more explicit forms of architectural knowledge must be seen in relation to the increasing complexity of building projects, the acceleration of planning and construction processes, and the specialization, internationalization, and automation of working procedures. At the same time, the notational system of architecture has also evolved significantly to convey more reliable information. Unlike our alphabetical system, which has gone through centuries of modification and improvement, the notational system of architecture is relatively new and still under development. Looking at these changes—including the shift to computer-based design processes with the turn of the twenty-first century—, the historical perspective also promises to reveal insights into the function of implicit and explicit forms of knowledge in architectural drawings and their transformational potential.

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*Veröffentlichungen: „Architektur ohne Maßstab. Digitale Visualisierungen im Entwurfsprozess“, in: Ingeborg Reichle, Steffen Siegel (Hg.), Maßlose Bilder. Visuelle Ästhetik der Transgression, München 2009, S. 279 - 294; „Das digitale Bild des Architekturentwurfs“, in: Gerald Bast, Florian Bettel, Barbara Hollendonner (Hg.), uni\*vers. Junge Forschung in Wissenschaft und Kunst, Wien 2010; S. 59 - 69.*

# DIAGRAMMATISCHE VISUALISIERUNG ALS ÄSTHETISCHE INFORMATION

Der in den letzten Jahren in der Architektur inflationär verwendete Begriff ‚Research‘, ein Konzept, in dem nahezu jedes Entwurfsverfahren als Forschungsprozess betrachtet wurde, kommt heute differenzierter zur Anwendung.<sup>1</sup> Deutlich wird das am Beispiel UN Studio, wenn Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos proklamieren, dass sie ihre Entwürfe nicht mehr für individuelle Einzelfälle entwickeln, sondern mit parametrischen Entwurfstechniken das Designmodell als ein neues Paradigma in ihre Praxis integrieren konnten. UN Studio reagiert damit auch auf die fundamental veränderten Rahmenbedingungen im digitalen Zeitalter einer neuen Weltordnung<sup>2</sup>, in der sich das Architekturbüro mit adaptierten Methoden neu positioniert und seine wissens- und entwurfsgenerierenden Techniken instrumentalisiert.

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1 Siehe dazu stellvertretend die Beiträge in *Daidalos* 69/70 (1998/1999).

2 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri: *Empire. Die Neue Weltordnung*, Frankfurt/M.2002 [2000]. In einer Ausgabe von *AD: Architectural Design* mit dem programmatischen Titel „Collective Intelligence in Design“ wiederholt Michael Hardt die mit Antonio Negri gemeinsam formulierten Überlegungen: „[...] the production of immaterial goods such as knowledge, images, code, communication circuits and even affective relationships is playing a more important role in the economy.“ Siehe Michael Hardt, Christopher Hight: „Designing Commonsplaces: Riffing with Michael Hardt on the Multitude and Collective Intelligence“. In: *AD: Architectural Design* 76,5 (2006), S. 70–73; hier S. 71.

### Die Entwicklung des Diagramms zum Designmodell

2006 stellten Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos in ihrer vorerst letzten umfangreichen Monografie *Design models*<sup>3</sup> gebaute und ungebraute Projekte vor und verdeutlichten außerdem mit zwei Essays (*Design models*<sup>4</sup> und *After image*<sup>5</sup>) ihre architektonischen und theoretischen Konzepte. Die Entwurfsprinzipien waren in der 1999 erschienenen dreibändigen Publikation *Move*<sup>6</sup> unter ‚Imagination‘, ‚Techniques‘ und ‚Effects‘ zusammengefasst und basierten auf der Verwendung des Diagramms als Entwurfsgenerator („abstrakte Maschine“).<sup>7</sup> Sieben Jahre später haben sich diese Prinzipien zu fünf Typen von Designmodellen erweitert: ‚Inclusive Principle‘, ‚Mathematical Model‘, ‚Blob-to-Box Model‘, ‚Y-Model‘ und ‚Deep-Planning Principle‘. Diese begrifflichen Bestimmungen lassen sich allerdings bereits in *Move* finden – ohne dass sie als Modelle deklariert waren. Kann die These von Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos, dass „an image is a diagram when it is stronger than its interpretations“,<sup>8</sup> auch auf eine Modelldefinition übertragen werden? Denn schon Diagramme fungierten im Entwurfsprozess von UN Studio auf mehreren Ebenen: als Inspiration, als Zwischenmedium, als Katalysator, als Matrix oder auch als Organisationsprinzip.<sup>9</sup> Die systematische Verwendung des Diagramms diene als ein Instrumentarium der Generierung, der Repräsentation

3 Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos: *UN Studio - Design models. Architecture, Urbanism, Infrastructure*, London 2006.

4 Ebd., S. 10–23.

5 Ebd., S. 370–379.

6 Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos: *UN Studio - Move: Imagination/Techniques/Effects*, Amsterdam 1999.

7 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari: „587 v. Chr. – 70 n. Chr. – Über einige Zeichenregime“. In: dies.: *Tausend Plateaus. Kapitalismus und Schizophrenie*, Berlin 1992 [1980], S. 155–203; hier S. 195ff. Greg Lynn verweist in seiner Analyse zu Ben van Berkel's Diagrammen erstmals auf die konzeptuelle Verwendung des Diagramms als „abstrakte Maschine“. Siehe dazu Greg Lynn: „formas de expresión. el potencial proto-funcional de los diagramas en el diseño arquitectónico / forms of expression: the proto-functional potential of diagrams in architectural design“. In: *El Croquis* 72,1 (1995), S. 16–31. Siehe außerdem vor allem die Beiträge in den Themenheften zum Diagramm in der Architektur in den Zeitschriften *OASE* 48 (1998), *ANY* 23 (1998), *Daidalos* 74 (2000) und *UMBau* 19 (2002) sowie Peter Eisenman: *Diagram Diaries*, London 1999. In letzterem Band schreibt R. E. Somol in der Einleitung: „In general, the fundamental technique and procedure of architectural knowledge has seemingly shifted, over the second half of the twentieth century, from the drawing to the diagram.“ S. 7.

8 Van Berkel+Bos 1999, wie Anm. 6; hier Band 2: *Techniques*, S. 20.

9 Äußerst kritisch rezensierten Mende und Ruby UN Studios Manifest *Move* und bewerteten besonders den Diagrammbegriff von Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos als prekär. Siehe Julia von Mende, Andreas Ruby: „Hybride Hybris. „Move“ – das dreibändige Manifest von UN Studio“. In: *Daidalos* 74 (2000), S. 80–85.

und des Transfers des architektonischen Konzepts. Diagramme und Modelle entsprechen dabei denselben Klassifikationskriterien.<sup>10</sup>

Anlässlich der Ausstellung *Architectures non standard* im Pariser Centre Pompidou im Jahr 2003 veröffentlichten Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos ein Essay,<sup>11</sup> in dem sie schildern, dass sich einige Diagramme in unterschiedlichen Entwürfen wiederholten. Beispielsweise wurde die Klein'sche Flasche, eine dreidimensionale Variante der Möbius-Schleife,<sup>12</sup> in mehreren Projekten verwendet. UN Studio begannen Bilder wie die der Klein'schen Flasche als „rich diagrams“<sup>13</sup> zu betrachten, um sie in weiterer Folge unter dem Begriff ‚Design models‘ neu zu bestimmen.<sup>14</sup> Sie beschreiben dabei ihre Entwurfstechnik als eine Interaktion von Analyse, Synthese und Evaluierung,<sup>15</sup> in der die Parameter definiert werden müssen, um das Designmodell als ein Instrumentarium anzuwenden, dass die komplexe Entwurfsbearbeitung überhaupt erst zulässt.

UN Studio entwickelte Modelle auf der Grundlage von Bildern mit Diagrammfunktionen. Das, was das Modell transportiert, könne jedoch nicht wie beim Diagramm auf ein einzelnes Bild komprimiert werden, obwohl die Wahl eines „key image“ die Repräsentation der Entwurfsmethode ermögliche.<sup>16</sup> Die wissens- und entwurfsgenerierenden Qualitäten von Modellen erlauben dabei eine methodologische Funktionalisierung und unterstützen das als Forschungsprozess verstandene Entwurfsverfahren. Das Designmodell steht nicht für den Einzelfall, sondern es wird nach dem modernen (natur)wissenschaftlichen Schema ein allgemeingültiges Entwurfsmodell konzipiert. Die Intention von UN Studio wird nun deutlich: Der parametrische Entwurf – oder „parametricism“,<sup>17</sup> wie es Patrik Schumacher

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10 Siehe Nelson Goodman: *Sprachen der Kunst. Entwurf einer Symboltheorie*, Frankfurt/M. 1995 [1968], S. 165.

11 Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos: „UN studio au travail et à l'œuvre“. In: Centre Pompidou (Hg.): *Architectures non standard*, Paris 2003, S. 186–187. Ein Jahr später wieder abgedruckt unter Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos: „From Parametric Design to Inclusiveness“. In: *DD: Design Document* 7 (2004), S. 8–13, sowie Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos: „From Diagram to Design Model / Vom Diagramm zum Entwurfsmodell“. In: Peter Cachola Schmal (Hg.): *UN Studio: Evolution of Space / Entwicklung des Raums*, Frankfurt/M. 2006, S. 22–29.

12 Siehe dazu auch Kari Jormakka: *Flying Dutchmen. Motion in Architecture*, Basel, Boston, Berlin 2002, S. 40ff.

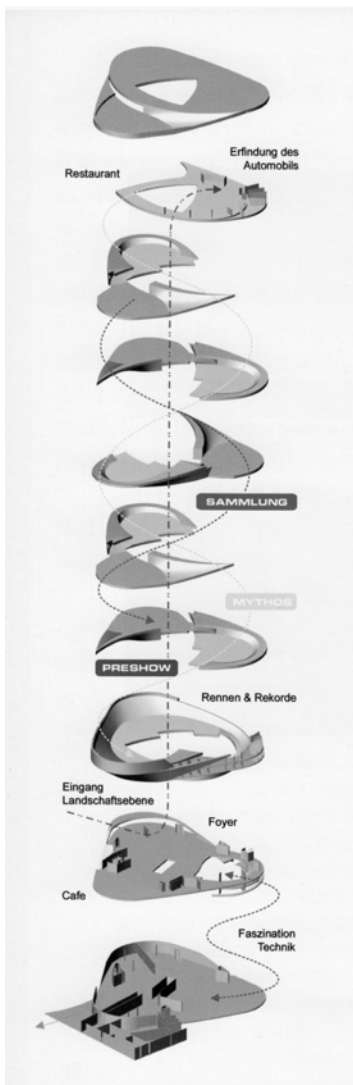
13 Van Berkel+Bos 2004, wie Anm. 9, S. 12. Zitiert nach der englischen Ersterscheinung des Essays.

14 Die Klein'sche Flasche ist das „key image“ des ‚Mathematical Model‘ bei UN Studio. Siehe Abb. 10.

15 Van Berkel+Bos 2006, wie Anm. 3, S. 19.

16 Ebd.

17 Patrik Schumacher: „Style as Research Programme“. In: Tom Verebes (Hg.): *DRL TEN. A De-*



formuliert – legitimiert den eigenen wissenschaftlichen Anspruch. Schumacher bewertet den parametrischen Entwurf als einen neuen Stil der Avantgarde in Analogie zu neuen wissenschaftlichen Paradigmen (nach Thomas S. Kuhn)<sup>18</sup> und stellt die These auf, dass „styles are design research programmes“ (nach Imre Lakatos),<sup>19</sup>

Ein UN Studio'sches Designmodell ist ein Kompendium mehrerer Entwurfsprinzipien, enthält aber keine standortspezifischen Informationen.<sup>20</sup> Designmodelle sind Prototypen mit epistemischen Funktionen, die in konkrete Entwurfsprogramme transportiert werden und zu anwendungsspezifischen Ergebnissen führen können.

### **Mathematisches Modell und ästhetische Information: Mercedes-Benz Museum**

Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos bezeichnen das neue Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart als ihr vorläufiges *opus magnum*, als Manifestation ihres jahrelangen architektonischen Forschungsprozesses.<sup>21</sup> Das Entwurfskonzept, dokumentiert in Plänen, Diagrammen, Visualisierungen und Fotografien aus dem Wettbewerb bis zur Realisierung, wurde nach dem Gewinn des internationalen Wettbewerbs 2002 in mehreren

*sign Research Compendium*, London 2008, S. 11–13. Bereits 1984 unternahm Stanford Anderson einen Versuch einer Bestimmung von „design method“ und „design research“ und analysierte Entwurfsarbeiten von Le Corbusier mit Imre Lakatos' Definition von „research programmes“.

Siehe dazu Stanford Anderson: „Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs“. In: *Design Studies* 5.3 (1984), S. 146–150 und ders.: „Architectural Research Programs in the Work of Le Corbusier“. In: *Design Studies* 5.3 (1984), S. 151–158. Wiederabgedruckt in K. Michael Hays (Hg.): *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, Cambridge (Mass.), London 1998, S. 492–505.

18 Thomas S. Kuhn: *Die Struktur wissenschaftlicher Revolutionen*, Frankfurt/M. 1976 [1970].

19 Imre Lakatos: *Die Methodologie der wissenschaftlichen Forschungsprogramme*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden 1982 [1978].

20 Siehe Van Berkel+Bos 2006, wie Anm. 3, S. 18.

21 Ben van Berkel im Interview mit Emiliano Gandolfi: „Museo Mercedes-Benz. Stoccarda – Germania / Mercedes-Benz Museum. Stuttgart – Germany. Ben van Berkel, UN Studio“. In: *The Plan* 14 (2006), S. 46–61; S. 53.

Gegenüberliegende Seite:

Abb. 1: UN Studio: Mercedes-Benz Museum (Explosionszeichnung der Kleeblattgeometrie), Stuttgart 2002-2006.

Rechts: Abb. 2: UN Studio: Mercedes-Benz Museum (Kleeblattschlinge mit Quartik), Stuttgart 2002-2006.

Daneben: Abb. 3: UN Studio: Mercedes-Benz Museum (Landschaft der Mobilität), Stuttgart 2002-2006.



Ausstellungen und Publikationen präsentiert.<sup>22</sup> Noch vor der Bucherscheinung von *Design models* und vor der Eröffnung des neuen Mercedes-Benz Museums zeigten UN Studio in einer Einzelausstellung im Deutschen Architekturmuseum ihre nach den fünf Designmodellen exemplarisch eingeordneten Entwurfsprojekte. Als prägnanteste Verkörperung des ‚Mathematical model‘ wurde in dieser Ausstellung das Mercedes-Benz Museum gewählt.

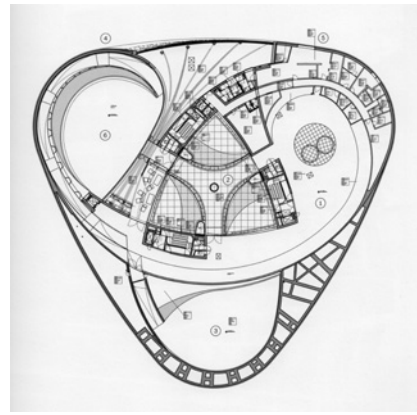
Nach der Eröffnung im Mai 2006 erschien ein eigens zum Mercedes-Benz Museum konzipierter Band,<sup>23</sup> der nicht nur detailliert den Entwurf-, Planungs- und Bauprozess und die Ausstellungskonzeption vorstellt, sondern darüber hinaus mit einer Reihe von Bildsequenzen eine Anleitung zur visuellen Wahrnehmung des Bauwerks ist.

Der Entwurf basiert auf einer Fläche einer polyzentrischen Figur (Kleeblattschlinge) (Abb. 1), die mit der Doppelhelix die Gestalt des Gebäudes formt. Fotografien dreidimensionaler Knotenflächen und eines Mathematischen Modells (Quartik)<sup>24</sup> (Abb. 2) fungierten in der Übersetzung des Entwurfs als Referenzbilder. Das Museum wurde neben der Autobahn (Abb. 3) in einer Industriegegend etwas außerhalb von Stuttgart errichtet und der Entwurf für den deutschen Automobilhersteller war passenderweise von vornherein auf die bildliche Wahrnehmung der passierenden Autofahrer konzipiert (Abb. 4). Die Außenansicht des

22 Siehe dazu die Ausstellungskataloge Aedes Berlin (Hg.): *Mercedes-Benz Museum. Internationaler Architekturwettbewerb / International Architectural Competition*, Berlin 2002; WECHSELRAUM Bund Deutscher Architekten BDA (Hg.): *UN Studio. Mercedes-Benz Museum. Design Evolution*, Ludwigsburg 2006; Peter Cachola Schmal (Hg.): *UN Studio: Evolution of Space / Entwicklung des Raums*, Frankfurt/M. 2006.

23 UN Studio, HG Merz, DaimlerChrysler Immobilien (DCI) (Hg.): *Buy me a Mercedes-Benz. Das Buch zum Museum*, Barcelona 2006.

24 Fläche vierter Ordnung. Die Fotografien entstammen einem Buch zu Mathematischen Modellen, wobei die Beispiele in diesem Band auch dezidiert nach ästhetischen und fotografischen Qualitäten ausgewählt wurden. Siehe Gerd Fischer (Hg.): *Mathematische Modelle. Aus den Sammlungen von Universitäten und Museen / Mathematical Models. From the Collections of Universities and Museums*, Braunschweig 1986.



Baukörpers lässt keine eindeutige Ausrichtung erkennen, vielmehr soll ausgehend von drei Bewegungsrichtungen ein homogenes Bild geboten werden, das UN Studios Intention für das Gebäude als „visual attractor“ unterstützt. Die dreiteilige Kleeblattform des Grundrisses (Abb. 5) entspricht demzufolge den von den Architekten definierten Blickachsen (Abb. 6) und lässt sich als erster Hinweis auf das ‚After image‘ lokalisieren.

Für Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos ist ein perfektes Gebäude durch zwei Eigenschaften gekennzeichnet: erstens eine Gestalt, die Informationen impliziert, und zweitens eine Gestalt, die kommuniziert.<sup>25</sup> Architektur soll ein ‚After image‘ evozieren: ein Bild, das als starker visueller Eindruck zurückbleibt, nicht nur als reine Repräsentation des Gebäudes, sondern auch als eine Vorstellung des Konzepts des architektonischen Entwurfs.

Mit dem Begriff ‚After image‘ führt UN Studio ein Prinzip ein, um „die Gesamtskala der von intensiven Eindrücken ausgelösten Sinneswahrnehmungen einschließen“ zu können, die darauf hinauszielt, die Intensität der Wahrnehmung durch die „Kombination verschiedener Typen von Bildkonstruktionen“ zu ermöglichen.<sup>26</sup> UN Studio unterscheidet dabei die drei Bildtypen ‚expanded hybridized images‘, ‚structure time images‘ und ‚future movement images‘. Das ‚After image‘ des Mercedes-Benz Museums kann nicht nur mit all diesen Bildtypen für die äußere Erscheinung des Gebäudes beschrieben werden, der erfahrbare sequenzielle Eindruck der Bewegung setzt sich zusätzlich im komplexen Innenraum des Museums fort.

Auf diese Weise lässt sich die Differenz zwischen Diagramm, Designmodell und ‚After image‘ verstehen. UN Studio implementiert ein Designmodell in eine konkrete Anwendung, indem die fehlenden signifikanten Parameter des Standortes als ästhetische Information eingegeben werden. Die diagrammatische Visuali-

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.baunetz.de/talk/crystal/index.php?cat=Interview&nr=19> (Letzter Aufruf: 4. Juni 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Van Berkel+Bos 2006, wie Anm. 5, S. 376.



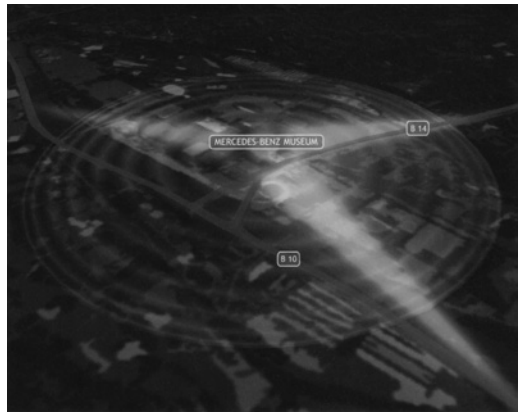
Gegenüberliegende Seite, links:

Abb. 4: UN Studio: Mercedes-Benz Museum, Stuttgart 2002–2006.

Gegenüberliegende Seite, rechts:

Abb. 5: UN Studio: Mercedes-Benz Museum (Ebene 8), Stuttgart 2002–2006.

Rechts: Abb. 6: UN Studio: Mercedes-Benz Museum (Bildung des Ortes: Sichtbarkeit von Autobahnen), Stuttgart 2002–2006.



sierung der drei von UN Studio definierten Vektoren, die in das als Zentrum gesetzte Mercedes-Benz Museum münden (Abb. 6), ist jener zusätzliche Parameter, der das lokalisierte Spezifikum des Bauplatzes konstituiert. Die diagrammatische Visualisierung ist kein Diagramm im Sinne einer „abstrakten Maschine“. Sie generiert nicht den Entwurf, sondern mit dem Diagrammatischen wird die Verweisfunktion auf individuelle Qualitäten des Entwurfsprogrammes sichtbar gemacht.

Das Prinzip der diagrammatischen Visualisierung als ästhetische Information funktioniert dabei auf zwei Ebenen: als Ästhetisches, als ein „in-Szene-setzendes Wahrnehmbarmachen“<sup>27</sup> des Entwurfs, und als Ästhetisches, als eine in-Szene-gesetzte Kommunikation des Entwurfs.

UN Studio kann dadurch seine Entwurfstechnik instrumentalisieren<sup>28</sup> und strategisch zur spezifischen Identitätsstiftung eines jeweiligen Entwurfsortes und Entwurfsprogramms einsetzen. Der Gebäudeentwurf des Museums wurde dementsprechend als architektonisches Pendant der Marke Mercedes-Benz konzipiert.<sup>29</sup> Im Bauwerk lassen sich mehrere Hinweise darauf finden, doch besonders ersichtlich wird dies, wenn man das Museum betritt und im Atrium nach oben blickt (Abb. 7): Die Rampe, die den Ausstellungsbeginn markiert, entspricht der Gestalt des Firmenlogos<sup>30</sup> (siehe Abb. 5).

Im gezielten Versuch der Identitätsstiftung eines Standortes durch Architektur und der Verwendung des Diagramms, bei UN Studio heute eben des De-

27 Sybille Krämer: „Was haben ›Performativität‹ und ›Medialität‹ miteinander zu tun? Plädoyer für eine in der ›Asthetisierung‹ gründende Konzeption des Performativen. Zur Einleitung in diesen Band“. In: dies. (Hg.): *Performativität und Medialität*, München 2004, S. 13–32; hier S. 25.

28 Siehe auch Ben van Berkel, Falk Jaeger: „Sechzehn Fragen / Sixteen Questions“. In: Falk Jaeger (Hg.): *UN Studio*, Berlin 2009, S. 137–144; hier S. 138.

29 Siehe dazu den Text der Wettbewerbseinreichung von UN Studio in: WECHSELRAUM Bund Deutscher Architekten BDA (Hg.): *UN Studio. Mercedes-Benz Museum. Design Evolution*, Ludwigsburg 2006; hier S. 26.

30 Aaron Betsky: „Automobilität. Das Mercedes-Benz Museum“. In: wie Anm. 23, S. 10–23; hier S. 17.



Abb. 7: UN Studio: Mercedes-Benz Museum, Stuttgart 2002-2006. Gegenüberliegende Seite, links: Abb. 8: Eisenman Architects: The City of Culture of Galicia (Serien zur Entwicklung des Lageplandialogramms), Santiago de Compostela, 1999. Gegenüberliegende Seite, rechts: Abb. 9: Eisenman Architects: The City of Culture of Galicia (Roof work on the two libraries), Santiago de Compostela, 1999.

signmodells, als Entwurfsgenerator lassen sich Parallelen zu Peter Eisenman Architects' Projekt City of Culture of Galicia in Santiago de Compostela finden. Der Entwurf an einem Hang etwas außerhalb der Stadt entstand aus der palimpsest-artigen<sup>31</sup> Überlagerung von vier verschiedenen Planfiguren: der Jakobsmuschel (ein Symbol, das eng mit der historischen und religiösen Bedeutung der spanischen Pilgerstadt verbunden ist), dem mittelalterlichen Straßennetz von Santiago de Compostela, der Topologie des Baugrundstücks und einem abstrakten kartesischen Koordinatennetz (Abb. 8). In Diagrammabfolgen wurde in verschiedenen Phasen von Vektordeformationen die Form des zukünftigen Gebäudeensembles generiert (Abb. 9).<sup>32</sup> Die Spuren der ursprünglichen Planfiguren sind nicht als Index, sondern als „coded rewritings“<sup>33</sup> in den Entwurf eingeschrieben.<sup>34</sup>

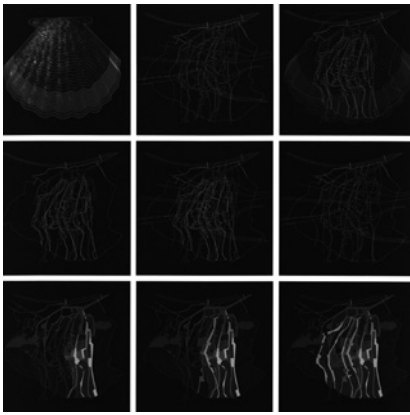
Der grundlegende Unterschied von UN Studio und Peter Eisenman ist jedoch, dass erstere nicht die Geschichte und Bedeutung des Ortes thematisieren, sondern Möglichkeitsräume einer zukünftigen Bedeutung eines Ortes vorschlagen. Das ist das eigentliche Thema einer antizipierenden Generation von Architekten, die Stan Allen beschreibt: „They are less concerned with interpreting the history of the site and more concerned with strategies to activate the site's potential. They draw freely from other disciplines, being less concerned with what ar-

31 Peter Eisenman: „Digital Scrambler: From Index to Codex“. In: *Perspecta* 35 (2004), S. 40–53; hier S. 51.

32 Siehe dazu vor allem Peter Eisenman: „Coded Rewritings: The Processes of Santiago“. In: Cynthia Davidson (Hg.): *Code X: the City of Culture of Galicia / Eisenman Architects*, New York 2005, S. 27–35.

33 Ebd.

34 Das wird besonders deutlich, wenn der Moderator Danny Forster in einer Folge der TV-Dokumentationsserie „Build It Bigger“ auf Discovery Channel durch die Gassen von Santiago de Compostela wandelt, um mögliche Hinweise auf die „secret message“ des Eisenman'schen Entwurfs zu finden und versucht, den „code“ der sich in Bau befindlichen City of Culture of Galicia zu entschlüsseln. Siehe dazu *Build It Bigger: Mountain of Steel*, Staffel 1, Folge 12 (Erstausstrahlung: 3. Oktober 2007).



chitecture is, or what it means, and more with what it can do, that is to say, what effects it can set in motion, regardless of their origin.”<sup>35</sup>

### **UN Studio's ‚Design Intelligence‘**

Das Transferieren und Adaptieren von Konzepten, Theorien, Techniken und Visualisierungsstrategien aus unterschiedlichen Disziplinen ist charakteristisch in den Arbeiten von UN Studio. Die Frage nach der Verortung der Architektur – ob Kunst oder Wissenschaft<sup>36</sup> – stellen sich Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos erst gar nicht. Zwar führen sie mit dem Begriff Modell ein explizit wissenschaftliches Konzept in ihre Praxis ein, wollen aber zugleich den Entwurf nicht entmystifizieren<sup>37</sup> und begreifen sich sowohl als „public scientists“<sup>38</sup> wie auch als ‚public artists‘.<sup>39</sup>

Vielleicht ist es überhaupt sinnvoller, Architektur als eine Wissenskultur zu verstehen, die Wissen generiert und validiert<sup>40</sup> und die wie alle Wissenskulturen im Gestaltungsprozess von Wissen epistemische und ästhetische Verfahren vereint.<sup>41</sup> Die Offenlegung und theoretische Reflexion der Entwurfsverfahren in Pu-

35 Stan Allen: „Response to Stocktaking 2004: Nine Questions About the Present and Future of Design“. In: *Harvard Design Magazine* 20 (2004), S. 4–52; hier S. 7.

36 Peter Galison, Emily Thompson (Hg.): *The Architecture of Science*, Cambridge (Mass.), London 1999; Antoine Picon, Alessandra Ponte (Hg.): *Architecture and the Sciences. Exchanging Metaphors*, New York 2003; Ákos Moravánszky, Ole W. Fischer (Hg.): *Precisions. Architektur zwischen Wissenschaft und Kunst / Architecture Between Sciences and the Arts*, Berlin 2008.

37 Siehe dazu stellvertretend Van Berkel+Jaeger 2009, wie Anm. 29, hier S. 142.

38 Van Berkel+Bos 1999, wie Anm. 6; hier Band 1: Imagination; S. 28.

39 Van Berkel+Bos 2006, wie Anm. 3, S. 12.

40 Karin Knorr Cetina: *Wissenskulturen. Ein Vergleich naturwissenschaftlicher Wissensformen*, Frankfurt/M. 2002 [1999]; S. 11.

41 Siehe exemplarisch die Beiträge in Caroline A. Jones, Peter Galison (Hg.): *Picturing Science, Producing Art*, New York, London 1998; Bettina Heintz, Jörg Huber (Hg.): *Mit dem Auge denken. Strategien der Sichtbarmachung in wissenschaftlichen und virtuellen Welten*, Zürich 2001; Wolfgang Krohn (Hg.): *Ästhetik in der Wissenschaft. Interdisziplinärer Diskurs über*

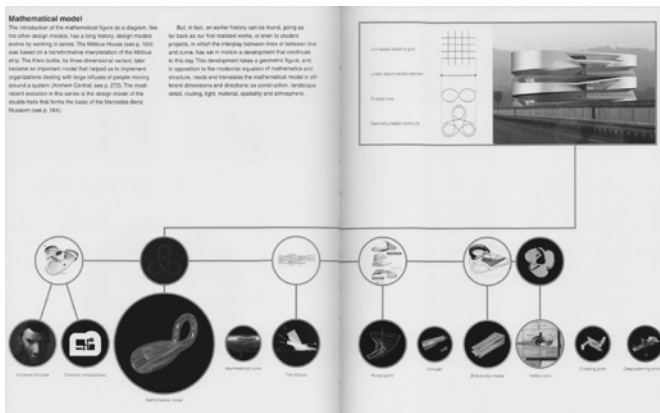


Abb. 10: UN Studio: Mathematical model.

blikationen dienen in der Wissenskultur Architektur nicht nur der eigenen Profilierung, sondern sie sind darüber hinaus ein Versuch einer Wissensordnung der Entwurfsarbeit. Dieser ‚Denkstil‘<sup>42</sup> verbindet UN Studio auch mit gleich gesinnten Protagonisten der zeitgenössischen Architektur. Architekten wie beispielsweise Foreign Office Architects und Reiser + Umemoto gehören demselben ‚Denkkollektiv‘<sup>43</sup> an, das in Monografien seine nach bestimmten Ordnungsstrukturen klassifizierten Entwürfe präsentiert und theoretisiert.<sup>44</sup> Das Entwerfen von und das Schreiben über Architektur hilft dabei, die eigene Position bestimmen zu können.<sup>45</sup>

Die entwerferische und theoretische Flexibilität der UN Studio’schen Position ist für die im globalen Wettbewerb einer neuen Weltordnung stehenden „network architects“,<sup>46</sup> die letztendlich immer noch auf die Akquirierung konkreter Bauaufträge angewiesen sind, von entscheidendem Vorteil. Methoden und Strategien aus anderen Wissenskulturen werden effektiv in die Arbeitspraxis und in den Entwurfsprozess eingebunden, und gründen jene Expertise, die Michael Speaks mit ‚Design Intelligence‘<sup>47</sup> beschreibt.

das *Gestalten und Darstellen von Wissen*, Hamburg 2006, sowie besonders die Ausgaben der seit 2003 erscheinenden ‚Bildwelten des Wissens‘: Horst Bredekamp, Gabriele Werner, Matthias Bruhn (Hg.): *Bildwelten des Wissens. Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch für Bildkritik*, Berlin.

42 Ludwik Fleck: *Die Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache. Einführung in die Lehre vom Denkstil und Denkkollektiv*, Frankfurt/M. 1980 [1935]. Thomas S. Kuhn bezieht sich in seinem Vorwort auf Fleck. Siehe Kuhn 1976, wie Anm. 19; hier S. 8.

43 Fleck 1980, wie Anm. 42.

44 Siehe exemplarisch Michael Kubo, Albert Ferré, FOA (Hg.): *Phylogenesis. FOA’s ark. Foreign Office Architects*, Barcelona 2003; Jesse Reiser: *Reiser + Umemoto: Atlas of Novel Tectonics*, New York 2006.

45 Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos: *Delinquent Visionaries*, Rotterdam 1993; S. 8.

46 1999 haben Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos ihr Architekturbüro unter dem Namen U(nited) N(network) Studio und dem Band ‚Move‘ neu positioniert. Siehe Anm. 6.

47 Siehe dazu besonders Michael Speaks: „Design Intelligence and the New Economy“. In: *Architectural Record* 01 (2002), S. 72–76, sowie Michael Speaks: „Interview Series: Design Intel-

Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos integrieren mit dem Designmodell ein Konzept, das unter anderem auch in der Informatik<sup>48</sup> zur Anwendung kommt und sich dadurch kennzeichnet, eine Programmstruktur in verschiedene Applikationen implementieren zu können. Doch während in der Informatik das Designmodell auf einem analytischen Modell basiert und der Programmcode exakt definiert ist, bleibt der ‚code‘ im auf der Grundlage von Bildern entwickelten Designmodell (Abb. 10) von UN Studio verdeckt.<sup>49</sup>

‚Design Intelligence‘ meint demnach nicht nur die strategische Anwendung einer genuin architektonischen Expertise. „Several institutions would kill to get their hands on our archives”,<sup>50</sup> schreiben Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos. Hier verdeutlicht sich die eigentliche Macht von ‚Design Intelligence‘<sup>51</sup>, die sich mit der Fähigkeit verbindet, die gesammelten, geordneten und interpretierten Informationen für Entwurfsprojekte zu instrumentalisieren.<sup>52</sup> Das ist das eigentliche neue Konzept eines ‚genialen Entwurfs‘<sup>53</sup> in der Architektur.

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ligence. Part I: Introduction“. In: *a+u: Architecture and Urbanism* 387 (2002), S. 10–18.

48 Van Berkel+Bos 2006. Wie Anm. 3, S. 17.

49 Ben van Berkel und Caroline Bos schreiben dazu: „In architecture, we strive to keep the textual part of the design model minimal and to develop an image-based model, which dictates that the instructions that usually form the body of the design model are implicit, rather than explicit.“ Siehe Van Berkel+Bos 2006. Wie Anm. 3, S. 19.

50 Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos: „The New, New Concept of the Architect – revised, recharged, now more hopeful than ever“. In: *a+u: Architecture and Urbanism* 405 (2004), S. 98–101; hier S. 98.

51 Eine der Fragen aus dem Call for Papers des Workshops.

52 Zur Ambiguität von ‚Design Intelligence‘ siehe auch Allen 2004, wie Anm. 35.

53 Titel des Call for Papers des Workshops.



## **Katharina Richter**

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*Her current research focuses on the investigation of the potential of computer based exchange of experiential knowledge in architecture. Between 2000 and 2006 she coordinated third party verification procedures at the Collaborative Research Center SFB 524 „Materials and Structures in Revitalization of Buildings“, Bauhaus-University Weimar, Germany. Her work has been published at various international conferences as well as in related reviewed journals.*

# TRANSFORMING TO EXPERT

## *On the Role of Experiential Knowledge in Architecture*

This paper deals with the question on how architectural knowledge can be de-tained respectively how it can be conveyed. It approaches this topic by discussing the highly complex subject of knowledge in architecture in general and experiential knowledge in architecture in particular. Thereby the role of experiential knowledge in transforming layman to expert is of special interest.

Core of this contribution forms the discussion of the question in how far the engagement with exemplary architectural objects, often referred to as referential objects or precedents has the potential to convey architectural experiential knowledge. The discussion of this question is based on the prevailing view that exemplary architectural objects are to be regarded as a rich source of experiential knowledge. A second aspect of this argumentation is grounded on the common argument that designers often and regularly make use of referential objects during design. This argument is repeatedly put forward by system developers of knowledge based computer systems in supporting their chosen strategy in creating these systems. The paper investigates in how far the engagement with referential objects by architects and student architects during architectural design is actually aimed at learning from these objects and supporting their design process by the experiences made by others. One Result of this conference contribution is the classification of the different types of usage and situations in which it is made use of precedents in architecture.

The reflections of this paper are undertaken before the background of a critical discussion of a paradigm of Artificial Intelligence applied to the domain of

architectural design. They integrate knowledge of various disciplines such as design theory, architectural computing, cognitive sciences and IT.

### Background

Background for the reflections in this paper forms a critical discussion of CBR (short for Case-Based Reasoning) applied to architectural design (Case-Based Design, short CBD). CBR is a paradigm of Artificial Intelligence, which stands for the reuse of past experiences in solving current problems or interpreting new situations. The term CBR describes both a model of the cognitive processes involved in problem solving or interpreting as well as a conceptual method for developing knowledge based computer systems.<sup>1</sup> CBR is based upon Roger Schank's 'Dynamic Memory Theory'<sup>2</sup> and theories on analogical reasoning<sup>3</sup>. CBR can be seen as a form of analogue reasoning<sup>4</sup> and draws upon the notion of inter-domain analogies.<sup>5</sup> One major difference between CBR and other approaches in AI to model expert knowledge lays in the fact that CBR relies (but not exclusively) on instance knowledge of concrete (e.g. problem solving) episodes, retained in cases, rather than on generalized knowledge in form of rules or models, derived from them, as is the case in traditional expert systems (such as Rule- or Model-based Systems). A case thereby is a contextualized piece of knowledge, an interpreted representation of a real experience including all details that make this experience special.<sup>6</sup> To formalize case knowledge Kolodner defines three major components of case description. These are: Description of the problem / situation of the problem, the description of the solution and the outcome of the solution, the result.<sup>7</sup> The last component should contain information on what happened after the solution has been carried out, whether the outcome was a success or failure, includ-

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1 Kolodner, Janet L.: "Improving Human Decision Making through Case-Based Decision Aiding". In: *AI Magazine*, 12(2) 1991, pp. 52–68. Kolodner, Janet L.: *Case-Based Reasoning*, Morgan Kaufman Publishers, Inc., San Mateo 1993.

2 Schank, Roger C.: *Dynamic Memory - A Theory of Reminding and Learning in Computers and People*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1982.

3 Aamodt, Agnar and Plaza, Enric: "Case-Based Reasoning: Foundational issues, Methodological Variations, and System Approaches". In: *AICom - Artificial Intelligence Communications*, IOS Press, 7(1), 1994, pp. 39–59.

4 Ibid. Heylighen, Ann: *In case of architectural design - Critique and praise of Case-Based Design in architecture*, doctoral Thesis, Faculteit Toegepaste Wetenschappen, Department ASRO, K.U. Leuven, Leuven, Belgium 2000.

5 Aamodt and Plaza, see note 3.

6 Kolodner, Janet L. (1993), see note 1.

7 Kolodner, Janet L. (1991); Kolodner, Janet L. (1993), see note 1.



ing explanations for success or failure. This last component is of special interest for the further discussion in this paper.

### **Knowledge in architecture**

One of the prevailing arguments for applying CBR to architecture is its classification as 'weak theory domain'. Weak theory domains are, beside the prevailing complexity of problems to be solved, which can be classified as 'wicked problems'<sup>8</sup> or as 'mean problems', characterized by the fact that domain knowledge is vague and inconsistent<sup>9</sup> as well as highly individual. In literature the terms 'knowledge' and 'skill' or 'theoretical' and 'practical knowledge', also described as 'Knowing-by-Doing', 'Knowing-in-Practice', 'Knowing-in-Action', are frequently cited in discussions, on the question of which types of knowledge constitute the body of architectural knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Whereas theoretical knowledge can be conveyed academically through lectures and textbooks, practical knowledge necessary for designing has to be gained by experience.

### **Experiential knowledge in architecture**

As one of the indicators for the fact that making architecture heavily relies on experiential knowledge can be seen that celebrated and distinguished architects often are of certain age. Collecting experience takes time. Chris Jones and Brian Lawson word as follows:

*Design seems to be an activity that requires a certain level of maturity to be practiced well.*<sup>11</sup>

*... nobody can be a good designer without the right experience.*<sup>12</sup>

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8 Rittel, Horst W. J.: "On the Planning Crisis: Systems Analysis of the 'First and Second Generations'". In: *Berdiftsokonomien*, 8, 1972, pp. 390–396. Rittel, Horst W. J. and Webber, Melvin M.: "Planning Problems are Wicked Problems". In; Cross, Nigel (Eds.): *Developments in Design Methodology*, Chichester, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1984, pp. 135–144.

9 Kolodner, Janet L. (1993), see note 1.

10 Schön, Donald: *The design studio: An exploration of the traditions and the potential*, RIBA Publications, London 1985. Akin, Ömer: "Case Based Instruction Strategies in Architecture". In: *Design Studies*, 23(4), 2002, pp. 363–435. Lawson, Brian: *What Designers Know*, Architectural Press, Imprint of Elsevier, Oxford 2004. Lawson, Brian: *How Designers Think*, Architectural Press, Oxford 2006. Paparizou, Elena and Protzen, Jean-Pierre: *To Rescue the Designer from Epistemic Freedom and other Challenges, International Engineering and Product Design Education Conference, 2–3 September 2004*, Delft, Netherlands.

11 Lawson, Brian: "Schemata, gambits and precedent: some factors in design expertise". In: *Design Studies*, 25(5), 2004, pp. 443–457.

12 Jones, J. Christopher: "The State of the Art in Design Methods". In: Moore, Gary T. (Eds.):

One characteristic of knowledge based on experiences is its implicit or tacit nature. This means that it can hardly be externalized. This is named as one of the reasons for the fact that educating architects heavily relied (and still does in some ways) on the so called 'Apprenticeship of Learning'<sup>13</sup> or 'Master-Apprentice Model'<sup>14</sup> respectively. Young architects spent years of apprentice with well-known colleagues to learn by observing and helping out in smaller tasks. The worldwide omnipresent studio setting in architectural education shares aspects with this approach to convey knowledge from experts to novices in the way that an experienced architect and designer, the professor, is there to lead the students design process and to offer assistance if needed.

### **Novices and Experts - differences in knowledge and skills**

*The accumulation of experience is a vital part of the transformation to expert<sup>15</sup>*

Experts hold generalized, a priori knowledge, gained by own experiences, which puts them in the position to apply this knowledge to a class of similar tasks.<sup>16</sup> Novices instead do not hold a comparable repertoire of design experiences and therefore do not have relating concepts at disposal. These concepts or schemes<sup>17</sup> are used by the designer in problem solving. The studio in architectural education is meant to bridge this gap and to form a platform for students to gain missing architectural concepts. In studio students are asked to work on design tasks which directly relate to problems they will actually have to work on later in life. Thereby they are put in the position to collect design experiences from which they can draw in future when confronted with similar problems. What they do there is learning by doing rather than learning by being told. There are some problems related to this approach to education: The first relates to the fact that it is a matter of

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*Emerging Methods in Environmental Design and Planning*, 1973, pp. 2–8. Lawson, Brian (2004), see note 10.

13 Cross, Nigel: "Designerly Ways of Knowing". In: *Design Studies*, 3, 1982, pp. 221–227.

14 Lawson, Brian (2004), see note 10.

15 Cross, Nigel: "Expertise in design: an overview". In: *Design Studies*, 25, 2004, pp. 427–441.

16 Liebich, Thomas: *Wissensbasierter Architekturentwurf - von den Modellen des Entwurfs zu einer intelligenten Computerunterstützung: ein Weg zu den Entwurfsgrammatiken and zur multiplen graphischen Repräsentation*, Fakultät Architektur, Stadt- und Regionalplanung, Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen, Weimar 1993, S. 62.

17 Ball, Linden J., Ormerod, Thomas C., et al.: "Spontaneous analogising in engineering design: a comparative analysis of experts and novices". In: *Design Studies*, 20(5), 2004, pp. 495–508.

Oxman, Rivka: "Design by re-representation: a model of visual reasoning in design". In: *Design Studies*, 18, 1997, pp. 329–347.

**In studio students are asked to work on design tasks which directly relate to problems they will have to work on later in life. However, it is a matter of chance whether they learn things of importance as well as whether a fruitful knowledge transfer takes place.**

chance whether students learn things of importance as well as whether a fruitful knowledge transfer takes place between teacher and student. If knowledge transfer takes place it still remains uncertain whether the student is able to translate this knowledge so that it can fertilize the own design work. Main obstacle of the studio setting is that it is not, can not and sometimes does not want to be a fairly close simulation of the real world of architectural practice and thus of related problems.<sup>18</sup> Therefore it is not possible for students to learn everything necessary to know during studio as a matter of fact. It is essential for them to learn also from the experiences of others.<sup>19</sup> It requires additional ways and means to convey experiential knowledge in architectural education. This statement is, to anticipate, often quoted by CBD researchers as one more argument for applying CBD systems in architectural education. But first let us reflect on what is regarded as sources of knowledge in architecture in general and experiential knowledge in particular.

### **Sources of experiential knowledge in architecture - processes and products**

As sources of architectural knowledge in general are regarded the knowledge of methods and the knowledge of their results.<sup>20</sup> This corresponds to a differentia-

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18 Cuff, Dana: *Architecture: The Story of Practice*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge 1991. Lawson, Brian: *How Designers Think*, Architectural Press, Oxford 2006. Heath, Tom: *Method in Architecture*, John Wiley & Sons. Ltd. 1984. Akin, Ömer: "Case Based Instruction Strategies in Architecture". In: *Design Studies*, 23(4), 2002, pp. 363–435.

19 Richter, Katharina and Donath, Dirk (Eds.): "Towards a Better Understanding of the Case-Based Reasoning Paradigm in Architectural Education and Design – A Mirrored Review", *Communicating Space(s) [24th eCAADe conference proceedings] 6-9 September 2006*, Volos, Griechenland 2006, pp. 222–227.

20 Tzonis, Alexandre and White, Ian: "Introduction". In: Tzonis, Alexandre, White, Ian (Eds.): *Automation based creative design*, Amsterdam 1994, Elsevier Science B. V. Richter, Katharina and Donath, Dirk: "Augmenting Designers Memory – Revisal of the Case-Based Reasoning Paradigm in Architectural Education and Design". In: Gürlebeck, K., Könke, C. (Eds.): *Electronic Proceedings of the 17th International Conference on the Applications of Computer Science*

tion between process and product as sources of design knowledge as for example put forward by Cross.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly as sources of experiential knowledge in architecture are mentioned:<sup>22</sup>

- Experiences gained through designing (as e.g. undertaken in design studio),
- Experiences made through the observation of others while designing ( as e.g. in the Master-Apprentice Model).

Time and again, and, importantly, not exclusively in the context of CBD, the built design product is named as a rich source of experiential knowledge in architecture, sometimes even put on the level of it. Two types of experiences based on the final product of a design process can be differentiated:<sup>23</sup>

- Experiences gained through studying buildings in situ, and
- Experiences gained by browsing through architectural magazines, journals, books, the internet for images, drawings, texts of existing buildings.

### References in architecture

One of the main arguments put forward by CBD researchers for applying CBR to develop architectural design support systems is the thesis that architects during design and especially in its early phases regularly and extensively make use of exemplary architectural objects, often also called precedents, references, referential objects, or sometimes even cases. In most cases researchers take this thesis as rational to define a description of the final product of design, the built and/ or published architectural object, as major source of knowledge in their systems to provide them for reuse.<sup>24</sup> To once again remind ourselves: CBR is originally all about reusing experiences made in the past e.g. in problem solving. One question appeared in this context to be critical and that is whether architects really engage with references during design for the purpose of decoding experiential knowledge encoded in/through these objects. Therefore a closer look had been judged essential

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*and Mathematics in Architecture and Civil Engineering*, Weimar 2006.

21 Cross, Nigel: "Designerly Ways of Knowing". In: *Design Studies*, 3, 1982, pp. 221-227. Cross, Nigel: *Designerly Ways of Knowing*, Birkhäuser. Basel, Boston, Berlin 2007.

22 Heylighen, Ann: "Exposure to Experience: On the Role of Experience in Architectural Design Education". In: Scotford, M. , Marbadi, J-F. *et al* (Eds.): *Research in Design Education*, Raleigh, NC, Herber Center for Design Excellence, College of Architecture and Environmental Design, 1998, pp. 148–151. Taha, Dina: *A Case Based Approach to Computer Aided Architectural Design. MONEO: An Architectural Assistant System*, PhD - Thesis, Graduate School, Faculty of Engineering, Alexandria University, Alexandria 2006. Cross, Nigel (2007), see note 21.

23 Taha, see note 22..

24 for a further discussion of this aspect and related problems, see: Richter, Katharina and Donath, Dirk (2006), see note 20.

to investigate the actual role references play during architectural design. At first a definition of the term reference had to be developed. Prefixing it has to be said that it is on purpose that the term 'precedents', which is often used in literature in this context, is avoided here, since it implies additional meaning (the notion of celebrated masterpiece or authoritative exemplar<sup>25</sup> – which is not of any help here).

References in architecture are: Built and/or published architectural objects or certain aspects or parts of them, which are studied in situ or by means of different media and which are consciously consulted/used by designing architects and students to support their design process.

Among others the interpretation of several research studies aiming at the investigation of different aspects of the use of reference in architecture<sup>26</sup> has been conducted to support the hypothesis, that the purpose of using exemplary architectural objects during design is not necessarily connected to the idea of reusing past design experiences to solve current design problems. The definition of the term design experience here has been put in relation to what is defined by the cognitive model of CBR as an experience, a. o. expressed by the tripartite nature of a case (see above).

### **Classification of the use of references in architectural design**

Through the interpretation of the aforementioned studies it was made possible to classify the situations in which designing architects and students access references and the purpose of this engagement into five distinct categories:

- The engagement with exemplary architectural objects is first and foremost conducted to trigger ideas. It showed potential to activate an intense memory scan for own experiences from the past to use in the current design problem solving.
- References as sources for design constraints.

The engagement with references during architectural design holds the potential to function as a reminder of aspects, design problems, design constraints etc. one has not been thinking of yet but which found consideration in other projects.

- References as means for communication.

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25 see e.g. Goldschmidt, Gabriela: "Creative Architectural Design: Reference Versus Precedents". In: *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 15(3), 1998, pp. 258–270.

26 Heylighen, Ann and Verstijnen, Ilse M.: "Exposure to Examples, Exploring Case-Based Design in Architectural Education". In: Gero, J. (Eds.): *Artificial Intelligence in Design '00*, Kluwer Academic, Dordrecht 2000, pp. 413–432. Heylighen, Ann and Verstijnen, Ilse M.: "Close encounters of the architectural kind". In: *Design Studies*, 24(4), 2003, pp. 313–326. Heylighen, Ann and Neuckermans, Herman: "Are architects natural Case-Based Designers?" In: *The Design Journal*, 5(2), 2002, pp. 8–22. Akin, Ömer (2002), see note 18; Taha, see note 22.

**The engagement with referential objects by architects and student architects during architectural design is not very much aimed at learning from these objects and supporting their design process by the experiences made by others.**

The study showed that in architectural practice as well as in architectural education objects of reference are indeed frequently used to externalize own design ideas and to mark off these ideas from preceding ones.

- References as means for design evaluation.

The study revealed indications that architects use exemplary architectural objects to make design decisions based what has already been approved in the past.

- References as source for explicit information.

This last category can further be divided in

- Reusing experiences made in the past and

This means that by that is that indeed sometimes exemplary objects are used to learn from them. They are e.g. used to predict costs of the designed object in comparison with other similar ones.

- Reusing solutions generated in the past.

Sometimes even the task of designing architecture, which often is driven by the demand to “produce” originality, relies on the reuse of solutions generated in the past for cost and time saving. This happens especially during later phases in the design process.

The order of these categories has been chosen regarding the increasing explicitness of information absorbed by architects by engaging with references. It has also to be noticed that these categories mirror the progress of the design process from preliminary design to construction documentation. Especially the last category requires a fairly good understanding of the project; ideas must have become precise for using references being fruitful for the process. One has to be aware that this classification can and does by no means want to be called complete. Reason for that lies a.o. in the narrow scope of available relating literature.

Another aspect of interest in context of this paper is the role which references play in architectural education, in ‘transforming to expert’. Exemplary objects are of great importance in conveying architectural knowledge to students. They are used to illustrate concepts and to communicate ideas in design studio, to convey explicit architectural knowledge in theory oriented subjects, to pass on different

views on architecture as well as for architectural analysis. Students during design studio use, more or less successful, references in the above mentioned categories. It has to be noticed that to bridge the gap of experiential knowledge between novices and experts stemming e.g. from the incomplete simulation of architectural daily routine in design studio, as explained above, the material on objects of reference available can not be called sufficient and effective. To meet this lack the conduction of so called case studies, studies of products and processes, are a common means in architectural education.

### **Discussion**

Although limited, as mentioned, the conducted study on the use of reference in architectural design indicates that situations and purposes of the use of reference in architectural design can further be grouped into two large groups which are:

- The use of references for indirect problem solving and
- the use of references for direct problems solving.

The engagement with references by designing architects and students of architecture is only secondarily undertaken for the purpose of extracting resp. using experiential knowledge encoded by these objects. This is especially true for the early phases of design – the main focus of CBD researchers in architecture.

The engagement with referential objects by architects and student architects during architectural design is not very much aimed at learning from these objects and supporting their design process by the experiences made by others. Besides available material on exemplary objects in architecture is by no means sufficient being to help support this strategy.

This finding is of great interest for a discussion of the CBR paradigm in architecture. It uncovers a predominant misunderstanding by CBR researchers of the role which references actually play in architectural design. This misunderstanding concerns two aspects. On the one hand it uncovers the misinterpretation of the term reuse which is, following the underlying theory of CBR inappropriately applied (only) to the final product of the design process, the designed solution – and on the other hand it shows the inappropriate emphasize on references as containers for experiential knowledge, when the mentioned argument put forward by developers would actually be oriented at the underlying theory of CBR. The two large groups of use of reference in architecture pointed out by this study are of high importance for a further discussion of the CBR paradigm in architecture which is not aimed at here and has to be discussed elsewhere.



# Bettina Schürkamp

Köln

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# GENERIC REALISM

## *Knowledge-Based Design Practice in AMO Identity Studies*

Over the past several decades, a new global order has emerged from the twilight of modern sovereignty. Negri and Hardt call this formation ‘*The Empire*’ and show in their writings how it progressively incorporates hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies and plural exchanges. Within its open, expanding frontiers production increasingly tends toward a knowledge-based economy and toward the production of immaterial goods such as a service, a cultural product, or communication. In his publications on “design intelligence”, Michael Speaks discusses how this substantial change transforms critical practice in architecture today. In 2003 Speaks published a number of interviews with architects, such as Greg Lynn, Neil Denari, George Yu Architects or Archi-Tectonics, that give examples of how a knowledge-based economy can inspire architecture today. One of the architecture offices selected was the think tank AMO, founded by Rem Koolhaas. In Speaks’ interview with Jeffrey Inaba, AMO director until 2003, it became apparent that the think tank is in many ways a counterpart to OMA’s architectural practice. Both practices are based in Rotterdam and often work in parallel for the same clients. However, while OMA remains dedicated to the realization of buildings and masterplans, AMO often operates in “areas beyond the traditional boundaries of architecture and urbanism, including media, politics, technology, art, curating, publishing, and graphic design.”<sup>1</sup> AMO has conducted research for companies

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1 See for more details <http://www.oma.nl/>

such as Universal Studios as well as Schiphol Airport and produced exhibitions at the Venice Biennale and Venice Architecture Biennale. For the fashion label Prada, AMO designs fashion shows, curates their website and has carried out research on in-store technology for new Prada epicentre stores in New York and Los Angeles.

In relation to the conference's theme, the question arises whether and in which way AMO's design intelligence could break new ground in Negri's and Hardt's Empire. A close reading of AMO's exhibition *The Image of Europe* reveals how the specific use of architectural intelligence opens up new markets in the diffuse Foucauldian network of economical, political as well as cultural power. The identity study about the EU came into being in two stages: an AMO preliminary design scheme in 2001 and the exhibition *The Image of Europe* in 2004. The initial idea originated from two brainstorming sessions in 2001, organised by the European Commission and the Belgian Presidency.<sup>2</sup> A group of well-known intellectuals discussed the needs and functions of a European capital and how Brussels could best express them. There was a wide consensus among the participants that the European capital should not follow the example of national capitals. In the course of the debate there was much talk about two almost opposing conceptions: Umberto Eco's "soft capital" and Rem Koolhaas' "hard capital".

The Italian philosopher Umberto Eco proposed a non-architectural capital of temporary events and activity. He concluded that the European capital should be more like a server put in the centre of a network. Similar to software this "soft capital" should guarantee the circulation of material and intangible ingredients such as enterprises, activities, markets, public administrative bodies and also exchange in science and arts, the production of religious beliefs, collective behaviour, fashions, etiquette and norms.<sup>3</sup>

Rem Koolhaas also addressed the richness and diversity of Europe; however, in his presentation he drew a different conclusion and proposed a "hard" rather than a "soft capital". He emphasized that there is not just one Europe but several that are present at the same time. Currently the EU consists of 27 and NATO of 28 member states. Furthermore there are several cultural institutions like the Eurovision or the UEFA that have up to 50 and more member states. On top of that there are traces of historical empires such as the Roman, the Frankish or the Habsburg empires, which are still influential in today's culture. Therefore the

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission, Belgian Presidency: *Brussels, Capital of Europe. Final Report* (Brussels: 2001), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

**AMO conceived a design for the EU flag that became really popular. The graphic designers subsumed all national flags into a common European barcode flag. This striped flag can be extended and read in several ways. It was conceived to embody an enlarged EU.**

process of unification in this “Mosaic Europe” consists not only in creating vertical connections between centres and peripheries; at the same time, it is also necessary to continuously relate a wide diversity of institutions, organisations and individuals within and beyond national boundaries.

Hence in his proposal Rem Koolhaas was concerned with the question how a “hard capital” could represent both the diversity and the unity of Europe at the same time. In an analysis of the EU’s visual representation, Rem Koolhaas and his think tank AMO revealed that so far the EU network is more like a non-place rather than an inspiration for a common European identity. Many of the buildings and interior spaces in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxemburg are uniform, standardized office environments that by no means express their public and political relevance. Therefore Rem Koolhaas argued that the hybrid organisation is almost invisible and without eloquence in its communication with the citizens. For a more vivid public appearance, he suggested in his conception of a “hard capital” two particular forms of representation of the European Union’s identity: the first is through communication, both verbal and visual; the second, through the physical substance and buildings of the European institutions. In this respect the AMO proposal incorporates “hard” and “soft” aspects in equal measure. Communication, emblems and architectural representation go hand in hand.

As the initial point of departure for a new EU representation, Rem Koolhaas and his AMO team, led by Reinier de Graaf, proposed an alternative design for the European logo in the preliminary design scheme of 2001. Taken for granted for more than 20 years, the logo has been omnipresent on letters, in the media and signposted on EU buildings since 1955. AMO suggested the circle of 12 golden stars be spread evenly on the blue background, thereby transforming the closed shape of the logo into an open texture and expandable icon. In the new design the stars form an unending plane that can be used in different scales and contexts. In the AMO collages, the new design of the EU logo functions as a background in broadcasting shows or is even enlarged to an urban texture that indicates the EU areas in the city of Brussels. Complementary to the new EU

logo, AMO proposed two different urban scenarios for Brussels as a prospective “hard capital” of Europe. The first scheme identifies possible areas in the present *Quartier Européen* that could be re-inhabited both through new buildings and a new conceptual framework. However, in this area there is not much space for expansion. Therefore the second option suggests creating a more “idyllic” campus outside the present area in the site known as “Tour et Taxi”, along the canal.

Apart from the transformation of the EU logo, AMO also conceived a second alternative design for the EU flag that became really popular. The graphic designers subsumed all national flags into a common European barcode flag. Similar to the previous expandable icon, the striped flag can also be extended and read in several ways. The new design was conceived to embody an enlarged EU, which since 2004 comprises 27 member states. Simultaneously the flag as an emblem is devised to become an inevitable part of everyday life that gets close to people and reaches almost literally under their skin. The most radical form of invading people’s privacy is probably the suggestion of an EU-barcode-tattoo on people’s necks. In this respect the expandable icon communicates on a micro as well as on a macro scale. The notion of a symbolic and physical expendability was influential in the publications of Reyner Banham. The British architecture critic realized that accessibility to the public could be accomplished more likely through the application of culturally loaded, meaningful forms as well as widespread recognisable symbols with appeal<sup>4</sup>. In his opinion, popular and fashionable genres and the enduring fascination of human beings with their bodies lead the designer to the “innate traditions” of relevant products and their immersion in society. Thereby it unifies and visualizes the network as a hybrid multinational space-time-continuum.

The exhibition *The Image of Europe* can be seen as a continuation of those initial ideas and sensibilities. The European Council and the Dutch presidency financed the show at Brussels’ Schuman roundabout in the centre of the *Quartier Européen* in 2003. For three months, AMO displayed three different panoramic collages in a “barcode” tent with the EU stripes on the outside. On the first ring, facing the outside, a selection of EU posters gave an overview of fifty years of public relations, which advertised the growing multinational organization. The AMO collage on the inner wall visualized the unification process since the Second World War. The main attraction of the exhibition was a panoramic collage sur-

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4 Nigel Whiteley: *Reyner Banham. Historian of the Immediate Future* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology: 2002), p. 318.

rounding the meeting point in the centre, which displayed epoch-making events and individuals in European history from the big bang until today. Large arrows marked periods of historical change and mutual influence.

Working drawings from the OMA\*AMO archive reveal how fragments from everyday life, culture and architecture merge in the organizational depth of the panoramic collage. One characteristic of this *Generic Realism* is to use ready-made elements from the Internet, newspapers, film or other media. Similar to strategies in Dada, Surrealism, or Pop Art, the AMO team arranged in a playful way images from these sources on the canvas. One inspiration for this working method might have been Robert Rauschenberg's "Combines". The artist considered the world as one gigantic painting; for this reason, he picked up trash and used objects found on the streets of New York City for his collages.

*I thought that if I could paint or make an honest work, it should incorporate all of these elements, which were and are a reality.<sup>5</sup>*

Against this background, the AMO team explored in their collages whether historical fragments could reawaken dormant memories in the forgotten past of cities and thereby form a new unifying European identity. From successive layers of diagrams, images, atmospheres, and cultural references, the designers formed an emerging cultural landscape. Following the collage's inscribed narrative from left to right, the geographic formation of the virtual landscape becomes more and more dense in the course of European history. In the prehistory of Europe and in antiquity, islands rise from the sea. In medieval times, the islands form filled continents, which finally add up to one continuous shape in modernity. In the twentieth century the virtual landscape turns into an apparently unending stream of information and entertainment, which overwhelms and distorts the European movement beyond recognition.

In her book *The City of Collective Memory*, Christine Boyer pointed out that, although the montage and the aesthetic of temporality originated from the early twentieth-century metropolis, it is only the "City of the Spectacle" that utilizes simultaneous stage settings, juxtaposing multiple perspectives and spatializing separate times, as intentional compositional arrangements. As a non-place it exists in a state of constant flux and challenges the traditional architectural practice with a complex synthetic space-time.<sup>6</sup>

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5 Mark C. Taylor: *Disfiguring. Art, Architecture, Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 168.

6 Christine Boyer: *The City of Collective Memory* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology: 1996), p. 46.

**The AMO team explored in their collages whether historical fragments could reawaken dormant memories in the forgotten past of cities and thereby form a new unifying European identity.**

In order to realize architecture in complex space-time-networks, such as the European Union or Negri's and Hardt's Empire, a mixture of "hard" and "soft" aspects might lead to new working methods. Rem Koolhaas emphasised that the combination of an identity study with a masterplan in the EU project allowed them to invade areas that are usually reserved for leading professionals from other disciplines, such as economics, engineering or politics. Through immaterial labour such as a service, a cultural product, or communication, AMO makes contact with all kinds of different groups, institutions and individuals. Therefore in AMO's strategy, immaterial work and extended services go along with commissions in architecture. Another example for the synergy between immaterial work and architecture is the close collaboration with PRADA. For this fashion brand, AMO designs the website, fashion shows, interior spaces, flagship stores as well as a museum of contemporary arts for the PRADA foundation. For all these commissions, the survey of everyday life and of complex network activities is an essential part of the architects' work, which can eventually result into a design for a building. In light of this, architecture emerges from a specified social, cultural and urban situation and finally transforms a "soft" stream of information into a "hard" condition.

In the magazine *Volume*, AMO published a "Timeline of the Timeline" that shows in how many different ways time, space and information can be represented in collages and diagrams. Alfred Barr's influential "flowchart" view of the history of modern art (1936), the Situationists' map (1960), CIAM IV (1933), Buckminster Fuller's "The 92 Elements" (1946) and Charles Jencks *Architecture 2000* (1971) were among the chosen examples. One of the concepts that might have served as an inspiration for the *The Image of Europe* was the exhibition *Mathematica: a world of numbers* by Charles and Ray Eames. With interactive displays, mathematical peep shows and an image wall, the designers invented a display that arranged information spatially. The installation of *Mathematica* was the longest-running corporate-sponsored permanent installation in the world and attracted a large audience. In their 1969 statement "What is design", they

enunciated basic principles that may be helpful to understand AMO's working method. Eames' diagram illustrates how in the design process different fields of interest and concern overlap. In their opinion design is successful if the interests and concerns of the design office intersect with the area of genuine interest of the client and the concerns of society as a whole. "Then it is in this area of overlapping interest and concern that a designer can work with conviction and enthusiasm". However, the example of *The Image of Europe* shows also how this kind of approach in the age of the Empire can easily become a hazardous enterprise that overwhelms the designer with a never-ending flood of information. Is it really worth facing this detailed complexity with new forms of critical practice and architectural intelligence? The Eames probably would suggest that it is because for them "the details are not details, they make the product. The connection, the connection, the connection."<sup>7</sup>

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7 Ralph Caplan and Philipp Morrison: *Connections: The Work of Charles and Ray Eames* (UCLA Art Council: 1976), p. 15.



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# OÍDA OUK EIDÓS

The question of an ingenious design, of a 'Design Intelligence' which arises here, is at the same time a question of a special power, perhaps a hidden one, a secret lore of the architect, out of which all architecture develops. The architect appears here as a magician using a very specific knowledge of which only he has command, and which is exclusively born in his architectural laboratory. I'd like to start with a provocative assumption, namely that the architect actually can't be sure about the cognitive expertise which is attributed to him. Despite that uncertainty he constantly continues designing architectural spaces and one could guess that this uncertainty is even connected with an additional value.

The famous phrase *oída ouk eídós*—*I know that I don't know* exemplarily represents this assumption.<sup>1</sup> The quotation from Plato's *Apology*, attributed to the Greek philosopher Socrates, represents a general critical questioning of that which one claims to know. Socrates suggests that this alleged knowledge is an unprovable assumption, which under closer scrutiny is often revealed as indefensible pseudo-knowledge. A secured knowledge, Socrates suggests, is in principle non-existent.<sup>2</sup> That such exclusive and conclusive pre-emptive notions also appear in the agendas of architectural concepts reflects the intentions of this paper.

In detail, it is 'dwelling' itself that should be questioned, dwelling, which is mostly conceived of as an anthropological constant with unchanging values and which is assumed as being almost resistant against every social or technological progress. Rather it is perceived as an archaic refuge connected with everlasting

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1 This does not refer to the generally used but imprecise translation of the phrase, i.e. *I know that I know nothing*. This phrase comes from a translation error, misses the point of the statement and would be translated into Ancient Greek as *oída oudén eídós*.

2 Cf. Platon: *Apologia Sokratous. Kriton. Euthydemus. Menexenos. Gorgias. Menon*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1990, p. 15.

traditions. Of course there are the essential requirements, such as weatherproofing, which meet the demands of dwelling and which indeed always dictate the practice of human habitation. However, the ‘how’ of this practice is thereby not yet defined. This changes—and that is the thesis—the cultural conditions which influence this practice accordingly.

### **Change of Mind, Change of Meaning**

This can go so far that apparently conventional (and in this sense also statically distinguished) models for dwelling reappear in some cases as their complete opposites. Terence Riley demonstrated this exemplarily with the history of development of the relationship of the public vs. private.<sup>3</sup> In a first step, he describes the private house as a spatial articulation of introspective isolation, a quality which seems to be one of the basic meanings of dwelling. In this way, the ‘well looked after’ private space seems to evolve consistently through the human need for refuge, safety and protection, in contrast to the surrounding public sphere. The apartment is understood as a “receptacle for the person”,<sup>4</sup> a segregated interior space “whose relationship to the outside world is maintained solely through strictly defined openings”.<sup>5</sup> The distinct, accompanying concept of privacy and its spatial-architectural analogies went through a very important phase at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Pictorially, this is clearly represented in the aquarelle painting *Cosy Corner* (1894) by the Swedish artist Carl Larsson as part of a series of aquarelle works inspired by his interior living spaces. The picture very accurately reflects the interpretation of the day of home, further illustrated in Larsson’s own words: “Here I experienced that unspeakably sweet feeling of seclusion from the noise of the world”.<sup>6</sup>

In his reflections on radical changes in contemporary society, Riley contrasts traditional interpretations with an almost diametrically calculated concept of dwelling. He is referring to the development of the private home into “a perme-

3 Riley, T.: *The Un-Private House*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1999.

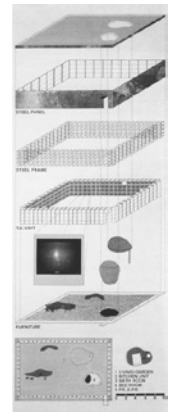
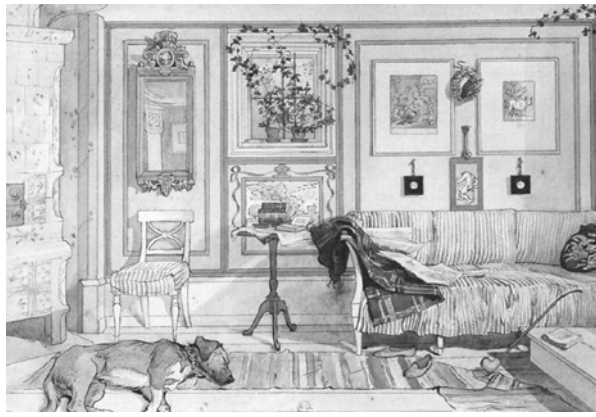
4 Benjamin, W., *The Arcades Project*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., London, 2002, p. 220.

5 Vetter, A. K.: *Die Befreiung des Wohnens: Ein Architekturphänomen der 20er und 30er Jahre*, Wasmuth, Tübingen, Berlin, 2000, p. 17. Translated by the author.

6 Carlsson C. cit. after Facos M.: *The Ideal Swedish Home: Carl Larsson’s Lilla Hyttnäs*, in: Reed C., *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1996, p. 86.

Left: Fig. 1: Carl Larsson: *Cosy Corner* (1894).

Right: Fig. 2: Takahide Nozawa: *TV GARDEN* (project, 1991).



able structure, receiving and transmitting images, sounds, text, and data”.<sup>7</sup> In this context, Riley discusses a clear transformation in the relationship between the private home and media beginning in the second half of the 20th century. The private as an opposite pole of the public seems to have had its day. The infiltration of the public into the private has reached the point where the two are now difficult to discern. As an example of this shift in borders, as well as the ‘natural’ relationship between media and the residents of a house, Riley employed Takahide Nozawa’s *TV GARDEN* (project, 1991), a house plan inspired by the famous stone garden of Ryoan-ji in Kyoto. 245 television screens form the outside wall of the house, allowing for a relationship between the residents and the media “equal (to) that found ‘among natural elements in the garden’”.<sup>8</sup>

### Inverse Dwelling

If, based on such shifts of values, a paradigm change in architectural design and practise in the late 1990s is apparent, then now, in the process of the current change in the structure of our society, we can observe this paradigm change coming into its full fruition. Under the influence of increasing economic and technological penetration, unstoppable media linkages and improved mobility, it shows that the shift of borders described by Riley is not an isolated case. Rather, multitudinal dualisms grouped together around the concept of the private house in the course of the last few centuries attract our attention by losing their clarity. Using the examples of previously clear distinctions, such as inside/outside, individual/community, dwelling/working, house/city, place/non-place, and reality vs. the virtual, it will be shown how such dualisms are not only becoming less distinctive, but are also creating, through their reversal of conditions, a quasi inverse living concept.

<sup>7</sup> See note 3, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> L.c., p. 12.



Fig. 3: Frank Lloyd Wright: *A HOME IN A PRAIRIE TOWN* (project, 1900).

## 1. Dwelling vs. Working

In 1951, for example, Martin Heidegger described the separation of dwelling and working as an unmistakable element of the dualities responsible for the feeling of being human.<sup>9</sup> And as such it is reflected in the image of a ‘functional city’.<sup>10</sup> But just a few decades after Heidegger’s comments, the situation began a fundamental change. In the mid-1980s electronic text and data editing made headway into the working environment. Around 15 years later digital technologies led to a reintroduction of the working environment into the home. Ben van Berckels *MÖBIUS HOUSE* (Het Gooi, 1993–98) is an example of how originally opposite areas can be melded into one continuous space. Based on his model, the single surfaced, non-orientable form of the Möbius Strip, previously spatially and architecturally separate activities, such as dwelling and working, are realised within one building.

## 2. House vs. City

It is possible to make several generalisations: firstly, that during this process the distinction between house and city lost some of its credibility; secondly, that the dissolution of these two foundational values began much earlier; and thirdly, that the cause of this was a medium, if but a conceivably simple one. While Frank Lloyd Wright was still adamant about walling in his *HOME IN A PRAIRIE TOWN* (project, 1900) from the surrounding city space using a diverse range of architectural techniques to create absolute privacy,<sup>11</sup> at the same time however, the

9 Cf. Heidegger, M.: *Bauen Wohnen Denken*, in: Conrads, U.; Neitzke P. (eds.), *Mensch und Raum: Das Darmstädter Gespräch 1951*, Bauwelt Fundamente Bd. 94, Vieweg, Braunschweig, 1991, p. 89.

10 Cf. Hilpert, T.: *Die Funktionelle Stadt: Le Corbusiers Stadtvision - Bedingungen, Motive, Hintergründe*, Vieweg, Braunschweig, 1978; Hilpert T. (ed.): *Le Corbusiers „Charta von Athen“: Texte und Dokumente*, Vieweg, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden, 1988.

11 The house itself is set back from the property line, a wall and a strip of vegetation function as a threshold between street and the approach to the house. The entrance to the house is recessed and further shielded by low eaves. The window openings facing the street are small and located



*Fig. 4: Berenice Abbott:  
Nightview, New York  
(1932).*

spread of electricity through urban areas<sup>12</sup> began a process of unification between the city and private homes. Light, previously limited to the secure, private sphere of the home, created an *Extension of Man* moving beyond the borders of the residence. It shines out and grasps the city, defined by Marshall McLuhan as creating a “space without walls”,<sup>13</sup> interconnecting the inner and outer regions by means of illumination. The previous differentiation of the bright, protected interiors and the dark, threatening exterior becomes obsolete.<sup>14</sup>

This development continues to evolve in our contemporary cities when in tall urban structures, such as in Tokyo, decentralisation, density and the partial outsourcing of dwelling zones come together to create an entirely new perspective of the city as a succession of interior spaces. Within these infrastructure landscapes, dwellings are reduced to a minimum, becoming mere cocoons, a base for daily movements through the urban environment. The AURA HOUSE (Tokyo, 1995-96), which would not even function without the surrounding city due to its uncompromising reduced form, is an eloquent example of this method. Alternatively, a rethink, not only of the way both systems are used but also of their spatial expression, will only become necessary in the moment when the home and the city are no longer diametrically opposed and the metropolis has become an integral part of the residential sphere. Shigeru Ban's CURTAIN WALL HOUSE (Tokyo, 1995) sets a course in this direction, in that this interconnection is not only visually realised, as achieved by Mies van der Rohe, Ban's inspiration, but can also be physically experienced.<sup>15</sup>

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high up, closely under the eaves to avoid a direct contact between inside and outside.

12 Cf. Schivelbusch, W., *Lichtblicke: Zur Geschichte der künstlichen Helligkeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, Carl Hanser, Munich, Vienna, 1983.

13 Cf. McLuhan, M.: *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Mass., London, 1994, p. 128.

14 Cf. Selle: G., *Die eigenen vier Wände: Zur verborgenen Geschichte des Wohnens*, Campus, Frankfurt a. M., New York, 1993, pp. 78–84.

15 Cf. Hennig, R.: *Tokyo Homezooms: Die Stadt als Wohnung*, in: Eckardt, F.; Zschocke, M.

### 3. Place vs. Non-Place

Also in the sense of being ‘familiar places’, the home and city are experiencing an increasing shift in meaning. For Otto Friedrich Bollnow dwelling still clearly represented the idea of “being at home in a particular place, having roots there and belonging to that place”.<sup>16</sup> Today, one must firmly contend this statement, in that mobility has completely overtaken the idea of traditional sedentary dwelling and the classic geographical reference.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the ‘areas of action’ have taken on increasingly global dimensions, but at the same time are still shaped by a peculiar vacuum in respect to identity dividing reference areas, by a terrain of non-places apparently without identity.<sup>18</sup> The traditional equation of dwelling, place and architecture seems once and for all to be invalid. Björk further confirmed this in her answer to the question of where she hangs up her hat, capturing in words the spirit of the times: “Home is where my laptop is”.<sup>19</sup> In the flippancy of contemporary existence, the self is reflected not in a place or a house, but is played out in an electronic gadget.

This is all clear evidence of an increasing shift in the art of dwelling from the relationship between body, place and housing. Instead of this, tiny living environments emerge which can be directly controlled and changed according to need. Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm sees this as a minimisation of the playing field of the social construct of dwelling in which the close-up view of these aforementioned micro-worlds (mobile telephones, laptops etc.) has more meaning than the actual spatial and architectural surroundings.<sup>20</sup> Today, establishing identities through place is less an issue of earthbound architectural gravity than of ubiquitous technology.<sup>21</sup>

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(eds.): *Mediacity*, Verlag der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Weimar, 2006, pp. 115–144.

16 Bollnow, O. F.: *Mensch und Raum*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne, 1990, p. 125.

Translated by the author. Cf. also Norberg-Schulz, C.: *Genius loci: Landschaft, Lebensraum, Baukunst*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1982, 6, pp. 22–23.

17 Cf. Urry, J.: *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty First Century*, Routledge, London, New York, 2000.

18 Cf.. Augé M.: *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Verso, London, 2000; Augé M.: *Orte und Nicht-Orte der Stadt*, in: Haus der Architektur (ed.), *Spaces of Solitude*, Haus der Architektur, Graz, 1997.

19 Björk cit. after Maresch, R.: *Empire Everywhere: On the Political Renaissance of Space*, in: Biesenbach, K.; Franke, A.; Segal, A.; Weizman, E. (eds.): *Territories: Islands, Camps and Other States of Utopia*, König, Cologne, 2003, p. 15; [www.rudolf-maresch.de/texte/60.pdf](http://www.rudolf-maresch.de/texte/60.pdf), November 25, 2008.

20 Cf. Hoffmann-Axthelm, D.: *Wohnen als fixe Idee*, in: Daidalos, Architektur Kunst Kultur, June 1996, issue 60, *Urbane Behausung*, p. 41.

21 Cf. also de Kerckhove, D.: *The Architecture of Intelligence*, Birkhäuser, Basel, Boston, Berlin, 2001, 28.

#### 4. Reality vs. Virtuality

This shows, once again, that for a long time the virtual has been an obvious and integral part of everyday reality.<sup>22</sup> Even so, the paradoxical separation of the two is repeatedly insisted upon in relation to apparently traditional concepts of dwelling and their spatial references. It would otherwise be impossible to explain the fact that new technologies only hesitantly find a place in the residential sphere due to their link to the aura of the virtual. Closely linked to dwelling are the anxiety and confusion surrounding the border between medial and residential space, as also occurred at the time of introduction for now banal technology such as the telephone or the television.<sup>23</sup>

Even Gisue and Mojgan Hariri's DIGITAL HOUSE (project, 1999) designed for the magazine *House Beautiful* still addresses this. Although it does respond to the explicit demand of integrating everyday media into its surrounding architecture, thereby creating a direct symbiosis, conceptually the house operates in quasi polar opposition. This manifests itself in the form of special, isolated spaces, forming a counterpart to the virtual world of digital images which significantly shape the house. "(These rooms) allow the inhabitants to unplug themselves momentarily, as they move between tasks and from the virtual to the actual world. Here, the eye takes in a layering of realities as one can look into other parts of the house, to the landscape beyond, or to the images on the walls".<sup>24</sup> But that the view of the image on the wall also gives us a view into a virtual reality clearly shows how fluid the borders are. Frank Eckardt comments insightfully here: "It seems hard to imagine that reality is to some extent fictional and that virtualities are not mere products of fiction, but real".<sup>25</sup>

The—conscious or unconscious—daily experience of the symbiosis between reality and the virtual, including the successful history of the integration of audiovisual media into the private sphere (from the 'family cinema', the television, through to computers) is perfectly represented in Gary Chang's MY OWN APARTMENT (Hong Kong, 1998). Old and new 'windows' are layered on top of or behind one another, giving them all the same value. In this manner, Chang's apartment has

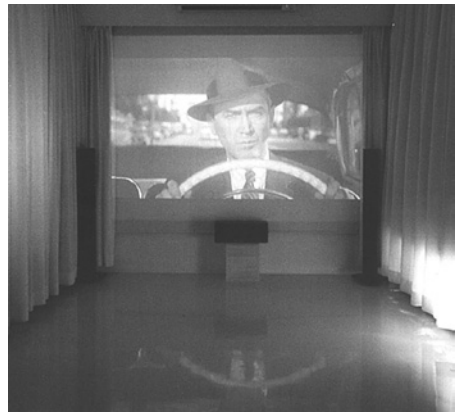
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22 Cf. Weber, S.: *Die Dualisierung des Erkennens: Zu Konstruktivismus, Neurophilosophie und Medientheorie*, Passagen, Vienna, 1996, p. 158.

23 Cf. Colomina, B.: *Das Wohnhaus als Schaustück*, in: Ferguson, R. (ed.), *Am Ende des Jahrhunderts: 100 Jahre gebaute Visionen*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 1999, p. 159.

24 Hariri, G.; Hariri, M. cit. after Riley 1999, p. 56.

25 Eckardt, F., *E-City: From Researching the Virtual towards Understanding the Real Urban Life*, in: Bucher, U.; Finka, M. (eds.), *The Electronic City*, Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, Berlin, 2008, p. 10.



not only a surrounding environment like all other dwellings, but also a view out the window representative of many different perspectives of the world: the actual view out the window (of the Chinese metropolis), or 'through' the widescreen TV to the fantasy world of Hollywood, the real world of the news or the electronic world of the internet. The window becomes an interface. Media function here not only as vehicles for overcoming spatial distances, but also as a critical examination, using the different 'views', of the communicative potential of private space. Using remote control, an 'environment of your choice' becomes available.<sup>26</sup>

### 5. Individual vs. Community

Even with the stubbornly held assumption that dwelling is a thing of the community and the familiar, the lived reality is confronted with a social dissimulation of the extended family and the distinctive individualisation of society.<sup>27</sup> Projects such as Piercy Connor's MICROFLAT (project, 2002) or Richard Horden's MICRO COMPACT HOME (Munich, 2001) manifest this as architectural-spatial expressions of solitary living. But even here it is media that allow for a concurrent tendency in that they open the closed apartment, the capsule of the solitary, from the inside. Peter Sloterdijk leads us to this unavoidable fact pictorially, by revealing that all media engaged within the private apartment are tools for group simulations, which the solo dweller uses daily to recreate the 'lost community' in his imagination, whether through the newspaper, a book, the TV, the telephone or the internet. Media document the interconnectivity of the private subject in the societal system which evolves against all tendencies of individuality.<sup>28</sup>

26 Cf. Chang, G.: *In the Age of Indeterminacy: Towards a Non-visual Pragmaticism*, in: *Architectural Design*, September/October 2003, issue 5, *Urban Flashes Asia: New Architecture and Urbanism in Asia*, p. 61.

27 Cf. Beck U.: *Individualisierung, Globalisierung und Politik: Eigenes Leben in einer entfesselten Welt*, in: *Arch+*, Zeitschrift für Architektur und Städtebau, December 2001, issue 158, *Houses on Demand: Mass Customization in der Architektur*, pp. 54–55.

28 Cf. Sloterdijk, P.: *Sphären: Plurale Sphärologie*, vol. 3, *Schäume*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt

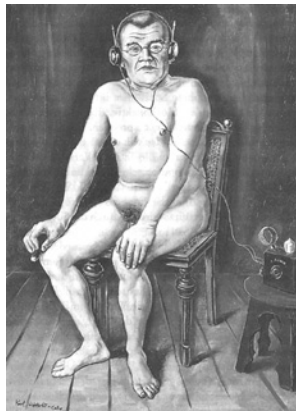


*Opposite page:*

*Fig 5: Gary Chang: MY OWN APARTMENT (Hong Kong, 1998).*

*Left: Fig. 6: Kurt Weinhöld: Mann mit Radio (1929)*

*Right: Fig. 7: Katsuhiko Miyamoto: CLOVER HOUSE (Nishinomiya, Hyogo, 2006).*



The internalisation of this fact has contributed significantly to the growth in interest of architects in the establishment of new forms of societal living. With growing intensity, spatial configurations of the behaviour of individuals vs. society are being handled differently, whether combining small living spaces with communal fittings, (BKK-3, MISS SARGFABRIK, Vienna, 1998), a layering of individual and communal forms of living, as well as their completion with additional integrated potentialities (Stücheli Architekten, KRAFTWERK 1, Zurich, 1993–2001) or ideas of communal living conditions inspired by the loft (Graft, LOFT GLEIMSTRASSE, Berlin, 2003–2004 and Flöckner & Schnöll, HOUSE NEAR ADNET, 2005–2007).

Katsuhiko Miyamoto's CLOVER HOUSE (Nishinomiya, Hyogo, 2006) can be seen as the most experimental realisation of a spatial concept in this area. It attempts to reduce individual requirements to a minimum by maximising the principle of community. Traditional, clearly defined spaces are not to be found in this house. Instead, residents are forced to share the only partially divided space day and night. Missing doors, the stairway positioned in the bathroom—a provocation against traditional efforts for intimacy—as well as a spatial concept that makes movement within the building almost visible to everyone, renders the idea of a spatially clearly defined individual retreat useless. Aside from this communal attempt of almost pathological appearance, the building of course offers strategies for providing privacy, although they are extremely finely nuanced. These strategies have nothing in common with the classic individual space, as shown for example by the open sleeping alcoves on the upper floor, which offer at least the suggestion of a room through the surrounding balustrades, and thereby also a certain screening effect and the possibility of some privacy.

## **Conclusion**

However, now wanting to persist with a concept of this kind, a concept of dwelling emphasising the opposite element of the respective dualism, would not be

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a. M., 2004, p. 592.

fair to reality. For as we know from Socrates: also the knowledge of ignorance is knowledge that we can't be sure about. In the end, the dynamics characterising the concept of dwelling against all expectations render the idea of unchanging architectural principles of dwelling completely useless. This leads to the assumption that the only power commanded by the architect in this scenario is to *realise*, that actually there is no 'secured base' (i.e. no secured knowledge) to proceed from and to build a house on.

Antoine Picon indicates this when discussing the change in codification systems of architectural design. He vividly describes here how new rules are evolving again and again. Every position, once found, is replaced by a quasi counter position after a certain time. As an example, he mentions the impeachment of the Vitruvian principles on the threshold of 18th and 19th centuries and the appearance of composition and type as new leading principles of (French) architectural practice. He also realises a second comparable and likewise radical transient situation closely related to the current digital revolution, assuming a similar important change through the contemporary spread of digital culture within architecture. Picon suggests that the successful establishment of a rule is followed sooner or later by a crises of that rule, succeeded by a new freedom (of design), which is condensed again to new rules: "Of course, the freedom granted by the crises of architectural rules cannot last forever. New rules which replace the lost ones are being established; and new liberties which soften these rules are gradually evolving".<sup>29</sup>

I do not only emphasise this, but wish to go one step further with the assumption that these upheavals delineated by Picon are strictly speaking only the 'earthquakes' which ravage the principles of architectural design from time to time, and in this sense they are of course clearly distinguished. But 'under the surface', things are moving constantly. In this context, the role of the architect is less one of someone presenting his (architectural) knowledge as ready-made, but rather that of a seismograph constantly recording even the quietest changes within the operating forces of society, in this way constantly updating his knowledge and using it accordingly in architectural design.

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29 Picon, A.: *Das Projekt: Von der Poesie der Kunst zur Entwurfsmethode*, in: Arch+, Zeitschrift für Architektur und Städtebau, October 2008, issue 189, *Entwurfsmuster: Raster, Typus, Pattern, Script, Algorithmus, Ornament*, p. 13. Translated by the author.





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