Actor-Network-Theory Approach to Archaeology of Contemporary Architecture

Citation for published version (APA):
Yaneva, A., Graves-Brown, P. (Ed.), Harrison, R. (Ed.), & Piccini, A. (Ed.) (2013). Actor-Network-Theory Approach to Archaeology of Contemporary Architecture. In *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Contemporary World* (pp. 121-135). Oxford University Press.

Published in:
Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Contemporary World

ACTOR-NETWORK-THEORY APPROACH TO THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

Albena Yaneva

for THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE

CONTEMPORARY WORLD,

edited by Paul Graves-Brown, Rodney Harrison and Angela Piccini,

Oxford University Press, 2013.

By advocating a need to focus on the recent past rather than engaging in historical recollection of the distant past, Victor Buchli and Gavin Lucas (2001) redirected the subject matter of archaeological enquiry to contemporary material culture. Drawing upon cross-disciplinary perspectives on contemporary material culture studies, the methods of archaeology were brought close to the exploration of contemporary social phenomena to outline a new agenda for the study of the materiality of late modern societies (Harrison and Schofield 2010). The familiar became 'unfamiliar'; engaged in deciphering layers of meaning and materiality (Graves-Brown 2000:2) and relying on "the archaeology of places and events that relate to the period of recent or living memory" (Harrison and Schofield 2009). Showcasing how archaeology can inform the study of our own society through detailed case studies triggered novel forms of anthropological analysis.

Yet, "archaeology of the contemporary past" is hindered by the continuation of a modernist trope that construes archaeology-as-excavation, which alienates and distances the subject from the present. Rodney Harrison argued recently that to move the issue forward required dispensing with a trope that is reliant on the idea of a past that is buried and hidden. Rather than an archaeology conceived as the pursuit of origins or focused on particular time periods, it should be understood as "a process of working from the present and its surface assemblages longitudinally across all of the pasts and potential futures which it contains" (Harrison 2011:158). To capture this, an alternative trope of archaeology-as-surface-survey and as a process of assembling/reassembling was defined by Harrison. This recent conceptual shift from the idea of an "archaeology of the contemporary past" to speak instead of an archaeology of emergent processes, an archeology "in and of the present", needs a closer dialogue with methods of enquiry that bring a better understanding of emergent processes and practices. One such method of enquiry that engages with the present is Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). This chapter will outline the possible contributions of ANT to archaeology and how it can assist in devising this new trope of surface as an allegory for a creative experiential engagement with the present and the spaces in which the past intervenes within it. It can contribute to enriching the repertoire of programmes of enquiry that can capture the "concrescence" of the emergent present.

The suggestion of bringing the ANT approach to the field of archaeology of the contemporary past is not new (Harrison and Schofield 2010). Yet, ANT-inspired studies of archeology remain scarce. For me, the questions are: how can we make ANT *transportable* to the field of contemporary archaeology? Is ANT transportable to *all* sorts of material practices? How long can we multiply the physicality and multiple materialities of things without tracing out the network-stabilising regularities? Can the abstention or engagement in archaeology of recent past play a productive role in deciphering the deployment of actual present? By addressing these questions, the chapter will contribute to unraveling how ANT as a method of enquiry can inform the archaeological understanding of contemporary world (see also Webmoor this volume).

First, I discuss some recent developments in the field of architecture studies, a field to which I have "transported" ANT methods and insights. It is also a field where the use of these methods has resulted in a series of detailed, longitudinal studies of the emergent processes of design and invention; the introduction of such methods has nurtured further interest in ethnography of architectural practices. To illustrate the potentials of ANT-inspired studies of architecture concisely, I construct and compare the epistemological positions of the *hasty sightseer* and the *slow ethnographer* of architecture. The first demonstrates an understanding of architectural objects as static surfaces where meaning can be projected; the second

refs to a more dynamic understanding of the processes that make buildings possible by not asking what a building means, but what *it does* and how it *works*. Second, I demonstrate ANT's potential to contribute to archaeology of the present that goes beyond the early-developed laboratory studies-inspired approach to archeological practices.

ANT in Archaeology

The field of archaeology has already benefited from the influence of science and technology studies approaches generally, and by laboratory studies in particular (Latour and Woolgar 1979; Latour 1987, 1993; Woolgar 1988). This influence has led to ethnographies of archaeological practice that explored archaeology and its relationship with other modern scientific fields (Edgeworth 2003, 2006; Yarrow 2003). The archeological interest in science and technology studies happened during a moment of ANT methods expanding to different material practices (Law and Hassard 1999). Originally developed by scholars tackling science, technology and engineering practices, ANT was taken outside of its privileged domains of action. Subsequently, it is used as a method to look at other fields as varied as music (Hennion 1993), drug addiction (Gomart and Hennion 1999), markets (Muniesa 2009), accounting (Lépinay 2011), contemporary art (Yaneva 2001), and architectural design (Yaneva 2005, 2009; Houdart 2006, Houdart and Minato 2009, Latour and Yaneva 2008).

As an anthropologist trained by Bruno Latour, my research consists in studying the activities and beliefs of the tribe of architects and designers; their strange obsession with time, novelty, and innovation; their enigmatic attachments to models, sketches and drawing software; and the extraordinary inconsistency in how they define themselves and their practices. I have spent the last ten years studying architects, their cultures, their enigmas, and their exoticism (specifically in the practices of Rem Koolhaas, Mosche Safdie, and Alejandro Zaera-Polo among others). Questioning *what matters to* architects and designers and *what truly defines their practices,* I have developed an anthropology of architecture practices with the help of ANT (Yaneva 2009a, 2009b) which contributes to a different - pragmatist, realist - understanding of architecture and design practices. It relies on symmetrical understanding of nature and culture taken in their multiplicity; a perspective where no prioritization of a *privileged* point of view is taken.

ANT is not a theory. It is a different method of social enquiry (Latour 2005). It is impossible to describe ANT in the abstract because it is grounded on empirical case-studies; we can only understand the approach if we have a sense of those case-studies (Law 2007). There was a lot of confusion among ANT scholars regarding ANT's status as theory. John Law argued that ANT is not a Theory because it is descriptive rather than foundational in explanatory terms. He claimed: "it is a

toolkit for telling interesting stories… about how relations assemble." (Law 2007) Instead, by following and accounting the networks in these empirical cases, new implicit theories (with a small "t") emerge: new theories about the nature of markets (MacKenzie et al 2007); about the nature of the human body (Mol 2002; Pasveer and Akrich 1996), about scientific facts and truth (Latour and Woolgar 1979) about the nature of design (Law 1987, 2002). As those "interesting stories" unfold, we find implicit theories that come right from the actors' worlds and are told with their native words. So, the use of an ANT methodology does not lead to the generation of one foundational Theory, but inevitably generates many new implicit theories that are better suited to explain the actors' world-building activities.

ANT reconfigures the relation between meaning and materiality. Traditionally, material culture studies considered the diversity of the material world (including architecture and design) as being significant in its own right without reducing it to models of the social world (Miller 1998). It focused on the materiality of modern culture by trying to decipher objects' embodied meanings and societal expectations. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, archeologists of the contemporary past have moved towards a more immanent, performative understanding of objects as actors rather than symbols (Hicks 2010). Yet, both material culture studies and archaeology of the contemporary past paradoxically

eluded fully tackling the physicality and varying materiality of the objective world (Buchli 2007). Grasping the multiple materiality and the unpredictable agency of things is precisely what ANT can bring to the field of the archeology of the contemporary past.

ANT-informed researchers followed various on-going practices. Practices, as we all know, produce multiplicities. Only by following "the making of…", "the practice of…" can we describe the variable ontology of entities that are shaped in an intermediary, non-stabilized state of the world. Only then can we witness moments in which the network has neither the complete status of an object, nor of a subject, and where new and different forms of objectivity and subjectivity emerge. ANT aims at accounting the unstable state of the social, the technical, the natural, the aesthetic, in order to be able to describe what *happens* in these extreme situations of volatility; situations that are so rarely investigated. The social sciences mostly tackle stabilized entities - technical, scientific, aesthetic. Their major task is to identify and characterize the different formulas of relationship between technology, science, art, nature on the one hand, and "society", on the other, presuming that they are all fixed, defined, and determined. Instead, ANT is interested in analyzing what is normally an exception for sociological theory and is more often tackled by anthropologists: non-stabilized series of technical/social, natural/social, scientific/social. ANT traces these heterogeneous entities by

following their gradient of stabilization. That is probably the common denominator of all the empirical case-studies, of all the stories told with ANT methods. They *all* tell a story of the making of the social. However, they tell it in different ways: by recalling different orderings of reality; by tracing different circuits of elements that are glued together to make the social; by following different types of associations. I will now tell you one such ANT-inspired story of architecture, narrated by my two epistemological figures: the *hasty sightseer* and *the slow ethnographer*.

In the Steps of Guattari

In the 1980s Félix Guattari met the Japanese architect, Shin Takamatsu, then visited Japan and engaged in dialogue with him. A short and somehow forgotten piece – *Les Machines de Shin Takamatsu* – published in the journal *Chimères* in 1994 bears witness to his fascination with the concept of machine in Takamatsu's architecture. Recollecting Guattari's encounter with Japanese architecture, I have equally become fascinated by the architect who inspired his thinking. I was eager to witness and empirically recount different ways of exploring machinic architecture. Following Guattari, I visit Takamatsu's office in Kyoto. I stroll the streets of different Japanese cities to find his buildings and engage in an exploration of the ontology of presence of architectural machines.

Osaka. A hot day in the summer of 2010. Wandering around downtown Osaka to find the iconic Kirin Plaza building of Takamatsu, a strange machinic building caught my attention. The air conditioners look tempting, and here I begin strolling through the building with different pace of speed; I experience it. Later, I discover, I had actually experienced a Takamatsu building. This is the recently built namBa HIPS building – an entertainment complex poised to become Osaka's newest landmark (Figure 9.1). At 280 feet tall, the building houses a variety of entertainment facilities with separate floors for golf, beauty salons, and restaurants. Integrated into an exterior wall of the building is the Yabafo – Japan's first building-mounted free-fall amusement ride. It is seen as the building's main attraction. From 240 feet up, the ride provides passengers a panoramic view of the city before dropping them down the side of the building at a top speed of 50 miles per hour.

Insert figure 9.1 (the namBa HIPS building, Osaka, photograph by the author)

There are two ways of exploring this building, which correspond to two epistemological positions. The first one, is the quick one, the one of the *hasty sightseer* whose perception of a building will not be better than the one of a racing car driver traveling across the fields and seeing but the flitting landscapes. She will visit the building once, will take pictures and produce a quick theory by connecting it with meanings, memories and stories related to the building's design; these stories will then be connected to key concepts in architectural theory and history. Else, she will visit the office of Takamatsu for a day, yes only a day! She will undertake an interview with the star-architect from the 1980s (Figure 9.2), she will take pictures of the models in his office and enjoy a chat with the younger designers. She will then go back home and reconnect the materials from the quick visits with the contextual materials on machinic architecture, and the 1980s in Japanese design and architectural theory.

Insert figure 9.2 (Shin Takamatsu with his collaborators and the author in his office in Takeda, photograph by the author)

The second epistemological position is a painstaking one. The *slow ethnographer* visits the building every day, trying to understand its ontology by experiencing it, keeping her diary carefully, trying to recognize words and movements in a strange environment. The *slow ethnographer* will be able see and experience a building differently. She will move about, within and without, and through repeated visits, she will let the building gradually yield itself to her in various lights, speeds, and intensities, and in connection with changing moods, crowds of people and flows of things. Or else, another type of slow ethnography will consist in visiting the office of Takamatsu and witnessing the daily process of design through interviews and ethnographic conversations with all designers; following the process slowly as it unfolds, trying to witness and make sense of the agency of scale models and drawings, and the networks of humans and non-humans deployed in design venture.

Quick, Quicker…

An instantaneous experience of this building is impossible. The *hasty sightseer* will flee through the building, take a picture, and hope that the image will provide her with the possibility of coming back and slowly discover all those features that the short moment of perception hampered her from seeing. But she never comes back.

She believes that she has seen the building all at once, and this belief relies on the assumption that buildings occupy space, and reach us from various points in space as a single simultaneous perception. When she takes a picture of it, she believes that the building is *on* the picture, trapped there, solid, motionless, *in* there (see DeSilvey this volume). Passing quickly by the building, she can have an impression of it, but hardly an experience of it. When she takes a picture, the building becomes an aesthetic object – and it becomes a flat image, a static one.

 She has some knowledge about Takamatsu having earlier read different accounts on his architecture, and newspapers from the 1980s. She conducts the interview mobilizing this knowledge. She makes specific assumptions when setting the questions. She strolls around the office and takes pictures. She sets up the tape recorder: chats in English; silence; chats in Japanese; silence. Her expectations are met. She gets what she expected; but isn't that already said in other writings or recent archives? Yes. The answers of Takamatsu are predictable. They do not add anything new to the writings of Guattari. In the formal setting of a dark conference room, bordered by solemnly displayed scale models and waiting to be photographed, Takamatsu rather stubbornly repeats the existing discourse. Nothing new; nothing unexpected. Our *hasty sightseer* is now a hasty visitor of an architectural practice in the Takeda suburb of Kyoto. Going home she will become a hasty writer and will produce a quick account of this visit that relies on causalities and symbolic interpretations of static models and confirmed discursive

expectations.

Embracing the position of a *hasty sightseer*, she goes back home with an image of a part of the building totality; and an interview that confirmed all expectations. Such a swift and partial perception will inevitably limit any theory of it as well. Its interpretation will be analytical and one-sided. Her aesthetic theory will rely on rigid conceptualizations based on principles and ideas (of styles, the architect's specific language, functions, typologies, etc.) that are framed outside of direct aesthetic experience. It will be expressed in strict categories of symbols and meanings. The classifications will set limits to perception. The experience of the *hasty sightseer* is reminiscent to the one of an archaeologist that will quickly disentangle the multiple and intricate structures of Takamatsu's design philosophy, of Japanese architecture from the 1980s, of Guattari's concept of architectural machines and will swiftly recollect them through operations of exhumation, identification, classification – rather than slowly excavating intricate meaning from materiality. The *hasty sightseer* never allows herself the time to become a slow ethnographer. That is why she will begin to replace the missing experience of the building with unrelated notions coming from another worlds – the world of theory, the background of the architect, the society, the period. Her interpretations will arbitrarilly define the random equivalent relationships between the building, on one side, and the interpretations produced after it was built, on the other. This will

situate the building in much larger circuits of meta-symbols, societies and cultures.

Slowing Down

A slow exploration of the architectural presence of the namBa HIPS building in Osaka makes me experience accidentally its machinic effects. Accounting the namBa HIPS building ethnographically leads me to engage in a cartography of architectural presence, relying on the trajectories, the events, and the happenings in this building. Here, am I, a *slow ethnographer*. When I engage in a day-to-day ethnography of the building, keeping my precious diary to hand, I engage in a continuously unfolding process of cumulative interactions; instead of discovering a part of it "at once", I gradually witness the building growing in front of me and with me (see Schofield this volume for a similar process). Experiencing the building is complex; its qualities are rich and form a spectrum that can hardly be put into rigid categories. I account for the play of light on a building with the constant change of shadows, intensities and colors, and shifting reflections. A building is never immobile or still in perception. It can be perceived only in a cumulative series of interactions. There is a continuous building up of the architectural object. I visit the namBa HIPS building many times and I describe what I see. I interact with it and with the users and keep a diary of these interactions. I practice a form of "site-writing" – a term coined by Jane Rendell.

That is, a form of writing that happens between words and things, between writing and speaking, between one place and another; "it is a two-way inscription, dreamed and remembered, of sites written and writings sited" (Rendell 2010:151). Inspired by Rendell, and taking the concept outside the field of art criticism, this form of writing involves a double movement to and fro between inside and outside, between the researcher and the work of architecture and suspends what might be a purely subjective judgement. The building cannot make an instantaneous impression on me. It is through a continuous process of interactions that it becomes possible to introduce enriching and defining elements of the machinic nature of namBa HIPS.

As an ethnographer who strolls in the building and wanders around it, I *extract* speeds from the building. Not meanings. These speeds are not given once and forever. They could not happen on their own. Hidden in steel and glass, wood and concrete, slick and bold surfaces; they conceal in the thresholds, they spy from the corners, they sleep in the shadows of darker and lighter colors. The contrast of materials, colors and textures can awake them and activate their energies. Diverse means are employed to sense the building gaining rhythm: ruptures of symmetry, discontinuous segments, decentered forms fitted-together, a vertical slit where the Yabafo structure is placed as part of the facade, the steeply inclined back part of the building as opposed to a flat and open façade. An abyss-like void opens to the

sky when Yabafo has moved down, thus inviting the blue Osaka sky to enter the building. I stroll again. If it is all steel, then aluminum would be the material that will make the dark and light grey steel vibrate and produce intensities. In order to obtain this effect of rupture, crossed by diverse transversal elements, the symmetries are systematically derived from the two circles of the façade slot, which become semi-circles when the movement of the Yabafo traverses the building. I feel the pulsations of the facade machine, the vibrations; the subsequent openings of the sky destabilizing the dimensions and forms anticipated by ordinary perception. The slit remains the focus, the attractor of subjectivity. "The becoming machine" can only be obtained, as Guattari argued, through the crossing of a threshold, in the course of which an effect of faciality [visagéite] will seize the building in order to make it live, in an animal-animist, vegetal-cosmic manner (Guattari 1994:136). The faciality is expressed through the many repetitions of the Yabafo - as a pulsating, virulent machinic core – and different intensities are produced. What matters is the constant succession of slow and fast, fast and slow; that is what makes the building dynamic. What runs with a great speed, then gradually slows down; what runs with a slow cadence, then suddenly speeds up.

Experiencing this Takamatsu building and its "becoming machine", I stroll in the building and I follow the people who stroll around every day. I do not ask the questions: What does this big machine-like structure stand for? What does it mean?

I just stroll; I follow the circuits; I lend myself to the different intensities of the building rhythms. Nothing is really neutral nor passive. There is something vital, and powerful. The colors, the materials do not say anything either. I witness only speeds; slow and fast, fast and slow. I do not question the meaning. Taken by the fine circuits of this machinic entity, making me immerse into different intensities of flows, speeding up and slowing down, slowing down and speeding up, I just ask: 'How does this building work?' 'What does it do?' 'How and where?' 'Who sets it in motion?' 'In what cases? 'What are its modalities of action?'

If the *hasty sightseer* relied on existing past or recent *archives* of the building she can quickly connect to a history of events and meanings, as a *slow ethnographer* I rely on *the diagram of the building* as a configuration of forces and fields of energies that shape the way that I experience it. The machine-like building does not symbolize anything. The movement does not mean anything. The setting in which I am strolling while writing these lines does not say anything. It *works*. What makes it work is the network of light grey metal modules that set disjunctions, outline colour contrasts and speeds, and the reversible game of transformations, of reactions, of inversions, of inductions, of slowing down, and speeding up; the moving core of Yabafo includes the disjunctions and distributes the connections. That is, a strange life circulating in the building, a vital force. Speeds. Not meanings. That is what we get from the building. Races of pace, speeds,

accelerations, intensities, a twinge of new velocity, turns, degrees of swiftness.
Speeds flow from all the materials used by Takamatsu: metal, aluminum,
decorative tubes and steel brooches, parallel bars, metallic adornments, and glass.
Takamatsu extracts the speeds from the contrast of materials, from their different
surfaces and colour shades.

Back to the practice of Takamatsu, we know what questions to pose. Asking an
architect "why do you do this?" has no meaning, no importance. We should rather
ask: how do you do this? How does this building work? His discourses might turn
around issues of meaning and symbols, as they did in the hasty visit of the office,
but while designing he will be experiencing different speeds and moves (Figure
9.3, Figure 9.4). When projecting and sketching a movement, Takamatsu speeds up
and slows down and he wants this to happen in the different successions of dark
grey and light grey metal surfaces of the building-to-be. Just like the visitors
strolling in the building and wandering around it, the architect is *to extract* those
speeds from the building in the process of drawing and designing it (Yaneva 2005).
They are not given once and forever. They could not happen on their own. While
working with the speeds, he does not express or symbolize anything; he simply
immerses into the tempo of design, and adjusts its different rhythms with
engineers, contractors, users, commercial agents, and neighbors.

Insert figure 9.3, figure 9.4 (architects at work in the office of Shin Takamatsu, photographs by the author)

The slow ethnographer can gain an experience of the building that will be the product of her continuous and cumulative interactions with its world. It is this rich experience of the vast range of the building qualities that will form the core of her interpretations; this should be the only foundation for architectural theory. A building experience should be expressed slowly in adjectives that will narrate the physical conditions of its perception; the large spectrum of building qualities cannot be recounted in a rigid repertoire of categories and fast concepts. Historical and cultural information will throw light on the building, but will not substitute the understanding of the architectural object in its own qualities and relations. Its

interpretation will derive from the world of a building that "opens to interpretation" because of its own activities, from its immediate presence.

Exploring the namBa HIPS architectural presence as a *slow ethnographer* I find out different spatial and temporal parameters that are able to generate properties and inform differently about the intensities produced. Experiencing slowly the building would mean following series of events, internal resonances and movements. We can find in its organisation different spatio-temporal dynamisms, confrontations of spaces, flights of time, syntheses of speeds, directions and rhythms. The namBa HIPS building appears as a field composed of differential relationships that define each other reciprocally in a network; there is a distribution of singularities, of differences, of intensities, of trajectories. The building is not immobile. It does not express anything. *It works*, and its meanings vary according to the distribution of properties manifested in its process of working.

ANT for Archaeologists

Judging a complex object like the namBa HIPS building as an aesthetic and static object would imply the *hasty sightseer* to embrace an authoritative way of speaking on behalf of established principles and reference to the works of other leading architects, of other buildings of this style or period, of architectural Theory. Such a

way of interpreting the building relies on quick images taken by the *hasty sightseer* and fast interviews, archives and accounts. It will treat it in its rigid aesthetic form and will have a limiting direct response in perception. When we say a building expresses Japanese culture, we rather think about a stable form that would reify subjective meanings.

The *slow ethnographer* engages instead in an enquiry into the architectural presence of the building that can only be understood in meticulous studies of the specific works of architecture. The object of the ethnographer is far from being stable; it appears rather as a dynamic map of all the trajectories and events it triggers; and it changes according to different speeds. The notion of presence and immediacy leads us to explore the concept of surface that Harrison (2011) referred to as being the new trope for understanding archaeological practices. We need epistemological practices that will rely on the posture of the *slow ethnographer* to engage in archaeology-as-a-dynamic-deployment-of-flat-networks, i.e. of surfaces (not as excavation). That is, a process of creative and immediate engagement with the present that will make us immerse in assembling and reassembling all human and non-human ingredients that an object (in our case a building) is made of.

This type of archaeology will lead us towards a flat understanding of the architectural work we engage with, its qualities, forces and events, its different

materials and textures, the noises, the accidents, the runners traversing it, the dramas in its premises. As witnessed here in the short story of the ethnographer, the apprehension of the machinic nature of the namBa HIPS building grows from the architectural object as it enters into the experience of slow observation by interaction with her own knowledge and sensitivity. Thus, experiencing and describing an object does not derive from objective standards nor is it the outcome of purely subjective impressions and feelings. When conducted in an architectural practice, slow ethnography helps us to witness the difficulties and the unpredictable turns in the process of its design and invention (Yaneva 2009b). It opens the enquiry to situations where subjective and objective are again not stable but multiple and changing; a situation where all distributions are possible.

With ANT in hand, we do not unravel meanings. We rather show how things become knowable and new realities are obtained. Following ANT's methodological ambition, a new agenda for archaeology of the contemporary World can be brought to the fore. Archaeologists should be able to witness and describe the modes of existence of various objects and account for numerous connections that flow out of these streams of experience. They should focus their efforts on gradually accounting and understanding (like a *slow ethnographer*), not replacing these objects, institutions and different cultures with the quick concepts of society, culture (like a *hasty sightseer*). Such an approach consists in

investigating *the making of,* not the *made* objects, institutions, rituals, cultures and groupings in contemporary societies.

Yet, such an approach does not consist in the simple description of practices, nor is it enough to discuss and analyze the relevant theories. It rather aims at making explicit the performative or pragmatic dimension that connects objects with the practices of their making, with the streams of experiences, with their makers and users. Following the particular connections, ways and actions, individual moves and collective groupings in practice, a new and richer repertoire of descriptions of objects, practices, institutions and connections can be generated. Made in a situationnist, pluralist, associationnist, morphologic, and psycho-topographic fashion these accounts can better seize the erratic behavior of an object (just like we have seen this with the namBa HIPS building). Only by generating such ethnographic accounts, tracing pluralities of concrete entities in the specific spaces and times of their co-existence, will archaeology be better prepared to grasp the changing contemporary realities.

What ANT will do to complement the existing tradition of archaeological ethnography (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009; Edgeworth 2010; Hamilakis 2011) can be summarised in the following three observations:

First, such an approach assumes that the divide between the "subjective"

and "objective" is abandoned. Objects are often grasped in archaeological accounts in two different ways: either through their intrinsic materiality (something that would define them as material, real, objective and factual) or through their more "symbolic" aspects (that would define them as social, subjective and lived). ANT helps us escape this modernist division. Suggesting that matter is absorbed into meaning, that it is *in the World*, archeology could engage in analysis of how materiality from one side, and morality, ethics, politics from the other are to coalesce.

Second, drawing on ANT, we could do justice to the many material dimensions of things (without limiting them in advance to pure material properties or to social symbols). Matter is much too multidimensional, much too active, complex, surprising, and counter-intuitive to be represented in stabilized artifacts and static institutions. A second advantage of an ANT perspective is that it offers us a fuller view of these dimensions and makes us embrace a complex conglomerate of many surprising agencies that are rarely taken into account. Such accounts reveal the unpredictable attachments to non-humans both in the processes of making and experiencing; and that is what makes them so materially interesting.

Third, instead of looking for explanations outside the particular field, by following an ANT perspective we should consider context as a variable; that is, as something moving, evolving and changing along with the various objects and practices. Context is made of the many dimensions that impinge at every stage on

the development of a project, at every stage of experience. And this is the third advantage of an ANT perspective to archaeology. Instead of analyzing the impact of external factors (market forces, class divisions, economic constraints, social conventions, cultural climate, marketing games, or politics) on contemporary material culture and the processes that produce them, we should attempt to grasp the erratic behaviour of different types of matters, of objects, technological settings, and institutions. ANT gives us one more tool, with which to follow the painstaking ways humans interact with objects and environments, and shape dynamic contemporary cultures at different scales.

I have shown here how ANT can help archaeology become a study of the surface, of assemblages of humans and non-humans jumbled together in the present. Drawing on two epistemological figures –the *hasty sightseer* and the *slow ethnographer* – I demonstrate two different approaches to contemporary architecture. I argue that ANT methodologies can help to create a space in which the past, present and future are combined and are still in the process of *becoming*. Equipped with ANT-inspired methods, contemporary archaeologists will not focus on the recent and contemporary past in its own right. They will rather engage in explorations of the vibrant contemporary World, i.e. of emergent processes, of world-building activities of various actors, of the fascinating epistemological techniques of engaging with, and making the present last.

REFERENCES CITED

Buchli, Victor

2007 Immateriality and Things. Lecture presented at the Manchester Architecture

Research Center, The University of Manchester, 7 June. Electronic document,

http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/marc/documents/victor-buchli.pdf,

accessed May 31, 2012. Manchester Architecture Research Centre, Manchester

[England]

Buchli, Victor and Gavin Lucas (editors)

 2001 *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past*. Routledge, London.

Edgeworth, Matt

 2003. *Acts of Discovery: an Ethnography of Archaeological Practice*. BAR

International Series, 1131. Archaeopress, Oxford.

Edgeworth, Matt

2006 (editor). *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice: Cultural Encounters,*

Material Transformations Worlds of Archaeology. Altamira Press, Lanham,

Maryland.

Edgeworth, Matt

 2010 On the Boundary: New Perspectives from Ethnography of Archaeology. In *Archaeology and Anthropology: Understanding Differences, Exploring Similarities*, edited by Duncan Garrow and Thomas Yarrow, pp. 53-68. Oxford, Oxbow.

Gomart, E. and Antione Hennion

1999 A Sociology of Attachment: Music Amateurs, Drug Users. In *Actor Network Theory and After,* edited by John Law and John Hassard , pp. 220-248. Oxford, Blackwell.

Graves-Brown, Paul (editor)

 2000 *Matter, materiality and modern culture*. London and New York, Routledge.

Guattari, Félix

1994 Les machines architecturales de Shin Takamatsu. *Chimères*:21-41.

Hamilakis, Yannis and Aris Anagnostopoulos

2009 What is Archaeological Ethnography? *Public Archaeology*, 8(2-3):65-87.

Hamilakis, Yannis

2011 Archaeological Ethnography: a Multi-Temporal Meeting Ground for Archaeology and Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40:399-414.

Harrison, Rodney

 2011 Surface Assemblages. Towards an Archaeology *in* and *of* the Present. *Archaeological Dialogues* 18(2):141–161.

Harrison, Rodney and John Schofield

 2009 Archaeo-Ethnography, Auto-Archaeology: Introducing Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 5(2):185-209.

Harrison, Rodney and John Schofield

 2010 *After Modernity: Archaeological Approaches to the Contemporary Past.* Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York.

Hennion, Antoine

1993 *La Passion musicale. Une sociologie de la médiation.* Métailié, Paris.

Houdart, Sophie

2006 Des multiples manières d'être reel – Les représentations en perspective dans le projet d'architecture, *Terrain* 46:107-122.

Houdart, Sophie and Chihiro Minato

2009 *Kuma Kengo, An Unconventional Monograph.* Editions Donner Lieu, Paris.

Hicks, Dan

2010 The Material-Cultural Turn: Event and Effect. In *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, edited by Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, pp. 25 – 98. Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York.

Latour, Bruno

1987 *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA,.

Latour, Bruno

1993 *We have never been modern*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Latour, Bruno

2005 *Reassembling the Social: an Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford University Press, Oxford

Latour, Bruno

Latour, Bruno and Albena Yaneva

2008. Give me a Gun and I will Make All Buildings Move: An ANT's View of Architecture. In *Explorations in Architecture: Teaching, Design, Research* edited by Reto Geiser. Birkhäuser, Basel.

Latour, Bruno and Steve Woolgar.

1979 *Laboratory Life: the Construction of Scientific Facts*. Sage, Beverly Hills and London.

Law, John

1987 Technology and Heterogeneous Engineering: the Case of the Portuguese Expansion. In *The Social Construction of Technical Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology,* edited by Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor Pinch, pp. 111-134. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London

Law, John and John Hassard

1999. *Actor Network Theory and After*. Blackwell, Oxford.

Law, John

2002 *Aircraft Stories: Decentering the Object in Technoscience* Duke University

Press, Durham, North Carolina.

Law, John

2007 Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics,' version of 25th April 2007,

available at

http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law-ANTandMaterialSemiotics.pdf,

(downloaded on 18th May, 2007).

Lépinay, Vincent A.

2011 *Codes of Finance: Engineering Derivatives in a Global Bank*. Princeton

University Press: Princeton, New Jersey.

MacKenzie, Donald, Fabian Muniesa, and Lucia Siu (editors)

2007 *Do Economists Make Markets? On the Performativity of Economics*.

Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Miller, Daniel (editor)

 1998 *Material Cultures. Why Some Things Matter*. Routledge, London and New

York.

Mol, Annemarie

2002 *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina.

Muniesa, Fabian

2009 The description of financial objects *Anthropology Today* 25(2): 26-27.

Pasveer, Bernike and Madeline Akrich.

1996 *Comment la naissance vient aux femmes.*

Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, Paris.

Rendell, Jane

2010 *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*. I. B. Tauris, London.

Woolgar, Stephen

1988 *Science. The very idea*. London.

Yaneva, Albena

2005 Scaling up and Down: Extraction Trials in Architectural Design. *Social Studies of Science* 35:867-894.

Yaneva, Albena

2009a *The Making of a Building: A Pragmatist Approach to Architecture*. Peter
Lang, Oxford.

Yaneva, Albena

2009b *Made by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture. An Ethnography of
Design*. 010 Publishers, Rotterdam.

Yarrow, Thomas

2003 Artefactual persons. The relational capacities of persons and things in the
practice of excavation. *Norwegian archaeological review* 36(1), 65–73.