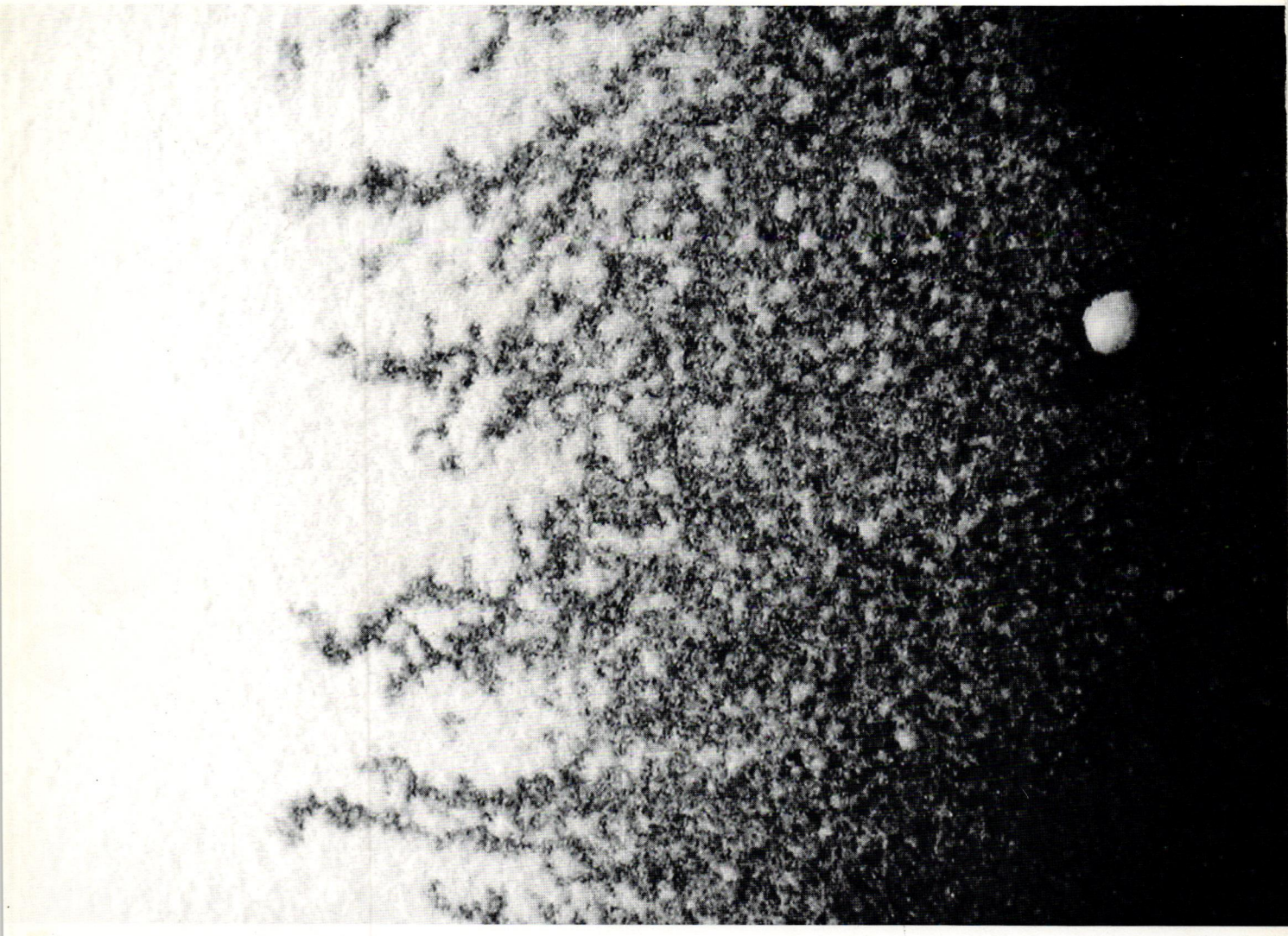

thresholds 31

EPHEMERA

Cover image: *Blacktop* © Talia Dorsey

thresholds 31

EPHEMERA

Editorial Policy

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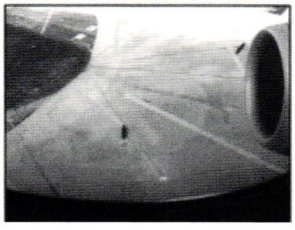
This issue is dedicated to Anastasia Hahn and Dorothy Dorsey.

Contents

* article includes Media component [see DVD]

Media Contents [see DVD]

James Boxer
MVI_0376 .....



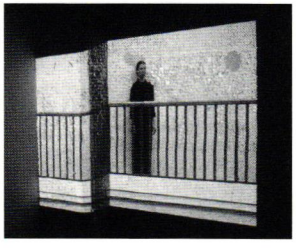
Canon SD100.
Early moments of a flight from Palm Beach Intl., Florida to JFK, NY.
Airbus A-320, runway 27 Right (moving west).

Lukasz Lysakowski, Keiko Uenishi & So Takahashi
In Real Time .....

In Real Time is an audio/video fragment of a media performance exploring improvised production in real-time. The performance is composed of custom software and content merged spontaneously by three composers to create an organic concert invoking ephemeral experiences of action and memory.

video : Lukasz Lysakowski :
audio : Keiko Uenishi & So Takahashi :

Claudia Westermann
Waiting .....



I am waiting, I am my own sacrifice, designed to be sacred.

Loneliness comes with the promise of efficiency. Holiness is a pleasureless escape.

The work *Waiting*, is a reflection upon the technologically enhanced, the mediated body, and its relation to the world of matter. For decades medical devices have found their ways into our bodies. This is not new. Yet, the capacities of these devices were relatively limited. Current research in neuroscience and in genetics however, seem to herald the final post-human era of both a technological body and mind. Its limits are unknown. Part for part, the human will replace himself with "smart" devices. Part for part, the self will be assigned to the activities of specific neurons within our brain.

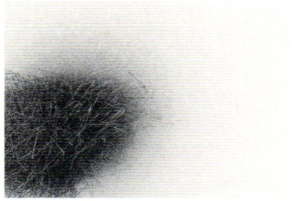
Aging belongs to nature only, age to matter that is irreplaceable.

Waiting depicts a female performer almost standing still in an obvious loop of 30 seconds duration, projected on a wall, that displays the traces of its age. The performer's small movements appear in relationship with the structure of the wall, as if she wanted to synchronize herself with that world that knows the truly ephemeral—history—and with it, memory and dream.

There is a place.

R. Shane Williamson

Scalar



Scalar presents varied representations of geometric data sets, each of which have been subjected to unique topological transformations. The perceptual speed of the transformations within and between these sets varies according to visual proximity which oscillates between the microscopic and the macroscopic. The ephemeral transitions between animations are syncopated to Steve Reich's "Music for Eighteen Musicians", a seminal work of musical minimalism that focuses the listener towards the subtleties of rhythmic and harmonic complexity.

video : R. Shane Williamson
audio : Steve Reich

Ben Dalton

hello ... hi ... hi ... er ... hello ....

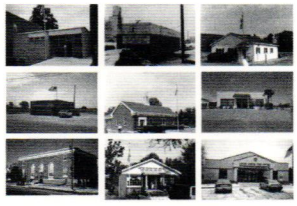
This piece is an investigation of my interest in the acute self awareness triggered when humans are placed in the range of a camera or microphone. There is something about the knowledge of the future record of ourselves which often triggers discomfort, and provokes a set of strange, plastic, forced responses. We find it difficult to prevent these reactions to someone who may be about to record our appearance or voice. We are even quick to adapt to new recording devices, such as our developing uneasiness and consciousness of cameras in previously innocuous mobile phones.

The audio recording for this project was produced by following a series of pre-formulated algorithmic steps:

* position yourself at a reasonably busy intersection with a standard (in the sense of being instantly recognisable as such) microphone.
* as someone walks towards you, try to not make eye contact and to not display the microphone until moments before they pass you.
* attempt to elicit a response from each passer-by using only the familiar action of thrusting the microphone within range of their face.
* retain only the first utterance from each person in the final recording.
* do not reorder or modify the words and noises.

Jesse Vogler

4132 United States Post Offices



The spatial practices and territorial logics of the Postal System constitute a diffuse yet embodied infrastructure across the American landscape. As a network of relays, the Postal System marks the intersection of spatial continuities, mobilities, and linkages on one level, and spatial haecceities, localities, and positions on another. The result is a paradoxical space—at once fleeting and situated, contingent and fixed. Perhaps no place crystallizes this tension more than the site of the post office itself, marking a locale as distinct and particular while being embedded in a larger, national set of relations.

The accompanying video presents images of post offices from across the United States. Over the course of the video, a common set of signifiers emerge—a flag, a mailbox, a blue and white streak—that begin to suggests a residue of postal appearance. The resulting matrix begins to reveal the tension between Federal legibility and local specificity.

The author gratefully acknowledges all contributors to the "Post Office Photos" archive.

Tomer Reiss

Tukim

A short documentary shot in Tel Aviv in 2004, using a high speed camera.

video : Tomer Reiss
audio : DNA

Talia Dorsey

Introduction

The ponderous question of ephemera is that it is at once that which is fleeting and, by a simple shift of the frame, that which remains. It is that which is transitory, that which *is* by the constancy of time's passage; however, it is too, by the very same definition, that which offers the semblance of duration by this precise capacity to move *beyond* or *with* time. The objects, moments and conditions by which we define and engage our age is constructed by the very things, by which it will become obsolete. In an era in which time and speed are so complicit in the constitution of our cultural awareness, where and how might we begin to locate the foundational registers by which to measure their effect?

In a relativistic model of existence, the operative nature of these registers becomes a point of question. If we are to examine the flux of our times, then we must seek to find the static points, modes, frames, axioms or objects by which it can be rendered. Conversely, if we are to seek the engagement with the flux of our times, then we must necessarily move with it, in the attempt of creating co-temporal portals to insight and experience, rendered stable by their paralleling dynamism. Such is the crux of ephemera's internal dynamic, constituted by the relationship of ephemera—the subjects and objects of a localized permanence, and the ephemeral—the temporally-engaged modes by which to establish, if even momentarily, these very registers of permanence.

This issue of thresholds is dedicated to this dynamic. It is a composition of works shifting in scales, scope and media, located throughout this circular spectrum. They are works actively and collectively engaged, through content and/or intent, in the consideration of the com-plex workings of time and the constructions it allows. Their methods and sites of questioning are manifold: looking at the objects that remain— the scrapbooks[1], the detritus[2], the depictions[3], the architectures[4], the images[5]— as a means of

investigating and contextualizing their constitution and the re-constitutional potentials they imply; interrogating specifically the procedural logics[6] that underlay such artifacts towards a disciplinary understanding of their relevance[7]; detecting the suggestive fissures in emergent cultural conditions and constructs in which enduring paradigms of experiential engagement[8] might take hold; creating[9], extracting[10], documenting[11] and deploying[12] the constituents of experience to uncover and offer permanence to their qualitative meaning; and lastly pondering the yearnful means[13] of this, so very human, endeavor.

This issue, comprised by the collective spirit of its works, is intended to offer an open-ended portrait, a register of this time, a site of experience and contemplation, of the interwoven dynamics of ephemera. And only by the journal's ultimate and inevitable participation therein, is it truly.

NOTES

1 see Charlie Hailey, *Scrapbook (1923)*

2 see Jennifer Gabrys, *The Quick and the Dirty : Ephemeral Systems in Silicon Valley*

3 see Cecilia E. Ramos, *Caillebotte's On the Pont de l'Europe : A Transversal Vista of Modernity*

4 see Irene Sunwoo, *Taming the Farnsworth House* and Jesse Vogler, *4132 United States Post Offices*

5 see Mark Cottle, *Seven Views of Twelve Months: Ephemera, Phenomena and Experience*

6 see John May, *Such as that Elegant Blend of Philosophy and Hardware : Preface to a History of Geographical Autonomy*; Scott A. Sherer, *Remains : Smithson's Partially Buried Woodshed after 35 Years*; Monika Codourey Wisniewska, *Manuscript : Technologies of Space and Body in Transit*; and R. Shane Williamson, *Scalar*

7 see Lydia Kallipoliti, *Materials off the Catalogue*; and Kiril Ass, *A Watch-Tower*

8 see Louise Pelletier, *Architecture of Events : Reconfiguring the City*; and Lydia Kallipoliti, Alexandros Tsamis, Ioannis Zavoleas, John E. Fernandez, M. Alexandra Sinisterra & Vana Tentokali, *Fecund Cityscapes : Ephemeral Structures for the Athens Olympics 2004*

9 see Lukasz Lysakowski, Keiko Uenishi & So Takahashi, *In Real Time*

10 see James Boxer, *MVI_0376*; Claudia Westermann, *Waiting*; Ben Dalton, *hello ... hi ... hi ... er ... hello*; and Tomer Reiss, *Tukim*

11 see Bert de Muynck, *Ephemera and Experience*

12 see David Serero, *Variable Geometry : Acoustical Domes*

13 see Natasha Ruiz-Gómez, *Essence and Evanescence in the Hands of Rodin*; and Jennifer Rhee, *Time Embodied : The Lived Body in On Kawara's Date Paintings*

John May

Such as that Elegant Blend of Philosophy and Hardware

Preface to a History of Geographical Autonomy

In the early literature on missile guidance I came across a photograph, taken by an unknown pilot on an unknown day in 1944, holding two blurred figures still within its frame, frozen in time somewhere in the skies above London (fig. 1). Winged objects both, though of slightly differing configurations, the two appeared locked in a mid-flight mechanical embrace. I later learned that the photograph reveals the first meeting between British pilots and an entirely new weapon employed by the Germans, the V-1 guided rocket, an early predecessor of the famed V-2.

Apparently the nascent missile traveled at speeds lesser than aircraft of the period, a fact not lost on the British airmen who quickly realized that although it could not be frightened off its vicious course, the rocket could nonetheless be downed by a delicate wing nudge from a defending airplane. Thus the ridiculous scene in the photo, the serenity of the image distending the violence of its content, a tango of humanity and hardware. Squadron leader Joseph Barry is known to have ruined the most V-1s, somehow amassing the curious total of 66 and 1/3rd before himself succumbing to airborne flak in late 1944 (fig. 2).[1]

Slumped now in the privacy of my thought, I was left to consider the quality of frightening that surely fixed on these pilots, brushing up so gingerly alongside mechanized autonomy, as they struggled to tip the

Figure 2 Joseph Barry

disturbing projectile. And for that matter, what was the missile thinking? Or rather, how was the missile thinking? Or, still more precisely, how does one think alongside a missile? There is a prevailing debate that wants to resolve whether or not an object can "think"; let's agree that I'd like to avoid that contest for the remainder of this essay.[2]

Instead, following Wittgenstein, the first step is to look at the phrase "to think" as a tool.[3] In this manner, I am here considering the employment of a tool (thinking-as-tool) by an object (a missile)—permission for which even the most dire humanist or severe automatist would grant me. Further suggestions, this time from

Figure 1 (opposite) Tipping a V-1

the *Tractatus*: objects are simple; objects contain the possibility of all situations; and the possibility of its occurring in states of affairs is the form of an object.[4] With these thoughts in mind, I inquired after the character of the guided missile.

I. Missile Basics

Initial research revealed essentially four different classes of missile guidance platforms. Pre-set guidance in which a pre-calculated program is fed into a device before firing and cannot thereafter be altered. Command guidance, which is the directing of the missile by means of control signals which originate from outside the missile, usually from or near the launching site. Direction along a path, involving the process of setting up a path, and fitting the missile with the means for identifying this path. And finally, homing (also known as proportional navigation), where some property of the target itself can be sensed by the missile, which then automatically steers itself to the target.[5]

Figure 3 "Basic" Guidance

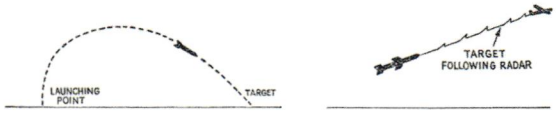


Figure 4 "Autonomous" Guidance

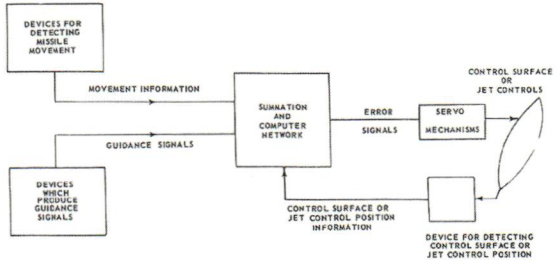


Figure 5 Autonomous Guidance Control Diagram

Both command and direction along a path might be called "basic" guidance systems, defined as those missiles which require control by a human operator at any point after launch (fig. 3). By contrast, both preset and homing can be seen as "autonomous" guidance systems. Autonomous guidance systems are fully independent of human operators from the moment of launch until final strike (fig. 4). Basic (non-autonomous) guidance systems can be identified as those in which the vehicle control aspects are located outside the body of the missile. But in any autonomous system the mechanisms for both control and guidance are located on-board the missile, entirely contained within its frame. In military terms, these autonomous systems are often referred to as "fire-and-forget" systems, and must possess the ability to relate target and weapon motion with respect to a common reference.[6]

Autonomous guidance systems are representative of significant epistemological shifts in mathematics and the physical sciences (particularly mechanics) and, further, indicate dramatic changes in the complex historical relationships built up between humans, technology, and the natural environment (fig. 5).

II. Geographical Autonomy

John Simpson, a British journalist working in Baghdad during the first Gulf War, reported having seen a cruise missile slip silently past his fifth-floor hotel room window, not one hundred yards from where he was standing as he surveyed the maligned landscape (fig. 6). Estimating it to be over twenty feet long, he remarked at how gracefully it followed the contours of the main road, executing a near ninety-degree turn at one point as it fluently navigated the dense downtown fabric. Disappearing as quickly as it had

made its attendance known, were it not for a deafening explosion moments later, Simpson would surely have questioned his eyes having actually seen it.[7]

One highly evolved method of autonomous guidance is terrestrial-reference guidance, of which terrain-sensing is the most complex form. Terrestrial reference guidance systems are those in which a predetermined path, set into the control system of a missile, can be followed by a device in the missile that reacts to some property of the earth. As these systems developed, they came to rely on more and more sophisticated mechanisms for "viewing" the earth, from photo-optical recognition, to remote sensing and GPS.

The first terrestrial reference system to move beyond simple gravitational attunement was the *Automatic Terrain Recognition and Navigation* (ATRAN) system, developed in the early 1950s.[8] Through a map-matching correlation process, ATRAN continuously tracked the ever-changing pattern of terrain features by comparing the observed radar returns to a sequence of reference images stored in its memory. ATRAN used a conventional, X-band, short-pulsed, non-coherent scanning radar sensor to map the ground area in the forward 135 degree sector of the missile (fig. 7). Video information provided by this active scanning radar sensor was automatically compared on a real time point-to-point basis with similar synchronized video, generated in a flying-spot-scanner—a device whose operability stunned me when first I stumbled on its existence. Contour models of the entire flight path were handmade, and then filmed by a camera, simulating the eventual position of the missile as it traveled. The reference images were stored on a 35mm film strip; a new reference frame was used with each two nautical miles of travel (fig. 8).

The missile map-matching problem consists of locating the position of a sensor relative to a reference map which is stored onboard the vehicle's computer (fig. 9). Once the match location is found, the relative location between the two map centers can be used to update the vehicle's navigational position. The important performance considerations are the avoidance of false fixes as measured by their frequency of occurrence, and the accuracy with which the position fix can be made.[9]

I discovered that the investigation of radar map-matching was initiated by the Goodyear Aerospace Corporation early in 1947, under sponsorship of the Wright Air Development Center. A successful test of airborne radar map-matching was made in April 1948, and the first automatically controlled flight using ATRAN was made in October 1948. This event marked the first instance, to my knowledge, of the production

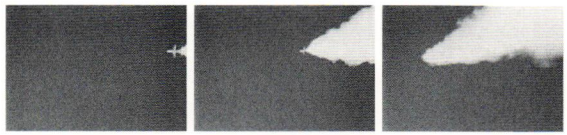


Figure 6 Silence

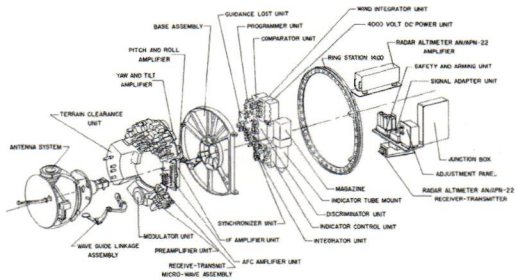


Figure 7 ATRAN Radar and Comparator Assembly

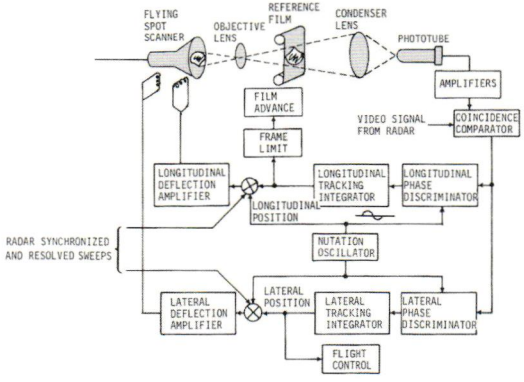


Figure 8 ATRAN Control Diagram

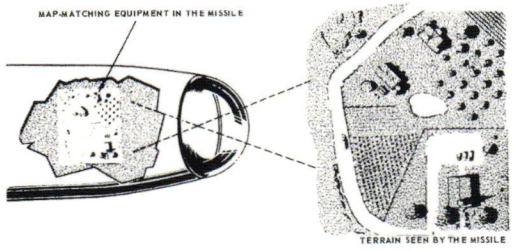


Figure 9 Map-Matching Missile Guidance

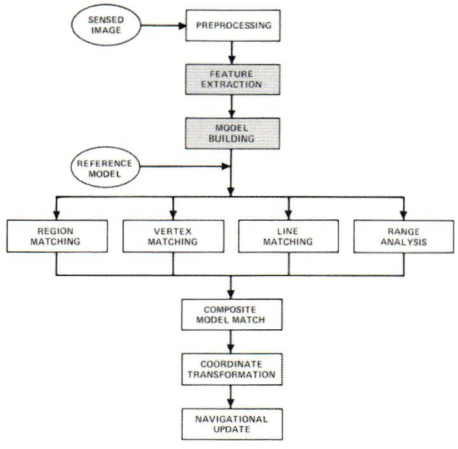


Figure 10 Landscape Feature Extraction

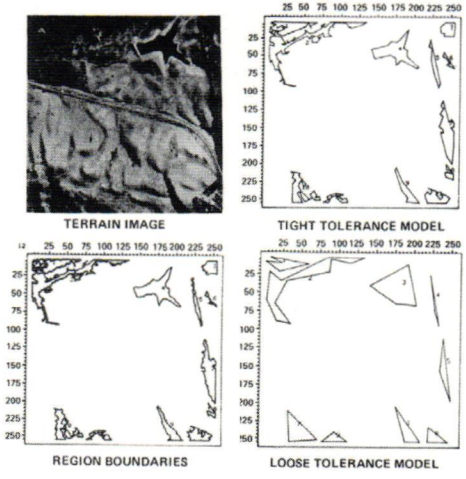


Figure 11 Terrain Recognition

and deployment of truly autonomous weaponry. Its significance lies in the fact that the method of automation was inherently geographical, and constituted fundamentally new relations between technology, the earth, and both human and machinic judgment.

The limitations of the ATRAN system became immediately apparent to its makers. Even a slight discrepancy between the sensed image and the stored image would be enough to send the object off its course. ATRAN was easily influenced by seasonal, or even diurnal variations in radiated light, and highly susceptible to inaccuracies or failures resulting from inclement weather, which limited its ability to view the ground. Additionally, the system itself was limited by the coarseness of the resolution made available by the flying-spot-scanner image. For systems designers of the period, improved accuracy and performance centered on what came to be known as "scene-discrimination" (fig. 10).

The scene was the most complex component of the map-matching problem, and the most difficult to model. Scenes can be described in the visual domain as being composed of a set of features. Actual sensor data, broken down by resolution elements, are described by a set of intensity values. There are regions of intensity values in the scene that can be considered analogous to features in the visual domain. From a physical standpoint, homogeneous regions are areas in which the signature is expected to remain fairly constant, e.g. a grassy field in which all the elements in the region are expected to have the same mean value but not necessarily a constant value (fig. 11). Map-matching was the lynchpin of geographic automation—a central innovation in the great mechanization of vision that began with the camera and continues today.

III. Statistical Morality

The guided missile is to space what the clock was to time; an expedition into accuracy and precision by a human desire committed to knowing, not when, but where it is, constantly. Mounted on stability platforms, balanced by counter-gyros, manufacturing false

horizons, we taught this object—this thing—to know, or rather how to know, continuously, precisely where it is in space, no matter its speed—a skill that not a single one of us possesses (fig. 12).

Like the clock, the missile is a reflection of the specific interpretation of the physical world on which its design is based. But unlike time, which could be measured mechanically, the space of the guided missile is measured statistically. Clock time, like clock motion, was, and is, ideally reversible, equally perfect forward and backwards. But thermodynamics laid bare the obvious irreversibility of both, forcing the substitution of asymmetrical explanation for mechanistic determinism. Its subsequent reduction to statistical mechanics has left us with troubling questions regarding the status of causality.[10]

Disturbed and mesmerized by images wound and rewound, the missile is at once so familiar and so foreign to my sensibilities. Its agility, dexterity, its truculent resolve, its temperament, its capacity for judgment; all can be traced to the circumstances of its birth, to its existence as a child of our own statistical morality; which is to say, to our collective belief that the certainty stolen from us by Carnot and Maxwell can be restored by the theories of Gibbs and Boltzman.[11] Statistical morality is the collective belief that although the causal chain of the physical world is no longer defined by perfect, irreversible regularity, it is nonetheless subject to statistical regularities, as expressed by probabilities. Knowingly or not, we all participate in this morality, we all believe. If the guided missile has kin, they're not mechanical devices, but actuaries, weathermen, and stock analysts.

It may be difficult for us to understand Wittgenstein's assertion that an object contains the possibility of all situations, but the missile understands this intuitively. It's from among these possible situations that it makes judgments regarding the probability of success, so that it's able to constantly increase this probability through calculated movement. The missile is explicitly designed to contain all possible scenarios, to recognize the most desirable from among the many,

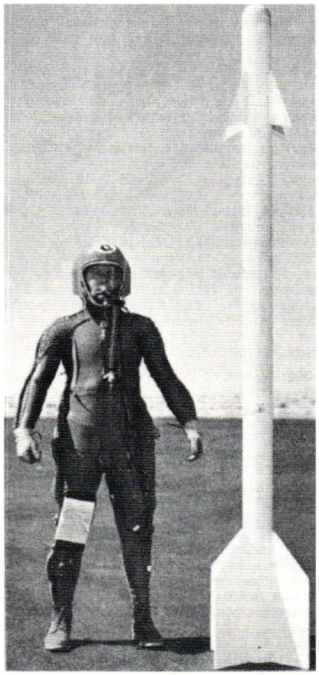


Figure 12 Man/Missile

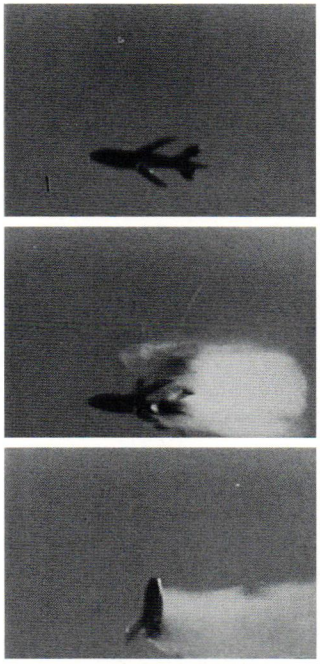


Figure 13 Cybernetic Suicide

and to pursue the selected situation with ferocity. Accordingly we occasionally encounter an odd state of affairs wherein the missile's unbending pursuit of the selected target, its obdurate drive to continually increase the probability of success, outpaces the material and structural capabilities of its lightweight airframe; leading, remarkably, to a kind of cybernetic suicide in which the servos calculate a path of exponentially increasing lateral acceleration that inevitably rips the object apart from the inside out (fig. 13).[12]

IV. Military Geography and Sensed-Terrain

What is omitted when a missile travels to its target? What strange perversion of classical military strategy was effected when the conventional mechanization of warfare was so thoroughly and instantly eclipsed, substituting inertial guidance for the long history of the art of ballistics? Pacing through these questions, I'm reminded of a passage from Clausewitz, where he argued that:

> Quite apart from their influence on sources of supply... geography and the character of the ground bear a close and ever-present relation to warfare. They have a decisive influence on engagement, both as to its course and to its planning and exploitation.[13]

Equating geography with ground features, Clausewitz sought to elucidate its influence by exploring the "fullest sense of the meaning" of the French term terrain. He hypothesized that geography can affect the course of warfare in three specific ways: as an obstacle to the approach, as an impediment to visibility, and as cover from fire. All other properties, he thought, can be traced back to these three. Rarely in Clausewitz, if ever, is ground a passive element in battle, but rather it actively imparts its characteristics on the course of events. Among these characteristics, he included "contours of the countryside" (such as hills and valleys), "natural phenomena" (forests, swamps, lakes), and "factors produced through agriculture" (such as ditches, hedges, fences, and the like). These characteristics have as their essential effect the necessary dispersal, or scattering, of force. Again, quoting from *On War*:

> As each type of terrain approaches its extreme, it will tend to reduce a general's influence on events to the same degree to which it tends to emphasize the personal resources of the ranks, down to the private soldier.[14]

For Clausewitz, there is a triangular relationship between "the character of the ground," the individual (as opposed to the mass), and the amplitude of force. Nearing the hypothetical condition of geographical passivity—on, say, a perfectly flat, frictionless plane—the absence of terrain allows for the concentration of individuals into an idealized mass, from which force may be derived (fig. 14). But, in reality, as the terrain "approaches its extreme," the mass is necessarily diffused, and each individual must increase both effort and will in order to maintain proper force. To be decisive, force must be held constant and high; the strategist must manage the variable relations between the individual and the terrain to preserve forcefulness.

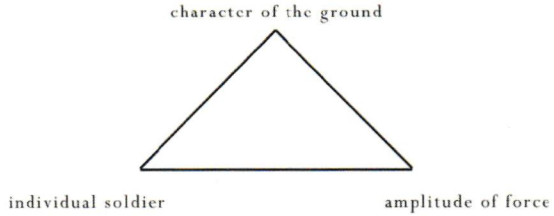


Figure 14 Derivation of Force: The Clausewitz Model

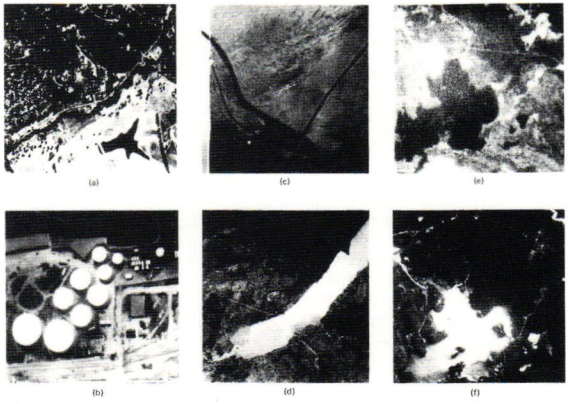


Figure 15a Features; or, The Character of the Ground

The terrain-sensing guided missile exploits the potential of this classical diagram precisely through the cancellation, or fixing, of its variables. Though quantifiable to some extent in Clausewitz's day (as a number of troops, cavalry, guns, etc.) force becomes, for the guided missile, pure calculation; a direct measure of tons of explosive delivered to a single point. Similarly, the "will and resourcefulness of the individual"—previously the most uncertain, and wildly fluctuating variable—is here determined through automation; its decisiveness reduced, quite literally, to either zero or one, on or off. Whereas previously force was considered a function of mass, it is now derived through the principle of precision.

And finally the "character of the ground" as either an obstacle to approach, or as an impediment to vision, is erased (fig. 15). In fact, the battleground is stood directly on its head, which is to say that those elements that previously presented the greatest difficulty in the forceful execution of warfare – mountains, lakes, and rivers – become for the terrain-based missile sites of reference, "features" to be sensed, and keys to a successful flight path. The great irony of the terrain-sensing missile is that it employs geography as means of canceling the effects of geography in warfare.

This essay is an abbreviated version of a lecture delivered at Harvard University in April 2005. The author wishes to thank Toshiko Mori and Ashley Schafer for their invitation to present the research.

NOTES

1 K. Werrell. *The Evolution of the Cruise Missile* (Maxwell, AL: Air University Press, 1985), 52-55.

2 I'm referring here, of course, to a debate that raged in the 1970's (pitting Dreyfus and Searle against early proponents of AI technology) and continues in some quarters today, though perhaps less focused on singular goals such as the Turing test.

3 L. Wittgenstein. *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), 130.

4 L. Wittgenstein. *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*. trans. D.F. Pears (London: Routledge, 1974), 6-7.

5 J. Humphries. *Rockets and Guided Missiles* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956).

6 G. Merrill. *Dictionary of Guided Missiles and Space Flight* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1959).

7 J. E. Lewis, ed. *The Mammoth Book of True War Stories* (New York: Mammoth Book Series, Carroll and Graff, 1999), 284. Simpson remarked that the missile "flashed across at 500 miles an hour, making little noise and leaving no exhaust...it was like the sighting of a UFO."

8 Donald Evans and Richard Koch. "ATRAN Terrain Sensing Guidance—the Grand-daddy System," in *Image Processing for Missile Guidance: Proceedings of the Society of Photo-Optical Instrumentation Engineers* 238 (1980). "ATRAN guidance units for the MACE missile were delivered to the Air Force in late 1955. In 1957 further were received to develop and deliver two facility sets of radar data synthetic reference processing equipment. These were then used by the Air Force Map Synthesis Section to generate and provide all of the mission planning and guidance reference films required by the operational MACE squadrons. *Thus, the ATRAN guidance development and production program with the MACE missile was the first total TSG cruise missile ever developed, produced and deployed* [emphasis mine].

9 E.H. Conrow and J.A. Ratkovic. "Almost Everything one Needs to Know About Image Matching Systems," in *Image Processing for Missile Guidance: Proceedings of the Society of Photo-Optical Instrumentation Engineers* 238 (1980): 426-451.

10 For a basic discussion of this historical shift, see N. Wiener. *Cybernetics; or, Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1961), in particular, ch. 1: "Newtonian and Bergsonian Time."

11 See Lawrence Sklar's *Physics and Chance; Philosophical Issues in the Foundations of Statistical Mechanics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Alongside Carnot and Maxwell one might add the name Godel, as well.

12 This problem was eventually overcome through optimization of the flight path using linear feedback controllers, which allowed the missile to estimate the target's future location within an acceptable range, until near-impact. It is well-described in the work of Arthur Bryson, [A.E. Bryson and Yu-Chi Ho. *Applied Optimal Control; Optimization, Estimation, and Control* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1961), 148-155, 280, 424], who solved the problem by distinguishing "between terminal controllers and regulators. A terminal controller is designed to bring a system close to desired conditions at a terminal time (which may or may not be specified) which exhibiting acceptable behavior on the way. A regulator is designed to keep a stationary system within an acceptable deviation from a reference condition using acceptable amounts of control (Bryson, 148).

13 Carl von Clausewitz. *On War*. ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 348.

14 Ibid., 349.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Materials off the Catalogue

By 1973, the *Cosmorama* pages of *Architectural Design* magazine were flooded by bizarre material experiments. Begun as a collective landscape of the newest building acquisitions in different geographic regions, *Cosmorama*—the introductory section of *AD*—evolved into an explosive index of exploratory material enterprises with an indefinite range of building applications. These luscious artifacts traced a larger disciplinary expansion in the latter half of the 60s, which interrogated the supremacy of 'building' as the primary product of architectural design. All imaginable provisional structures and strategies—pneumatics, domes, carpets, pills, spray cans, pistons, capsules, et al.—became part of a new publication equation, one that would reflect the intense socio-political concerns of the time and the collective fantasizing about new technologies. As a platform for this new experimental mindset, in which vanguard architects and groups passionately indulged, there was a wide resurgence of 'little magazines' illustrating no polished products, but sketchy endeavors with a proactive stance that sought to redefine the notions of 'shelter' and 'habitat'. This was a radical and almost instantaneous transition that took place between 1968 and 1973.

In 1965, *AD*'s *Cosmorama* was featuring cathedrals and airport extensions, theatres and office buildings, presented as grand displays of 'civic achievement'[1]. Yet, by the December *AD* issue of 1973, the discipline was presented with maximal elasticity in a spectacular refocusing of *Cosmorama*'s main constituent works. The new focus was characteristically suggested in this proposition for occupiable environments that occur by *Snow Moulding*[2]:

> David Sellers has solved the rather tricky problem of creating cheap but variable moulding forms for free-form polyurethane shelters—by using snow. The snow is built up to the required shape and covered with hessian. It is then sprayed with low temperature foam to create a shell of a thickness of between two and eight inches, depending on the structural requirements. In this way, Sellers was able to build a four room 1000 sq. ft. house for less than $8,000.[3]

In combination with a series of proposals of a similar nature—*Soft Future*[4], *Vacuumatics*[5], *Foam House*[6], *Giant Flexible Tubes*[7], *Parachute House*[8], et al.—*Snow Moulding* exemplified a novel material genealogy (fig. 1) that became an underlying theme in *AD* and climaxed in its last issue of *Cosmorama*. This genealogy was characterized by materials that resisted standardization and cataloguing; in other words materials that withstood framing into repeatable pieces of knowledge that could accordingly be directly selected and applied in various conditions. Rather than absolute indexical objects, they were the offsprings of a local inventory; an inventory by which the selection of material and the technique of its deployment fused semantically towards the production of unique and variable solutions. Such material experiments will here be entitled 'materials off the catalogue.' With this rather slippery name, a clarification is necessary: the lineage of these experiments cannot be singularly defined by

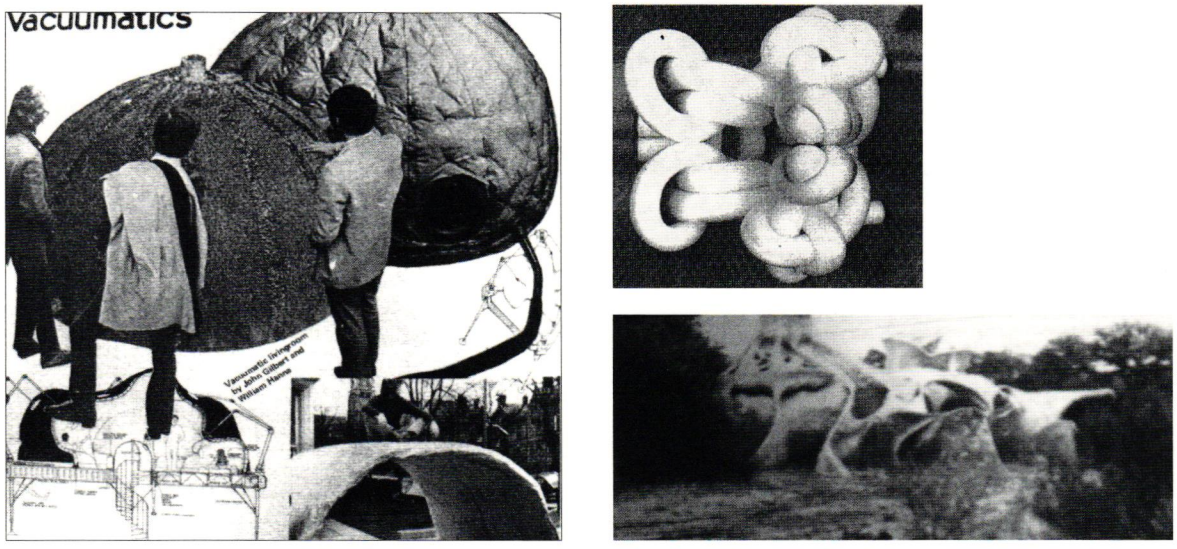


Figure 1 (left) *Vacuumatics;* (top right) *Giant Flexible Tubes;* (bottom right) *Soft Future*

the selection of peculiar materials that would otherwise not be used for construction purposes. Rather, it is precisely the inseparable merging of a material (e.g. snow) and its deployment tactic (e.g. moulding) which positions them within an alternative lineage of building processes made evident in the pages of *Cosmorama.*

To understand this differentiation, one might look at *Snow Moulding* and its immediate predecessor[9], *Ice City*[10] (fig. 2), the product of a workshop held by the Symbiotic Process Laboratory of Texas University that took place in Fargo, Minnesota at the beginning of 1973. The workshop was designed to experiment with ice as a building material for temporary shelter. The selection of ice as an un-catalogued material, abundantly available in nature was at the crux of the workshop, for it emphasized numerous free-form possibilities derived from ice's inherent material properties. The case of *Snow Moulding* however, was methodologically different. As explained by Sellers, snow was used as a mould, onto which low-temperature foam was sprayed, so that the occurring shelters resulted from the synergistic effect of two materials—one as the mould and the other as the cast. Equally, the process of moulding was of seminal importance to most 'materials off the catalogue'. For instance in the *Parachute House,* air acted as an invisible mould onto which a polymer would set: "The parachute... deploys itself within about 2 seconds to its natural shape under air pressure, which in fact provides an invisible mould for the resin to set."[11]

In both the *Snow Moulding* and *Parachute House* cases, moulding was in many ways an open construction process; one that allowed the shelter under formation to be affected by environmental parameters, such as local winds, temperatures and other meteorological phenomena. In this sense, a more expanded definition of moulding was suggested; one in which the 'mould' was an *accumulator* of physiological contingencies that played an active role in the construction process. This simple fact implied a new course of thinking on two levels. First, it juxtaposed moulding experiments to mainstream techniques for temporary shelter, in which the logic of efficiently assembling a kit of component parts was the predominant site of design thinking. Secondly, moulding methods set up a speedy and almost *automatic* mode of spatial production that could provide shelter in seconds. So, in parallel to participating in vanguard agendas of the time—e.g.

embodying chance (as by dropping or dripping a shelter)[12]—the instantaneous production of habitats responded to real world problems very much in line with the social imperatives of the day.

Ideas for 'automatic construction' were presented as a response to distressed housing and urbanization predicaments, radiating from the United Kingdom as a collective social concern. In the 60s, there was common consensus amongst both avant-garde advocates and their conservative opponents, that every individual be entitled to an equal right for housing.[13] While the state and the planners remained lethargic in their response, new hope was sought through a bottom-up material approach and newly acquired technical skills in building science. Technology and science were put into effect as reflex mechanisms by which to allegedly address these problems, since the practice of urbanism seemed to no longer offer any alternative routes out of the housing crisis other than the practice of abstract formal arrangements. Essentially, these methods suggested an alternate model for urbanism that "presupposed a new form of description that could no longer be satisfied with formal explanations of architecture, but had to integrate the parameters of an environment that is constantly changing."[14] Although the improvisatory techniques of 'materials off the catalogue' only provided rudimentary shelters, they suggested a new method of approach, in contrast to prior geometric configurations, allowing for the integration of constantly changing environmental parameters within the design/construction process. Interestingly, this germinal connection between the macro-urban scale and the micro-material scale was vigorously registered in the pages of *AD*'s *Cosmorama*. The two main subjects consistently covered during the late 60s were urban analyses and material experiments. In effect, what was gradually left out of the equation was 'building.' Peter Cook recalled in 1975 how, at the end of the 60s, "it was fashionable to introduce a project as 'anti-building', or a 'conglomeration of environmental elements."[15]

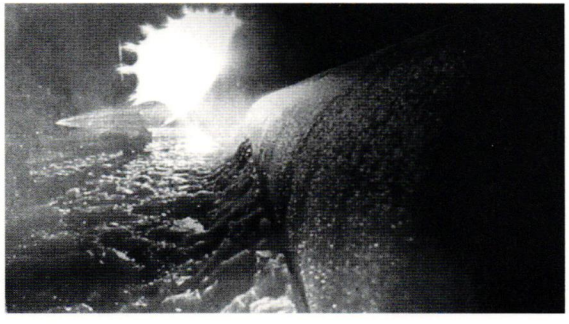


Figure 2 Wolf Hilbertz, *Ice City*

However, even though housing and the need for shelter instigated endless quests for solutions within the fields of building science, in the course of this procedure, these very same quests derailed from their original destination, towards a remarkable playfulness. After a point, material exploration precipitated as an autonomous epiphenomenon, or as architectural critic Reyner Banham put it, a "science for kicks; a way of using the mind for pleasure, or just for the hell of it, in such a way that it flourishes not vegetates."[16] But the ramifications of such kicks were crucial to design practices. In a sense, material experimentation was a recovery of alternate means of spatial production in architecture that resisted representation—namely drawings—as an exclusive mode of prescription. In many of the experimental projects, the final product-artifact was not firstly represented and accordingly executed. This mere fact of a practice generated directly from the use or misuse of materials challenged conventional assumptions deeply rooted within the discipline, namely the momentous role that representation can play in the cohesion between a conceptual artifact and a material spatial entity. This mischievous course is extensively registered in the multiplicitous paradigms of 'materials off the catalogue' (fig. 3) invading the *Cosmorama* division of *AD*. Describing epitomes of 'hypothesisless' investigations, *Cosmorama* reports in 1969:

> Ferdinand Spindel (b.1913, German) hoping to break down our preconceptions of the well-ordered space, has been experimenting with plastic foam and has built a series of spaces that, whatever other virtues they might possess—and they would probably be good for spastics—have the supreme virtue (in his estimation) of not being conceived first on the architect's drawing board. Space, he suggests should be thus dematerialized; it should be over-run by

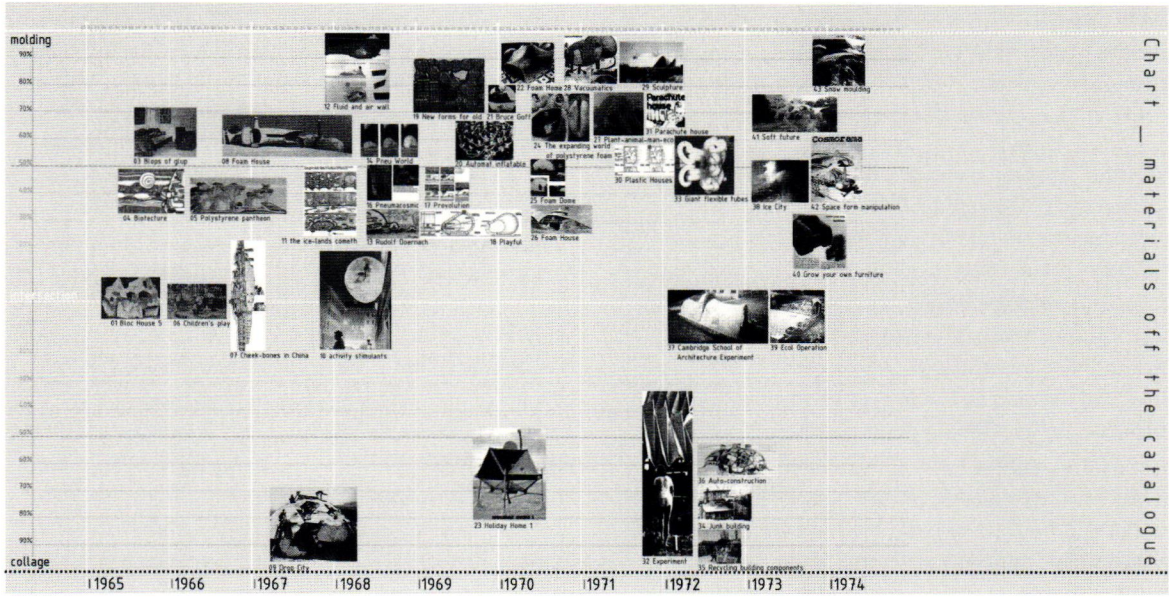


Figure 3 Diagram indicating the emergence of 'materials off the catalogue' in the *Cosmorama* section of *Architectural Design* (*AD*) magazine between 1965 and 1974. All these case studies are ephemeral structures categorized along a spectrum of *collage* to *moulding*. The former represents structures where the primary method of construction is the assembly of parts. The latter, moulding, represents the examples analyzed within the framework of this paper, in which moulding, casting, and sculpting constitute the techniques of spatial production.

> plastic foam. Hans Koetsier (b.1930, Dutch) even more determined to break down our unthinking adherence to a Euclidian geometry and a traditional range of architectural forms, offers two weird proposals. They are proposals for nothing in particular. They mean nothing; they might perhaps not be possible of realization. They are offered only as suggestions for a way out.[17]

Sculpting chicken wire in order to spray it with foam, using biodegradable moulds that would disappear in the hardening process of a substance; inserting beads in pneumatic envelopes so that they could collectively act as a mould when air was evacuated; manipulating the solidification process of a material; these are just a few of the many examples in *AD* that marked a new set of physical techniques that were receiving increasing attention. However these techniques, although stemming from scientific principles and discoveries, could only be judged as elementarily scientific. Rather, using the terrain of science as a background, they creatively deployed scientific discoveries to serve the most brilliantly absurd purposes, such as providing food and shelter to homeless people by a parachute that falls from the sky and solidifies as it reaches the ground with the help of proper chemical catalysts[18]:

> Dr. B. S. Benjamin proposes a method whereby parachutes used to drop food supplies to disaster areas can be converted into a shell house unit to house the homeless families with adequate temporary shelters (which in seriously underdeveloped regions have a sad habit of stretching into semi-permanent homes). The basic idea is to convert the flexible fabric parachute into a rigid shell before it hits the ground. This can be accomplished by soaking the parachute fabric in a suitable catalyst in its container. Seconds prior to its drop, however, a suitable resin is introduced into the container either by injection or by crushing several previously placed phials within the container. The resin proceeds to react with the catalyst and setting commences. The parachute then deploys itself within about 2 seconds to its natural shape under air pressure, which in fact provides an invisible mould for the resin to set. The parachute fabric acts as reinforcement for the now fast setting laminate. Set is achieved in under 30 seconds and the parachute is a rigid shell before it hits the ground. The supplies dropped would prevent the shell being blown about in high winds until anchorage has been carried out.[19]

As humorous as this may sound, for the day it was serious play; a play that was creating new ground for a radical reconsideration of the notion of 'material.' Francois Dagognet defines "the material of invention" as something that "does more than to reverse a cultural approach and endow matter with speech (logos). It also helps to redefine matter."[20] 'Materials off the catalogue' may have given birth to ideas derived directly from the inherent properties of materials, but even beyond the generative potential of matter and the revival of a material doctrine that could delineate design decisions, the subversion ran deeper.

Matter was now bonded to the stages of its production and conceptualized in relationship to chronological factors. In other words, materials were not singularly self-defined according to their embedded attributes, but considered in effective relation to the phases they would undergo. The processes and intermediate states of conversion, necessitated for the production of a material in its final 'catalogued' form, were extracted and creatively manipulated . In this sense, time as a fourth dimension, became integral to materiality through the dynamic use of the successive stages of formation.

Going back in time, this effectual linkage between materials and their potential for formation over time could be described as an insurgent state of previous traditions, vivid in the heroic times of early twentieth century design practices. The seedbed of the Bauhaus tradition promoted the invention of materials with diverse properties that could perform innumerable tasks provoking wonder and scientific awe. As recorded in *G*, the German avant-garde architecture journal issued in 1924, this aspiration was largely predicated upon a belief in pioneering scientific-chemical discoveries: "Our technology must and will succeed to invent a building material which can be technically produced and industrially processed which is strong, weather resistant, soundproof and thermally insulating."[21] In the immediate post-war decade, this new scientific-chemical sensibility had become so well engrained within the common psyche that it developed into a significant factor in assessing the credibility of building materials. As is evident in the advertisements of the *Architect's Standard Catalogue*[22] from 1950-52, guaranteed credibility of a product was paired in one way or another with the image of the laboratory space, and the labeling of a product as "chemical" (fig. 4).

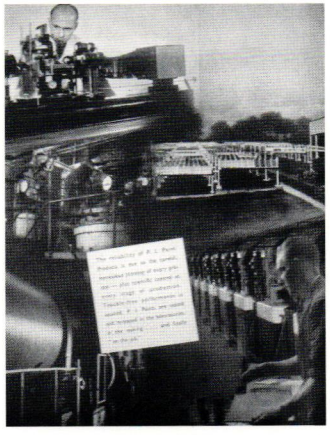


Figure 4
Advertisement for *P J Paint*

Throughout the following decade, the chemical awareness was sustained, but found itself increasingly correlative to a secondary discourse evolving out of its roots: *animated matter as a tool for social reform*. 'Materials off the catalogue' became the gear wheels of a short-lived, explosive era between 1967-1975, marked by an obsessive search for a spiritual 'extension' of matter, beyond its physical limitations. Put differently, the scientific-chemical discourse was gradually paralleled by a spiritual-alchemic one, in which both the parameters of temporality and the animation of matter were central. For, "[e]ssential to alchemy is the precondition that its materials contain life, which is only different by degree from that of an animal or man."[23]

The turn to a spiritual-alchemic material sensibility was manifest, among others', in the work of Haus-Rucker-Co. in Vienna. Through their use of plastic materials (fig. 5), they claimed the "expansion of the mind" (*Mind Expander*[24]), relaxation and concentration, as well as yearning for love (*Balloon for Two*[25]) all in service of enhancing an individual's cosmic view, as depicted in

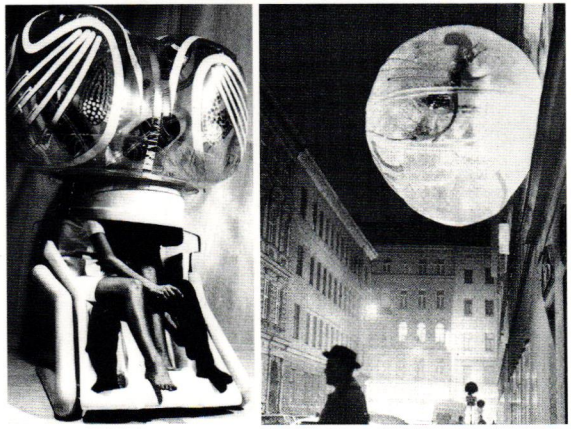


Figure 5 (left) Haus-Rucker-Co., *Mind Expander*, 1968. (right) Haus-Rucker-Co., *Balloon for Two*, 1967.

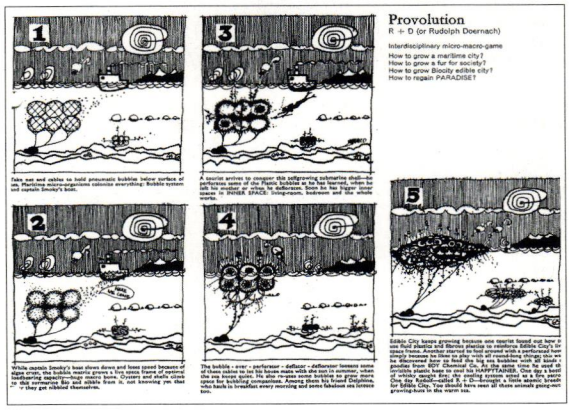


Figure 6 Rudolph Doernach, *Provolution*

the lyric lines of *Pneumacosmic morning*:

> I am lying deep in the bulb on a yellow foil cushion, beyond the furniture-tree a violent helium moon is rising. After a while it sets and becomes larger and larger, I remember XANA and that she has marvelous legs.[26]

Concurrently, Rudolph Doernach from Germany, "one of the chief early pioneers of plastics architecture,"[27] was regularly hosted in the pages of *Cosmorama* putting forth a peculiar socio-spiritual material discourse that strategically positioned organic matter as the primary foundation upon which, and by which a city could grow. In his project *Biotecture*,[28] "contractible and reusable organic matter becomes the universal building material, invented and programmed by the environmental scientist, the comprehensive architect"[29] (figs. 6, 7). However, this desire for enhancing matter with superior properties such that they could reify endless and exploitable transmutations is most vividly described in the *Organics* manifesto by William Katavolos:

> A new architecture is possible through the matrix of chemistry. Man must stop making and manipulating, and instead allow architecture to happen.... New discoveries in chemistry have led to the production of powdered and liquid materials which when suitably treated with certain activating agents expand to great size and then catalyze and become rigid. We are rapidly gaining the necessary knowledge of the molecular structure of these chemicals, together with the necessary techniques that will lead to the production of materials, which will have a specific programme of behavior built into them while still in the sub-microscopic stage. Accordingly, it will be possible to take minute quantities of powder and make them expand into predetermined shapes, such as spheres, tubes and toruses. Visualize the new city grow moulded on the sea, of great circles of oil substances producing patterns in which plastics pour to form a network of strips and discs that expand into toruses and spheres, and further perforate for many purposes. Double walls are windowed in new ways containing chemicals to heat to cool and to clean, ceiling patterns created like crystals, floors formed like corals, surfaces ornamented with visible stress patterns that leap weightlessly above us.[30] (fig. 8)

Summing up this material genealogy of *AD*'s *Cosmorama*, we can identify the following symptoms of 'materials off the catalogue': a) the implicit direct action of a local inventory b) the semantic fusion of material and its deployment process, inducing the integration of time into the notion of materiality c) the union of cultural mandates and material explorations, with the intent of providing solutions to pressing social problems via the 'animation' of matter.

In the spirit of experimentation and conjured through the prism of undercurrent publications, 'materials off the catalogue' clearly comprised a polemic discourse at the end of the 60s. Enmeshed in all essential parameters of an oppositionary thesis, the model of 'direct action' stimulated major design debates, the echoes of which are still vibrant in

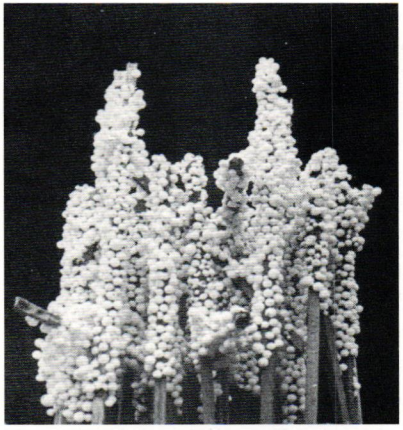


Figure 7 Rudolph Doernach, *Edible architecture: 'Biotecture 70.6,'*

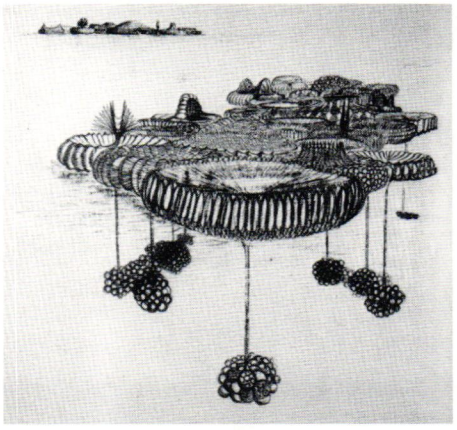


Figure 8 William Katavolos., *Plastics Floating City*, 1960.

contemporary practice. Foremost, this emerging framework of thinking critically undermined the imperial significance of formalism as the distiller of value, in favor of open-ended potential in procedural design. Otherwise stated, 'materials off the catalogue' positioned an experimental mindset at the forefront of design debates, in which manic formal obsessions were not exclusive concerns (if at all). As an effect of this discourse, alternate means of production were recovered, disengaging design from the conventions and limitations of drawings, which have for the most part, governed design practice throughout the century.

Architectural theorist Simon Sadler describes the lack of interest in formal exploration as a sacrifice of "ideal form in favor of an iconography of spontaneity."[31] In many 'materials off the catalogue' cases, especially those interrelated with transformation techniques such as sculpting and moulding, the results were less than formally promising. As could be expected, initial attempts to explore the nature of new materials and techniques could not be other than coarse, given the lack of proficiency in their manipulation. Formal finesse is intimately bound to the accumulative knowledge embedded in the adeptness of established means of representation, implicity acquired and passed from one generation to the other and regularly succeeding initial stages of experimentation. However, the majority of critics of the time were less than sympathetic to this juncture of open-ended exploration, pitilessly attacking such efforts for their formal vulgarity. Even in the pages of *AD*'s *Cosmorama* could this deeply engrained unwillingness to look beyond form be found, as a distinctive article states: "the sculptured house has always been a bit of a freak."[32]

Material experimentation has often occasioned such denigrating critiques[33] by its evaluation on the basis of subjective aesthetic criteria beyond the scope of the authors' agendas. If one considers for instance the *House of the Century* (1971-73) (fig. 9), constructed by AntFarm, the experimental aspect of this vast undertaking for the time was to compute and construct doubly curved surfaces fusing different materials in gradient construction components.[34] Despite the highly complex procedural method of the project, the critique the project received, when it got a citation in the *Progressive Architecture* awards of that year, questioned the eroticism of curvilinear forms, limiting the import of the project in the symbolic connotations of its overall form. Apparently, this inquiry has never occurred to the architects, Michels, Lord and Jost, who were deeply involved in the application of ferro-cement boat building technology. As they state in their timeline notebook pages, "While the questions and responses by those who can't get past the form will go on, it

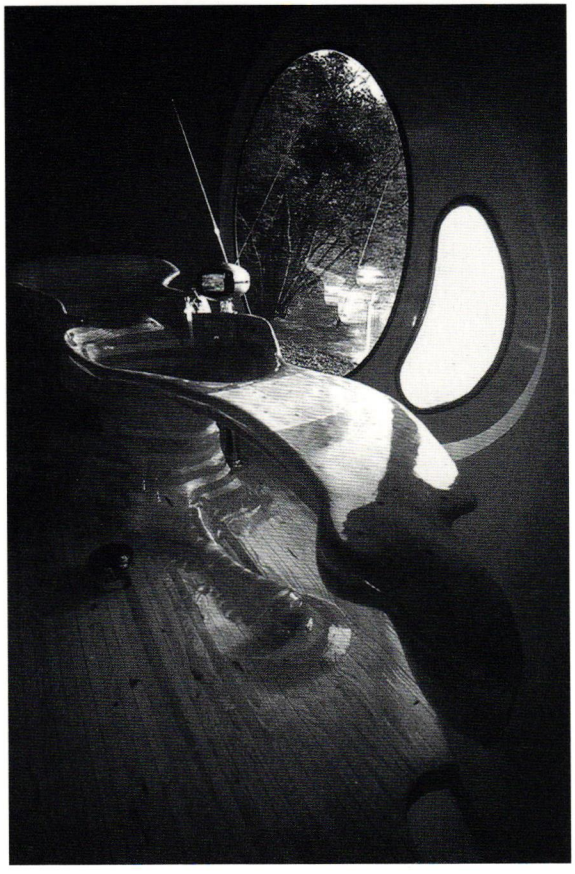


Figure 9 Antfarm, *House of the Century*, 1971-1973.

may come as a surprise that the story doesn't end there. In fact it shouldn't even begin there."[35]

However, despite the misinterpreted reception of such projects, formalism's temporal displacement, as recorded in the profusion of 'materials off the catalogue,' entailed a short-lived subversion of the belief in representation as an exclusive mode of spatial production, putting forward an agenda of 'direct making' before one is in command of formal intent. Latent in the punctuated lineage of this experimental trajectory, is the disciplinary necessity for ongoing, unceasing production; a production so brutally wallowing that it might 'devour' the heroic architect, and remind the discipline of the fragility of precious concepts in the face of *direct action*'s potential.

NOTES

1 "Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guilford," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 35 (July 1965): 316.

2 "Snow Moulding," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 43 (December 1973): 751. "Snow Moulding" first appeared in *D & E* (Winter 1972).

3 Ibid.

4 "Soft Future," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 43 (October 1973): 617.

5 "Vacuumatics," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 41 (April 1971): 198.

6 "Foam House," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 40 (November 1970): 545.

7 "Giant Flexible Tubes," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 42 (March 1972): 135.

8 "Parachute House," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 42 (January 1972): 15.

9 'Predecessor' is defined here by considering *AD* as a historic outline. In other words, *Ice City* was published in the April issue of 1973—reporting a workshop that took place in January 1973—while *Snow Moulding* was published in the December issue of the same year—reporting an experiment presented in *D & E* (Winter 1972). In reality the projects were almost concurrent.

10 Wolf Hilbertz, "Ice City," *Architectural Design* 43 (April 1973): 213-216.

11 "Parachute House," 15.

12 Although the term 'dripping' is for the most part drawn together with the work of Jackson Pollock and artistic practices of a similar nature in the early 50s, the term 'dropping' is related to an architectural paradigm launched by *Drop City* in 1965. *Drop City* was the first rural commune in America built entirely by geodesic dome frames, clad out of assorted found components or in other words, garbage. For its founders, *dropping* had a double significance. The first meaning is literal, referring to the droppers' socio-political discontent that urged them to abandon the cities and 'drop out'. The second meaning though, which correlated to the common understanding between droppers, adjoins a spatial narration to this previous action; something or someone being dropped from above, like a drip, a driblet or a splotch. The manner in which the droppers envisioned their relocation in abscond lands was similar to a 'drop' from the sky that lands and creates a thin-skinned membrane, an inhabitable environment that does nothing to disturb the ground and the milieu on which it was positioned.

13 Dennis Crompton, interview by the author, 11 October 2005, PhD Proseminar, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

14 Frederic Migayrou, "Extensions of the Oikos," *Archilab's Earth Buildings. Radical Experiments in Earth Architecture*, ed. Marie-Ange Brayer and Beatrice Simonot (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 20.

15 Peter Cook, "The Electric Decade: An Atmosphere at the AA School 1963-73," *A Continuing Experiment: Learning and Teaching at the Architectural Association*, ed. James Gowan (London: Architectural Press, 1975) 142. Quoted in Nigel Whiteley, Reyner Banham. *Historian of the Immediate Future* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) 246.

16 Reyner Banham, "Architecture after 1960; Stocktaking 1960," *Architectural Review* 127 (June 1960): 388.

17 "New Forms for Old," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 39 (August 1969): 3.

18 "Parachute House," 15.

19 Ibid.

20 Francois Dagognet, "Material Invention Preface," *The Material of Invention*, ed. Ezio Manzini (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), p.12.

21 *G*, no.3 (Berlin, 1924).

22 The *Architect's Standard Catalogue* was the company that owned *AD* magazine from its inception.

23 Robert Stockhammer, "From Excrement to Gold," *Daidalos* (June 1995): 59.

24 "Activity Stimulants," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 38 (March 1968): 100.

25 Ibid.

26 "Pneumacosmic morning," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 38 (November 1968).

27 Arthur Quarmby, *Plastics and Architecture* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 170.

28 Rudolph Doernach, "Biotecture," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 36 (February 1966): 4-5.

29 Quarmby, 170.

30 William Katavolos, "Organics," *Programs and Manifestoes on the 20th Century Architecture*, ed. Ulrich Conrads (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1970), 163.

31 Simon Sadler, "Open Ends: The Social Visions of 1960s Non-Planning," *Non-Plan. Essays on Freedom Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, ed. Jonathan Hughes and Simon Sadler (Woburn, MA: Architectural Press, 2000) 152.

32 "Sculpture" *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 41, no. 8 (August 1971).

33 A characteristic example of a clearly denigrating critique of material explorations can be traced in the article "Blops of Glup," *Cosmorama: Architectural Design* 35 (November 1965). *AD* reports: "Aagaard Andersen's *Chesterfield Suite*, made by spraying polyester from a garden hose and painting it black, is less the result of reconsidering how best we may sit in contort than a snook to be cocked at both the technologists who want new techniques and new materials for all new furniture designs and the traditionalists of contemporary architecture who have cornered the furniture market in Scandinavia. When they were first shown, at the forestry museum at Gävle, Sweden, these chairs not surprisingly provoked some angry and ugly comment. They are a self-indulgent fantasy, clearly intended to stimulate disgust, sick-laughter and pity for the poor furniture designer. And it is probably not by chance that they evoke that old, black image of Dali and Bunuel spraying their dead donkeys with glue."

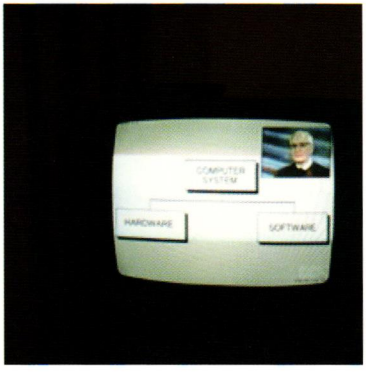
34 Specifically, "Michels, Lord and Jost decided to apply ferro-cement boat building technology to the house. Beginning with a three foot three dimensional grid interval, ½ in. pipe was hand bent to form the compound curves. The configuration of the pipe contours could have been solved more easily with a computer, the architects point out, but since none was available, they did the work themselves. Held in place by wood shoring that would later become the flooring, the pipe was the base for a layer of 3/8 in. steel reinforcing rods 6 in. apart. Four layers of chicken wire were then secured to both sides of the rod. Two reinforced concrete columns were placed to give support to the tower and it two floor levels, and reinforced concrete arches added extra strength to the tower-to-wing intersections. Specially designed door and window frames were installed. Three coats of high early strength Portland cement, hand applied to the mesh by a Houston plastering crew, were moist cured for seven days. Battens at the locations of the pipe contours secure four inches of foam insulation. The entire inside surface was finally covered with upholstery, pleated with batten lines."

Constance M. Lewallen and Steve Seid, eds., *AntFarm 1968-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) 112-113.

35 Chip Lord, Doug Michels and Curtis Schreier "Pages from AntFarm Timeline, 1976," Lewallen and Seid, *Antfarm 1968-1978*, 112.

Jennifer Gabrys

The Quick and the Dirty
Ephemeral Systems in Silicon Valley



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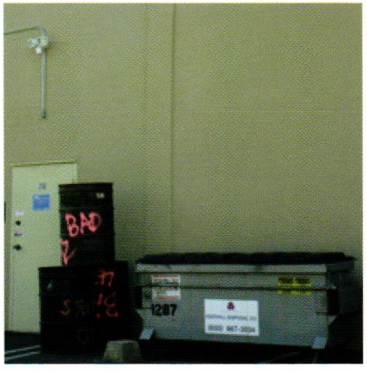

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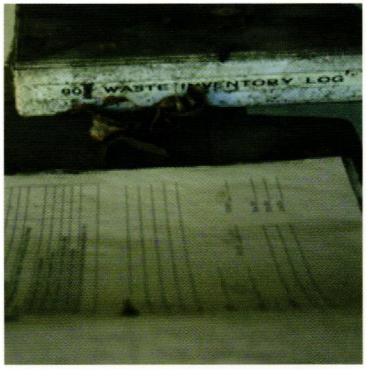
Figure 1

In Palo Alto, California, one can tune the TV set not just to the nightly news and game shows, but also to educational programming designed to instruct viewers on the finer points of computer systems. A computer system, one such program notes, is comprised of two elements: hardware and software. But because I am here in Silicon Valley to consider the types of waste and pollution that emerge with computing, it becomes apparent that the "system" of computing in fact, extends to a wider landscape. Digital technologies (basically, everything fitted with a chip) contribute to a sense of acceleration and dematerialization. Material becomes mobile, smaller and approximates a state of immaterial information. With the continual rush of innovation so synonymous with computing, an equally rapid rate of obsolescence emerges. The appearance of every new machine inevitably corresponds to outmoded devices and systems. Innovation and obsolescence within digital technologies have for this reason given rise to the dilemma of electronic waste, or that growing tide of computer debris, the fallout from constant computing advances. Yet these tendencies toward the ephemeral fall outside the crisp diagrams that instruct on digital functions. This photo essay maps those spaces where waste, decay and pollution reveal other orders of materiality that have yet to enter the sense of the digital. These are spaces outside the diagram; they suggest that computing may be a system that is deeply implicated with forms ephemerality that extend far beyond technological obsolescence.



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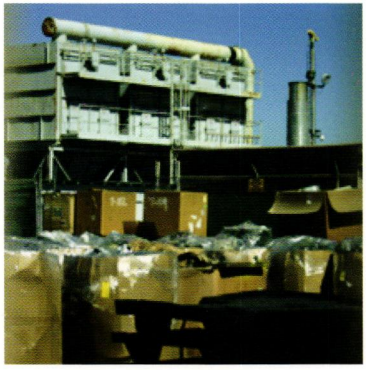
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Figures 2-6

Stepping outside the archive and museum, one can read the history of computing through the waste traces left in this sprawling landscape of sun and speed. Digital technologies promise a future without residue, yet here in Silicon Valley, the erstwhile epicenter of all things digital, one also finds the highest number of Superfund sites within the United States. Many of these sites, now in remediation, are saturated with chemical pollution not from heavy industry, but rather from the manufacture of electronics, primarily microchips. From the mining of gold to the production of integrated circuits through toxic chemicals from Freon to trichloroethane, to the eventual recycling or disposal of equipment, digital technologies involve an elaborate process of waste-making. The notion that materials and devices are disposable is further aided by the speed at which new technologies operate and appear.

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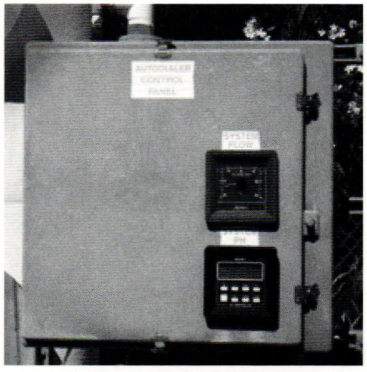
Figures 7-11

This is a landscape geared toward digital production that must contend with its solid construction not from virtual bits but from dirt and rocks. Computing acquires its speed in tandem with its increasing miniaturization and dematerialization. But this speed and immateriality affect not only the size and style of the latest electronic devices, but also the contours and infrastructure of a landscape sculpted for digital production. With such quick technology, the landscape itself becomes ephemeral. It is even ephemeral twice over. Outmoded, the landscape lapses from the scenic function to become a template of movement, with circuits from freeway to office complex. Expendable, it is a container and dumping ground that can be wasted, buried and rearranged. Silicon Valley has engineered its own geology, where slow systems have quickened to a digital pace. As economies of production, consumption and waste accelerate, the time of landscape shifts, systematically, toward the ephemeral.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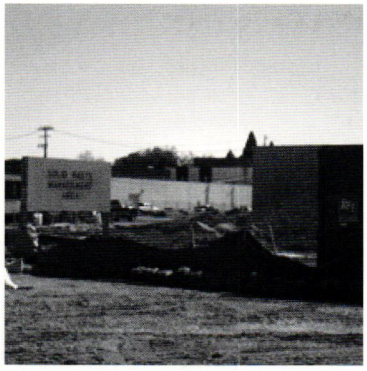
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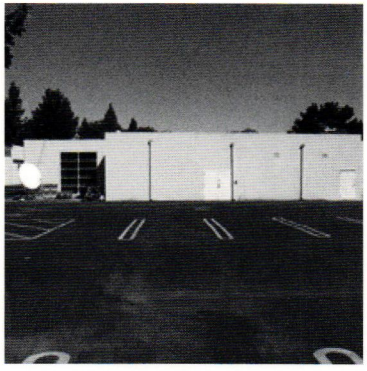
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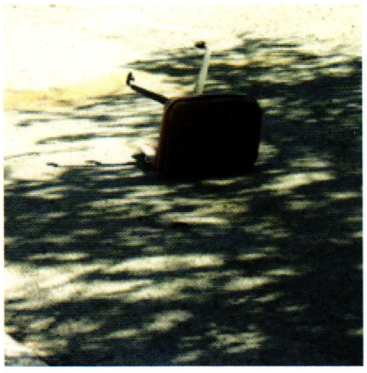
Figures 12-15

Architecture, and not just landscape, finds its shelf-life rapidly diminished in scale. Buildings appear overnight and vanish within the same duration. Fully occupied as the headquarters for ground-breaking technologies and completely abandoned upon failure or obsolescence, these blank structures register neither shock nor excitement at their fate. They are mute blocks of concrete, aluminum and glass that reflect only the blue of sky and the turn of automobiles. Buildings full or empty register in nearly the same way, as though they were constructed with the moment of disposal already etched on their facades. Parking lots are the only sign of life. Company logos are easily emblazoned or erased on corner signs. Every long block of buildings gives way to a litter of structures—divisible and available—for lease. For these buildings, inside and outside become ephemeral. Interiors are the site of frenzied and dissolving activity sited in the communication across wires. Exteriors collapse into a planar dimension of anonymity, so that when the show is over, we can all pack up and go home.



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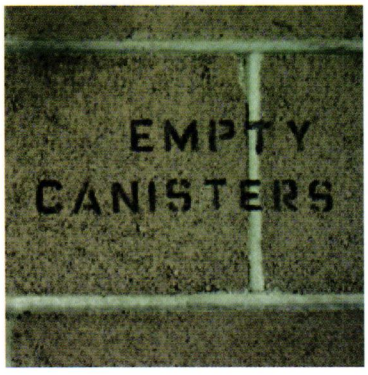

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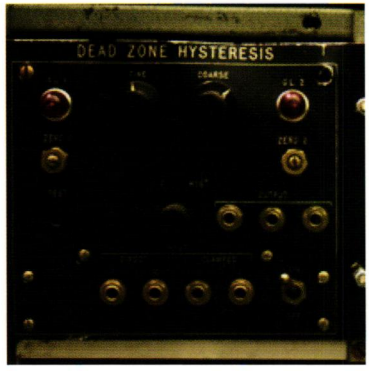

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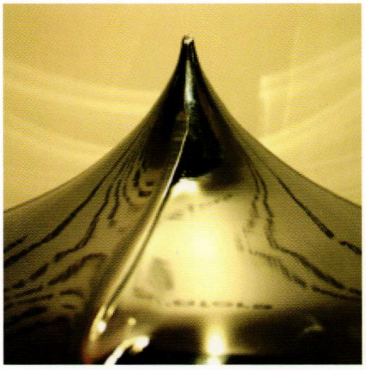
Figures 16-20

The digital industry has speed and turnover in mind, but it typically employs materials that linger for decades. Here are foam and plastic, mercury and lead, substances thicker and more enduring than any transcription of zeros and ones. Yet for all their endurance, these substances have been essential to the emergence of new orders of ephemerality. Plastic is nearly synonymous with disposability; it is the durable discardable. The tons of chemicals used in the manufacture of integrated circuits, and the gallons of water used to wash away the solvents, migrate and accumulate in the soil and groundwater beneath every zone of fabrication. Materials are caught in a tension between the quick and the slow. Ephemerality may hold at one level; yet at another, new spaces of permanence emerge. The balance of time shifts. The instant creates new geologies. We now have mountains of congealed carbon polymers that will last for an ice age.



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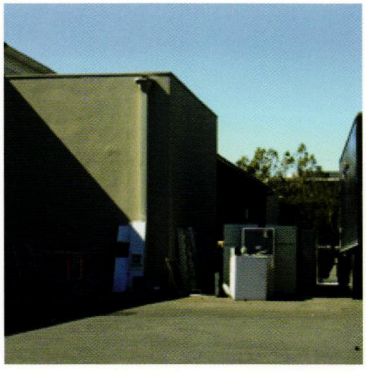

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Figures 21-24

The system of hardware and software thought to discretely contain the processes of computing cracks open to reveal intersections with other landscapes. Here is the dirt that comes with the quick; the indelible stain of ephemerality. An entirely new landscape accumulates from the fallout of the momentary and the disposable. This is not just a story about the progressive vaporization of "all that is solid," but also one that suggests new forms of solidity—new types of "hardware"—that emerge with programmatic obsolescence. The waste endemic to digital technologies suggests as much, where so many new beginnings give rise to a mounting space of endings. The feedback within this system of computing produces accumulative and unpredictable effects; it is an open rather than closed system that may have ephemerality as its guiding agenda, but unwittingly produces new orders of permanence. This essay hopes to raise the question of how we encounter these new spaces and artifacts of indeterminable duration.

Cecilia E. Ramos

Caillebotte's *On the Pont de l'Europe*
A Transversal Vista of Modernity

French impressionist Gustave Caillebotte's *On the Pont de l'Europe* (1876-1877) is a compositionally intriguing representation of evolving industry and its effect on Parisian city life during the Second Empire. The Pont de l'Europe, constructed between 1865 and 1868 in the new residential district of the Quartier d'Europe, merged six roads over the span of the tracks of the Gare Saint-Lazare. This structure in its appearance and function was a celebration of both industrial and social modernity. The Pont de l'Europe was a composite structure of sorts, which enabled the co-existence of opposing dualities. It was both architecture and industry, a bridge and a place, a public space surrounded by private buildings, and a place for the bourgeois and petit bourgeois alike. Many artists, including Caillebotte, were so fascinated by this novelty that they chose the bridge as the subject of many of their paintings. However, Caillebotte's *On the Pont de l'Europe* stands out amongst other illustrations of the bridge in its reconfiguration of the traditional vantage point of the viewer inventing what I will call the *transversal vista*. I will argue that Caillebotte's composition, technique, and manipulation of space in *On the Pont de l'Europe* was as modern as the construction of the bridge itself (fig. 1). Today, the bridge no longer exists. The structure was dismantled in 1930 and as a result, the physical bridge has been replaced within collective memory by its various representations. While such imagery serves to document the bridge's role within the city, only through close examination of Caillebotte's *On the Pont de l'Europe*, can the bridge's importance as an ephemeral object of modernity be truly retrieved.

Figure 1 (detail, opposite) Gustave Caillebotte, French (1848-1894) *On the Pont de l'Europe*, 1876-1877 (Oil on canvas, 105.7 x 130.8 cm) [for full image, see fig. 10, p. 38]

Le Pont de l'Europe and le Quartier de l'Europe

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the area of Paris now known as the Quartier de l'Europe in the eighth arrondisement was little more than open countryside. While there existed a slaughter house, and a market in the eastern section, and Little Poland and the Tivoli Gardens in the west, the region was considered the periphery of the city and its residential population was close to zero. In 1824, the land was acquired by John Hagerman, a banker, and Sylvain Mignon, an entrepreneur, and together these men (with the approval of the government) drew a plan in which the proposed streets—all named after European capitals—would converge at one point to form the Place de l'Europe.[1] In 1835, this area became the home of the first railway station in Paris: the Gare Rouen (renamed the Gare Saint-Lazare in 1842). As the years passed, the Gare began to service more lines and physical expansion thus ensued (fig. 2). In 1854, engineer Eugène Flachat enlarged the station, creating a second stone tunnel under the circular Place de l'Europe to facilitate the departure and arrival of trains into the city. In July of 1853, the *Journal des chemins de fer* published an article titled "Chemin de fer de

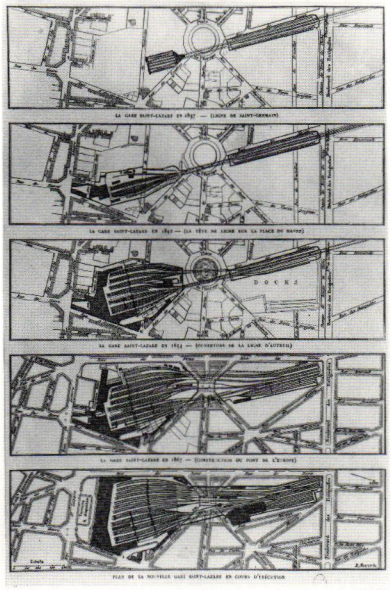


Figure 2 E. Morieu, *Growth of the Gare Saint-Lazare over Time* from *L'Illustration*, 17 July, 1886. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.
This plan shows the station in 1837, 1842, 1854, 1867 and 1886.

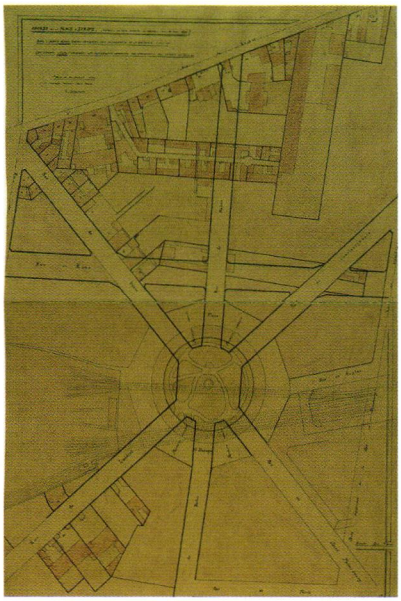


Figure 3 Georges Haussmann, *Surroundings of the Place de l'Europe*, 16 July 1858. Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris.
"map attached to the decree of 30 June 1859, which Haussmann signed and dated as prefect of the Seine; the new bridge is outlined over the existing place de l'Europe."

Saint-Germain. Gare de la rue St. Lazare" that illustrated a plan of the new construction. This article reported that some forty million passengers had used the railway station since its opening in 1837 and that sometimes more than 40,000 passengers were carried daily.[2] By 1858, the Gare Saint-Lazare serviced trains to seven different destinations and as the demand for trains continued to grow rapidly, the need for more rail space became evident.[3] Thus, the Compagnie de l'Ouest, managers of the Gare Saint-Lazare, and the Barron Georges Haussman, Prefect of the Seine, proposed to reconstruct the railway tracks above ground and to erect a new bridge over the Place de l'Europe that would span the outgoing tracks of the Gare Saint-Lazare (fig. 3). This work was authorized in 1859[4] and between 1865 and 1868 a large iron bridge on stone pillars was erected linking together six monumental streets: la rue de Constantinople, la rue de Madrid, la rue de Vienne, la rue de Londres, la rue de Berlin, and la rue de St. Petersbourg.[5]

In 1869 when the bridge was complete, Barron Haussman initiated the building of luxury apartments around the Place de l'Europe that conformed to his vision and regulations regarding the proper height and proportions of buildings.[6] As a result, in less than thirty years, the Quartier de l'Europe was completely transformed from countryside to bustling metropolis: the area that had been nearly uninhabited in 1800 had grown to a population of 44,000 inhabitants[7] and had become an important urban transportation hub within the city, an emblem of industrialization, and a symbol of both architectural and social modernity.

In order to grasp the form of the bridge as a structure with six radiating arms, it is necessary to look at the bridge in plan or from above. The experience of the bridge however, was characterized by that of an open place rather than as a convergence of branching streets or a linear crossing. It is precisely the difference in these spatial appreciations and their corresponding representation that prompts a discussion of the various vistas through which the function and social implications of the bridge were first explored.

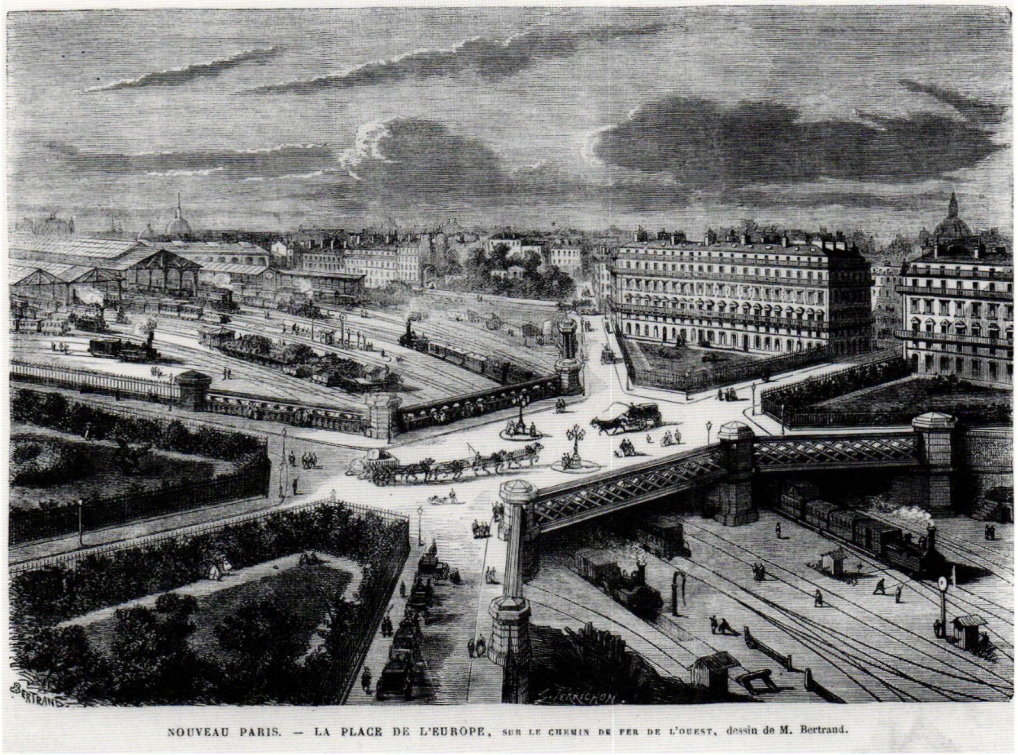


Figure 4 Georges Perrichon, *New Paris. The Place de l'Europe, over the Western Region Railway.* Wood engraving drawn by Bertrand, from *L'Univers Illustré*, 9 October 1868. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

Views of the Pont de l'Europe

The *birds-eye view* of the Pont de l'Europe, published in the journal *L'Illustration*, 1868, exemplifies a common mode of rendering public architectural spaces (fig. 4). A vista from above asserts a bridge or building's functionality and strategic placement within the urban fabric of the city. In such representations, the Pont de l'Europe is portrayed as a grand monument, an object of architectural and industrial importance, literally making way for new paths and modes of transportation. This view allows us to understand the horizontality of the bridge (as opposed to the verticality of its stature). Hence the bridge is presented not as web of infrastructure but as an *object* facilitating the networking of traffic. From this vantage point we see the various activities occurring on the bridge such as carriages passing on their way, visitors strolling on the promenade, and people stopping to look out at the Gare Saint-Lazare and the Garnier Opera House.

Another notable portrayal of the bridge within art and literature of the period was as a *utilitarian observatoire.* Painters such as Norbert Goeneutte, Claude Monet, and Louis Anquetin render the atmosphere of the bridge and of the gare below as a romantic experience or vision. In paintings such as *The Pont de l'Europe* (Anquetin, 1889), *The Pont de l'Europe and the Gare St. Lazare* (Goeneutte, 1888) and *Le Pont de l'Europe (Gare Saint-Lazare)* (Monet, 1877), plumes of smoke creep through the trellises of the bridge enshrouding the architecture in a blanket of hazy steam (figs. 5-7). Through the smoke we catch a glimpse of a picturesque Paris, of the Opera, of the Gare, and of the tracks

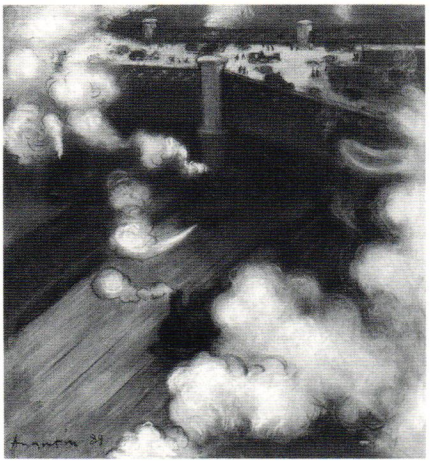


Figure 5 Louis Anquetin, *The Pont de l'Europe*, 1889 (pastel).
Private Collection.

Figure 6 Norbert Goeneutte, *View of St. Lazare Railway Station, Paris,* 1887 (oil on canvas, 47.6 x 56.5 cm).
Baltimore Museum of Art: The George A. Lucas Collection.

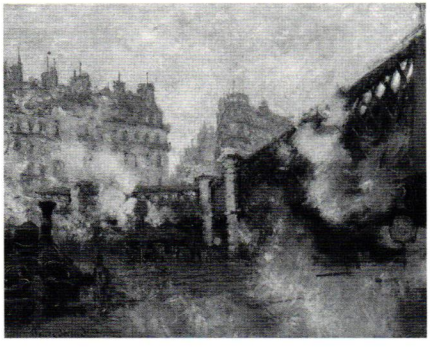


Figure 7 Claude Monet, *Le Pont de l'Europe (Gare Saint-Lazare),* 1877 (64 x 80 cm). Musée Marmottan – Claude Monet, Paris.

enveloped in this haze. Hovering above the tracks of the Gare Saint-Lazare, one could gaze out at this mottled picture of the evolving cityscape of Haussmann's Paris and of the novelties of industrialization.

The awe-inspiring vista from this bridge is further confirmed by eye witness accounts: René Heron de Villefosse, in *Le Coeur Battant de Paris* (Paris: Pont Royal, 1968) quotes a Paris guidebook of 1867, which describes the bridge as a structure of immensity and strangeness of form. He goes on to recall his crossings, "les mêmes acres fumées opaques, où je regardais les trains s'engouffer au loins dans le noir tunnel des Batignolles, géante souricière."[8] For many, simply the act of watching the trains arrive and depart from the station was itself a Sunday afternoon pastime and source of entertainment. Others however, found the view and experience from the Pont de l'Europe overly emotional or disconcerting. "The poet Mallarmé, who crossed the bridge to get to his job teaching class, confessed to George Moore that each time he crossed he was nearly overcome by the desire to jump off onto the tracks, to die under the wheels of the train."[9] Such moving descriptions of the Pont de l'Europe alongside the impressionist images of Monet, Goeneutte, and Anquetin present the bridge as a Romantic construction, a sort of *utilitarian observatoire* of the spectacle of modernity.

The Pont de l'Europe as a functional bridge is another representational typology explored by artist Caillebotte (fig. 8). In his painting *On the Pont de l'Europe* the bridge is depicted as a means of transportation and as a structure connecting point A to point B. The plunging perspective lines of the bridge and apartment buildings in the background, accentuated by the repetition of the *X*-pattern of the trusses, emphasize the linearity of direction and movement. In this image, even the dog follows the linear path dictated by the bridge.[10] In the passage from *L'Illustration*, 1868 quoted earlier, remarks on circulation patterns further emphasize the purely infrastructural aspect of the bridge. After all, it cannot be forgotten that the bridge's construction was necessitated by the maintaining of the connection

between areas on either side of the new railway beds (in this case, by six separate roads). The social importance of this facet, and the remarkable means by which the bridge's design achieved this, is evident through its registration as such within paintings of the time.

Just as the Pont de l'Europe functioned as a bridge, its unusual plan with a large central open space enabled it to function equally as a public space, a making of *place*. The sheer size of the structure was such that there was no one physical point from which one could appreciate the complete six-prong plan.[11] As a result, the visitor on a promenade is fully immersed in a spatial expanse much like that of a Haussmann *place* where the unobstructed geometrical plan facilitated a wide spectrum of public activities. The Pont de l'Europe "with its broad streets and sidewalks and its expansive, central area, complete with two traffic islands, was a space where different social classes could be comfortably experienced and easily viewed."[12] Jean Béraud's painting *The Place at the Pont de l'Europe* (1876), illustrates a panoramic vista of such social encounters generated within the bridge's public space (fig. 9). The Pont de l'Europe as a *lieu de rencontre* or a place of promenade made it an ideal site for a Baudelairian flaneur: "voir le monde, etre au centre de monde, et rester cacher de monde."[13] In Béraud's painting, the variation of social classes typically found in public *places* and framed by the gaze of the flaneur is evident. In this image, there also exists a sense of confusion, a sort of chaotic disorganization where pedestrians and carriages meet. The notion of the Pont de l'Europe as a structure devised to channel and organize traffic here seems to come undone. Instead, this image exudes a sort of tension and excitement where the crossing or collision of different subjects is always a serendipitous possibility.

On the Pont de l'Europe: A *Transversal Vista* of Modernity

The rendering of the Pont de l'Europe from a *birds-eye view*, as a *utilitarian observatoire*, as a *functional bridge*, and as a *place* are all typologies of vistas commonly explored in nineteenth century depictions. However Caillebotte's *On the Pont de l'Europe* is unique in its rethinking of vantage point ultimately inventing a *transversal vista* of modernity—a rendering as modern as the function, construction, and realization of the bridge itself.

In this painting, the depicted subjects and the viewer gaze through the iron trellises of the bridge upon the Gare Saint-Lazare and the Garnier Opera House. These two monuments of modern Paris are extraordinarily symbolic as they respectively represent access and spectacle—perhaps the two most important characteristics of the city itself. By reframing such definitive elements of Paris, the Pont de l'Europe actively partakes in the reconfiguration of urban vistas characteristic of Haussmann's intervention. However unlike Haussman's desire to generate singular correct perspectives, the bridge facilitates an assembly of monumental views, of which those of the Opera House and Gare are simply a part. Through each *X* of the

Figure 8 Gustave Caillebotte, *Pont de l'Europe*, 1877 (oil on canvas, 124.7 x 180.6 cm). Musée du Petit Palais, Geneva.

Figure 9 Jean Béraud, *The Place and the Pont de l'Europe*, 1876-1878 (48.3 x 73.7 cm). Private collection.

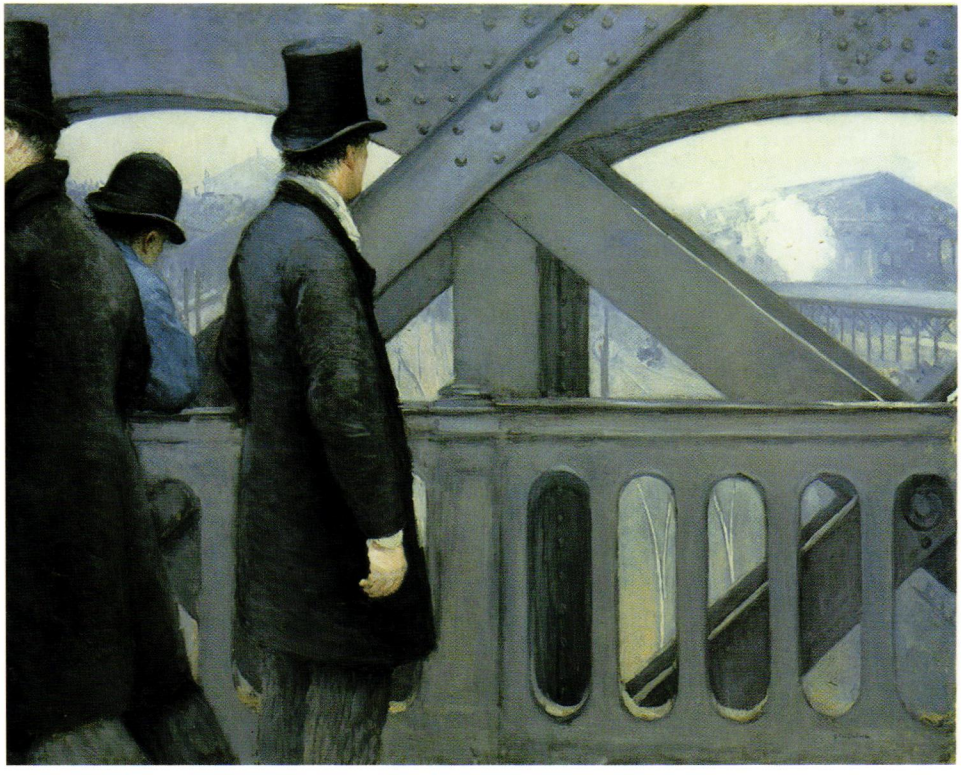


Figure 10 Gustave Caillebotte, *On the Pont de l'Europe*, 1876-1877 (oil on canvas, 105 x 131 cm). Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

trellis, a different vista can be framed. Given such a range of possibilities, it is of deep relevance that Caillebotte chose to specifically frame these monuments of transport and spectacle.

In this large painting, the viewer finds himself alongside a petit-bourgeois and a bon-bourgeois gazing at the Gare Saint-Lazare and the Garnier Opera House. Compositionally, the irregular cropping of the canvas, rendering no figure complete along with the large void on the right side both serve to invite the viewer to join in the act of gazing through the bridge. The giant *X*s of the iron lattice run nearly parallel to the picture plane outlining a sharp geometry that emphasizes the flatness of the plane before which the viewers stand and of the vista beyond it. Here the bridge structure is reduced to an abstract pattern, a sort of indelible stamp on the surface of the canvas whose geometrical and repetitive qualities supercede its figurative form. The repetition of the arch, the oblong openings, the massive *X*s and the dotted rivets suggest the infinite continuation of this two-dimensional pattern beyond each side of the canvas. In this way does Caillebotte's painting exist as a slice of reality, a single frame of an ongoing scene. The artist by rendering the bridge as pure pattern negates its function as infrastructure and instead allows it to become a mechanism through which space and time can be momentarily paused and viewed.

The bluntness of this static state makes the bridge, as opposed to the viewer, the firmly determinate force in what is to be viewed and what is not to be viewed beyond it. The screen of girders blocks and determines the views, actively framing the vistas. The bridge acts as a two-dimensional frame for a two-dimensional picture. Any foreground, middle-ground and

background beyond it is compressed into a singular plane converting the view into a series of framed pictures for the viewer and spectators to contemplate. Beyond the figured foreground of this painting, there is no spatial recession, only layers of information doubly compressed onto a single plane.

The flatness of the bridge and vista beyond it is further emphasized by Caillebotte's choice of a cool regular color palette and by the finished quality of his brushstroke. The subtle shades of blue and gray employed throughout the middle-ground and background of the painting unify these layers, relating bridge and view. However, the use of flesh tones in rendering the faces of spectators in the foreground further emphasizes the distinction between the active subjects and the monochrome middle-ground and background of the bridge and vista. Beyond the darkened coats and peachy skin of Caillebotte's foregrounded figures the coloring of the canvas remains a uniform cool blue-gray. Any tonal contrast simply articulates the stamp-like quality of the bridge further emphasizing the flatness of its plane and image. Caillebotte's brushstrokes evenly blend shades of blues and grays so that the bridge reads as surface. Structure, mass, and distant vistas are reduced to singular planes superimposed on one another. Here Caillebotte has found a solution to the problem of depicting a three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional canvas. This *transversal vista* enabling the compression of space onto a singular plane of vision is truly modern as no other painting of this subject had yet rendered this effect.

It is precisely this method of display, the *transversal vista*, successfully achieved through the flattening of the three-dimensional world onto a two-dimensional picture plane that distinguishes Caillebotte's *On the Pont de l'Europe* from all other impressionist interpretations of this bridge. In this painting, the artist progresses beyond traditional vantage points inventing a new mode of composition and vista. Caillebotte's *On the Pont de l'Europe* succeeds in representing the conditions of modernity at the time and in itself exemplifies the achievement of such progress within the artistic realm.

Many thanks to Professor Erika Naginski for her scholarly advice throughout the research process.

NOTES

1 Pierre Lavedan. *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris: Histoire de l'Urbanisme à Paris* (Paris : Association pour la publication d'une histoire de Paris : diffusion Hachette, 1975), 365.

2 Plan and supplement article by G. Lenoir "Chemin de fer de Saint-Germain. Gare de la rue St. Lazare," *Journal des chemins de fer* 12, no. 30 (23 July, 1853), as cited by Juliet Wilson-Bareau. *Manet, Monet and the Gare Saint-Lazare* (Washington: National Gallery of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 186.

3 The seven lines were namely : la ligne de Paris au Havre, Dieppe et Fecamp, Paris à Caen et à Cherbourg, la ligne de Chemin de ferre de ceinture, and quatre lignes de banlieu : Saint-Germain, Versaille, Auteuil, Argenteuille. "Le Pont Metallique de la Place de l'Europe," *Illustration: Journal Universel* (21 Mars, 1868): 235.

4 "In 1860, a note by G. Danès, 'L'ancien quartier de l'Europe. Le Boulevard des Malesherbes. Enlargissement partiel de la Rue St. Lazare, etc.' *Revue municipale* (10 mars 1860) explained the developments in effect since 1826 and published the text of the decree of 30 June 1859 concerning the road works to be carried around the place de l'Europe." Wilson-Bareau. *Manet, Monet and the Gare Saint-Lazare,* 186.

5 J. Kirk T Varnedoe. "Caillebotte's Pont de l'Europe: A New Slant," *Gustave Caillebotte and the Fashioning of Identity in Impressionist Paris,* ed. Norma Broude (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 2002), 9.

6 Wilson-Bareau. *Manet, Monet and the Gare Saint-Lazare,* 67-68.

7 Lavedan. *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris: Histoire de l'Urbanisme à Paris,* 375.

8 "The same smoky, opaque expanse from which I watched the trains be swallowed in the distance by the black tunnel of Batignolles, as if it were a giant mousetrap." J. Kirk T. Varnedoe and Thomas P. Lee. *Gustave Caillebotte: A Retrospective Exhibition, 1976-1977* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1976), 106.

9 "Cited by Daniel Halévy in Pays Parisien, in turn cited by Mina Curtis in a note in her translation of Haleévy's *My Friend Degas* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1964) 43." Ibid., 106.

10 Lightsone, Rosanne H. "Gustave Caillebotte's Oblique Perspective: A New Source for 'Le Pont de l'Europe'," *The Burlington Magazine* 136, no. 1100 (November 1994): 761.

11 "There was no single point from which this architectural harmony could be appreciated in its entirety, except from above. Every view from without and within the Pont de l'Europe was a partial one." Anne Diestel, et al. *Gustave Caillebotte, Urban Impressionist* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux: Musée d'Orsay; Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; in association with Abbeville Press, New York, 1995) 102.

12 Ibid.

13 "To watch the world, to be at the center of the world, and to remain hidden from the world." Caroline Mathieu Baudelaire, « Le Paris D'Haussmann dans la Peinture 1860- 1900 » as cited by Jean Des Cars, *Paris-Haussmann: "Le Pari d'Haussmann"* (Paris: Edition du Pavillon de l'Arsenal: Picard editeur, 1991) 312.

Lydia Kallipoliti, Alexandros Tsamis, Ioannis Zavoleas, John E. Fernandez,
M. Alexandra Sinisterra & Vana Tentokali (consultant)

Fecund CityScapes

Ephemeral Structures for the Athens Olympics 2004 *

* article includes Media component [see DVD]

Condition 1: Palimpsest in flux

In Athens, the subway's excavation process has vividly revealed the presence of subterranean cities, underneath the contemporary level. The apocalypse of a fragmented, discontinuous, terrain—penetrated by disparate historic traces—now characterizes the city as a *palimpsest*. Places that have provided access to the latent *palimpsest* are the *voids* of the urban fabric, the residual parts of city blocks due to their *receptive* qualities. The urban *palimpsest* has been considered as a passive system of diverse layers of identity. We are proposing an active, receptive evolution of the *palimpsest*—a *registration device* of activities that emerge in the urban context.

Condition 2: Navigating at the interval

Urban voids provide points of access to the latent urban *palimpsest*. At the same time, exits and ventilation wells of the subway that are positioned in *void spaces* generate a new, emerging urban network, attached to the existing transportation infrastructure. These voids act as hosts of ephemeral structures, setting up a dual navigation game in the city. Physical navigation occurs as people travel through the subway system, roaming through the city as corporeal beings. Virtual navigation occurs as each traveler inhabits the registration device and inflates an individual pod that projects information about Athens, the Olympics, and other cultural activities. Sensory incentives immerse the traveler into a perceptual urban journey. An idea of the city is constructed in the mind, parallel to the actual urban fabric. At an urban scale, the structures are interfaces, nodes of interconnection between the perceptual and the physical city. Leisure activity activates a threshold for an ongoing, 'un-destined' journey between two distinct cityscapes.

Two different intents, *the re-production of the palimpsest* and the *creation of an interface for an urban navigational game*, converge. Our proposal is an **interfacing registration device**, a structure conceived as a ductile layer implemented upon the historic context, a *vessel* that enables the site to *record* any kind of *intrusion*. An interface is created by reproducing the three-dimensional void space with a flexible, receptive *epidermis*.

The structure is essentially a vertical, multi-leveled inhabitable wall, which is positioned at edge conditions of void city blocks, marking the absence of the street's borderlines. The program—space for leisure activity—is embedded as a latent element in the structure's floor components like a 'seed.' Visitors' interaction launches the lifecycle of the structure, by inflating the 'seeds'—1m pneumatic rings—and creating space out of the floor components. In this sense, activity literally *impregnates* the structure, which then accommodates the change that is generated, by re-shaping and re-texturing itself. One surface of the wall structure registers the inflation of activity pods on its skin, by

PROJECT DATA: This project was a collaboration between four MIT graduate students (at the time) and one MIT professor. It took place in the Fall semester of 2002 in an intense occupation of the MIT Building Technology Laboratory.

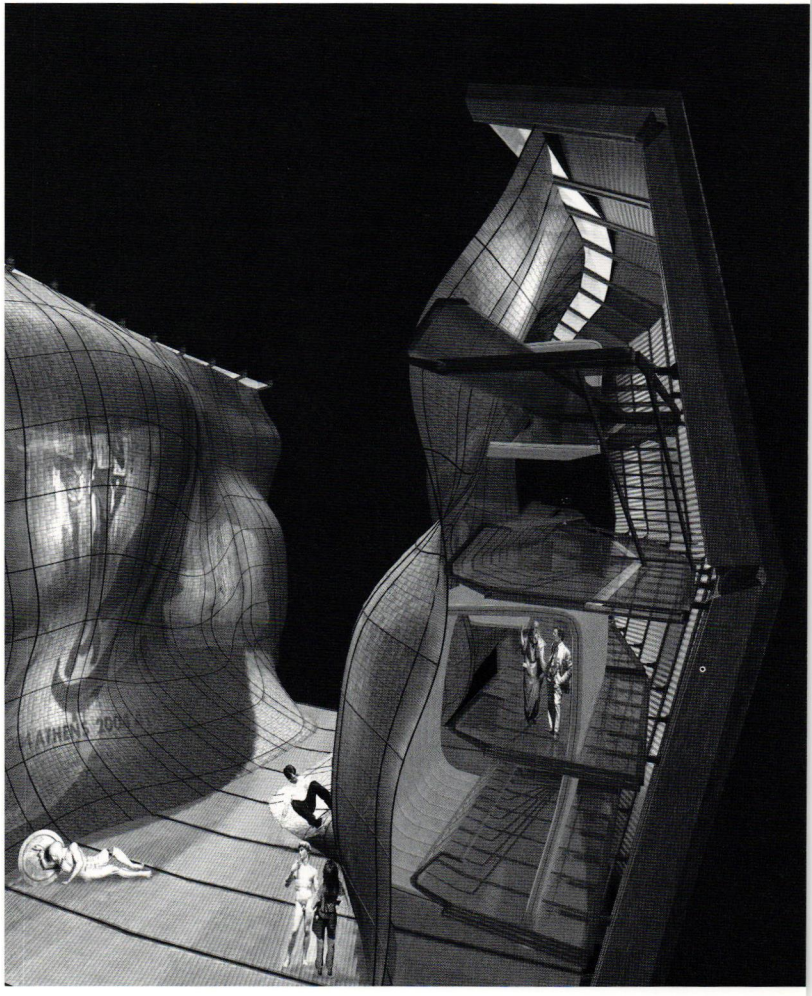
AWARD DATA: The project was awarded an Honorable Mention in the professional category of the International Architectural Competition for the "Design of Ephemeral Structures," for the Athens Olympiad of 2004 and exhibited in the Byzantine Museum of Athens, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Fondation Hellénique in Paris, the Evagoras Lianitis Center in Cyprus and the Biennale of Greek Architects.

COMPETITION INFORMATION: As indicated in the competition brief, "The competition was an invitation to architects worldwide to rethink and give an architectural form to their relationship with the city of Athens by designing ephemeral structures. It was supported by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, within the context of the Cultural Olympiad 2001-2004 and the Athens 2004 Olympic Games." The jury included Elias Zenghelis, Zaha Hadid, Hani Rashid, Yatsuka Hasime and Sylvia Lavin.

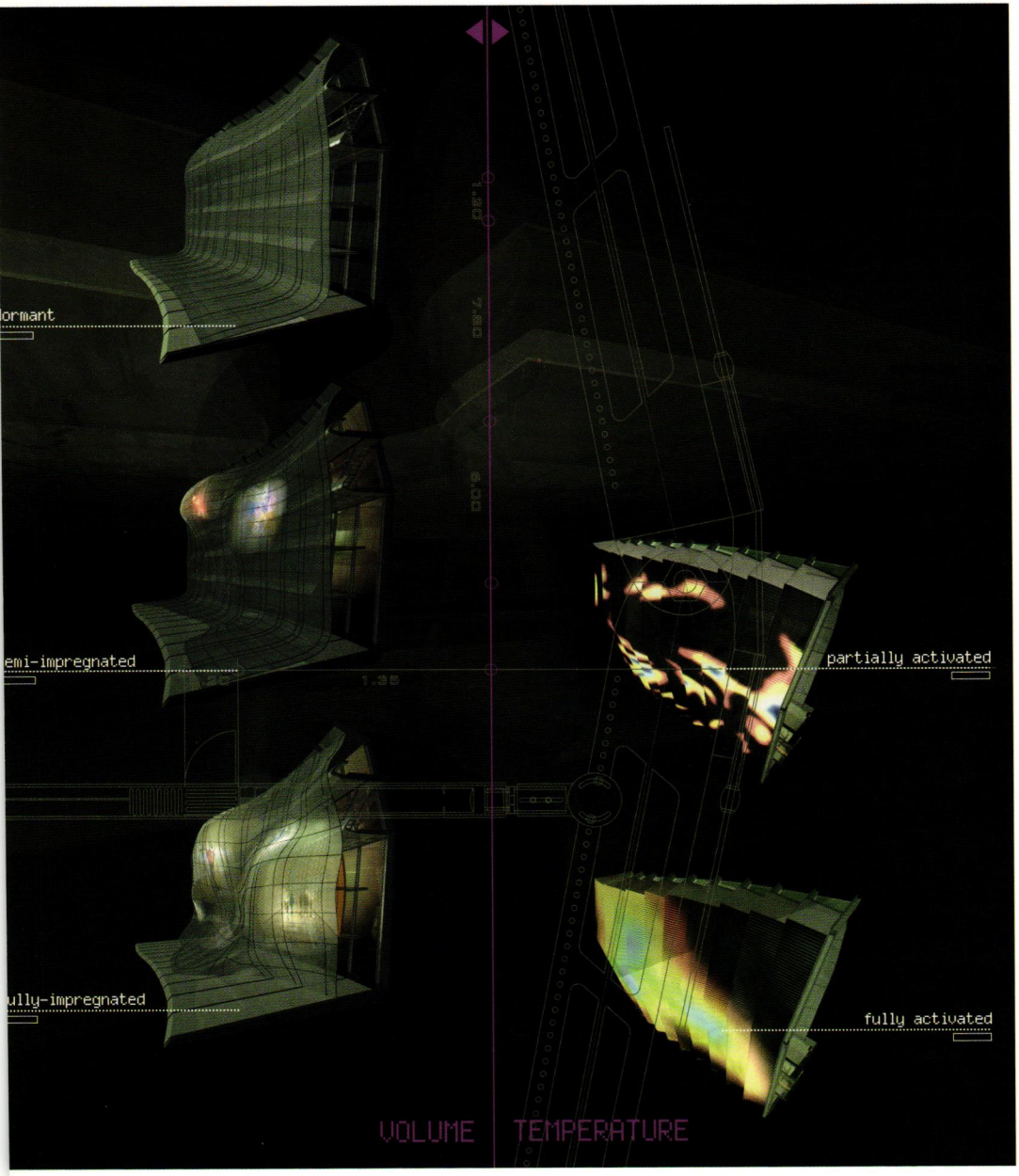
PROGRAM: There were five thematic categories: events platforms, open-air theatres, creative activities spaces, semi-open exhibition spaces, city-leisure activities generators and landmarks of Olympic activities. The project was submitted in the city-leisure activities generators program.

adapting to the volumetric change. As a result, void vertical space is produced, indicative of the *palimpsest*. The other surface of the wall structure, alters its color and degrees of translucency, according to fluctuations in temperature that reflect intensity of activity and local aggregations of crowds along the range of the wall.

The *fecund-impregnating* structure forms the conceptual framework of the parasite.* Rather than being external, the parasite rests within the reproduced host/interface, using it as its carrier. The parasite may either be manifested or it may remain dormant; it is perceived as the suppressed potential of activity. The flux of successive activities is registered on the unified surface of the host, in a constant reevaluation of the historic process. The particularity of an ephemeral activity is imprinted on the host, triggering the metamorphosis of its sur-face to a constantly changing unified inter-face.



* The competition specifically required to conceive of the ephemeral structures as 'parasites,' which can be not only assembled and disassembled, but also adapted to the specific urban infrastructure of Athens. The program explicitly stated: "No specific site is given for the installation of the structures. Their design should guarantee easy mounting and de-mounting. All structures should be movable and designed "in the name of Athens." This implies that they should neither be conceived as site-specific nor generic. The ephemeral structures will rather operate as "urban parasites" to be adapted to the existing infrastructure of the sites that host them, and they are expected to invite citizens and visitors to participate in the cultural events they will generate."



Superstructure
The superstructure consists of vertical ribs that may be positioned at a variety of angles. The ribs are joined together to form the primary load transfer mechanism capable of being configured around adjustable stainless steel pin joints. The high-strength aluminum ribs are reinforced with internal steel plates positioned to maximize flexural strength while maintaining a lightweight section. The superstructure may remain on site, and accommodate other uses after its initial use has been completed.

Floor components
The 5.6m x 3m floor components consist of the horizontal structural surface that contains pneumatic seeds that deploy into habitable media pods. The floors may be reached from stairs attached to each level. Each floor is attached to the vertical ribs through a moment connection consisting of high strength steel bolts and compressible high-density polymer.

Surfaces
The exterior surface materials are topologies of registration. These surfaces register activity contained inside of the volume of the construct. There are two distinct types of *epidermis*:

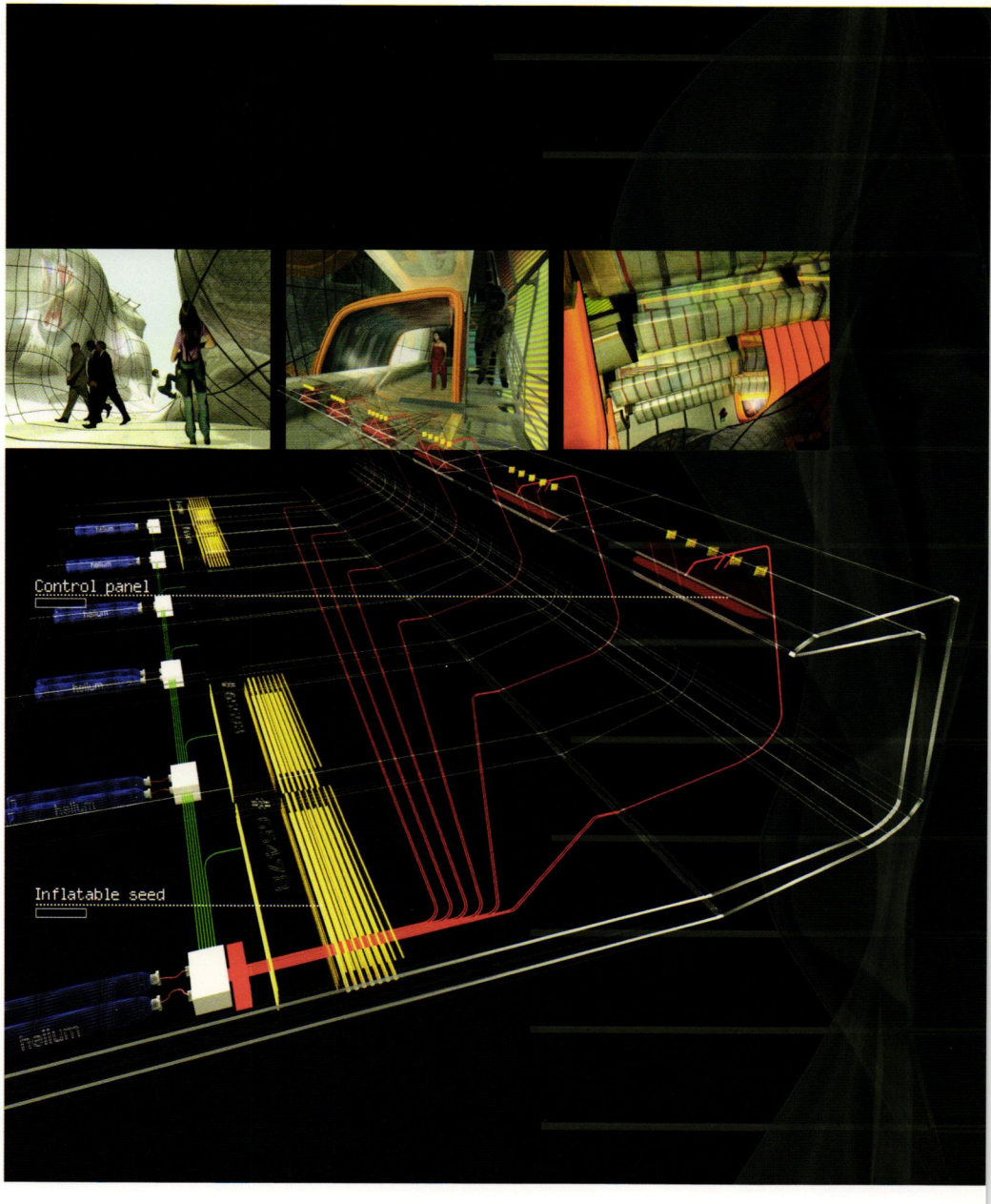
a) shape change surface
in order to accommodate the

change produced by the inflation of the pods, this woven surface allows for volumetric change within the interior of the construct. The fabric is composed of two woven materials, the first running horizontally and the second vertically. The horizontal sections are composed of two ductile polyurethane layers of moderate hardness, capable of expanding to within 150% of their original length. The vertical material is non-elastic, transferring vertical dead load and lateral live load to the upper section of the superstructural ribs above. This is accomplished with the use of stainless steel cables spaced at regular intervals.

b) THERMOCHROMIC SURFACE to register the heat produced by occupancy and various levels of activity, a thermochromic film is used to register temperature fluctuations within the interior of the construct.

UNITS

The seeds, deployable and habitable media volumes, are contained within the thickness of the floor, as described above. These units, when inflated, can be fastened together with the use of a continuous zipper in order to form a habitable pod. The inflatable pillows of the pods contain a mixture of helium and air in varying proportions to ensure the correct three-dimensional form for each pod.



Louise Pelletier

Architecture of Events
Reconfiguring the City *

* article includes Media component [see DVD]

The greatest architecture of all is the fireworks'.
Bernard Tschumi (1996)[1]

Is permanence over-rated in the field of architecture? Given the materialist tendencies of our contemporary society, we are often led to believe that architecture is primarily defined by the permanent presence of structures rather than the events or rituals that may take place within them. Conversely, now that some buildings come with an expiry date and the quality of architectural detailing barely lasts as long as the builder's liability period, it seems that the very notion of ephemerality within architecture has been identified with a byproduct of developer mentality and bloated consumerism. Until the end of the nineteenth century however, ephemeral constructions were not only considered to be within the province of the architect; they played an important role in civic life, animating cities through different forms of ritual during punctual or recurring events. Moreover, such temporary events were deemed essential to a city or kingdom's social and political stability, relying on the power of the image, or the representational meaning of the compositions, to establish order and convey social unity and structure.

Since the beginning of modernity however, the representational devices that might constitute such events have often been condemned as simple artifices contributing to an already over-saturated culture of the image. This notion has remained in cultural currency since artist and theorist Guy Debord diagnosed contemporary society as suffering from the acute dependence on the image such that any concept, any object and even our experiences had to be requisitely mediated through their representation to conform to society's consumerist logic. The status of the image within architectural practice has been iincreasingly reduced to an objectified tool of basic representation, less and less apt at creating authentic phenomenological experience. This article proposes a critical historical tracing of the changing relationships between city, experience and spectacle (as representational image), and a look to contemporary artistic practices, to suggest that rather than working against our well-instated fascination with images, we might begin to actively deploy it towards the reconstitution of experience proper. Moreover, by such means might we begin to transcend the materialistic consumerism so denounced by Debord, and renew our understanding of civic life.

From the first Mystery plays, ceremonial entries and processions throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, to the temporary stages of nomadic troupes, ephemeral structures have always played a central role in the configuration of the urban landscape—orchestrating meaningful events in the public domain, and layering

Figure 1 Floating structure designed by Servandoni to celebrate the birth of the Dauphin (1730)

the city with momentary veils of earthly ideals. From the Renaissance onwards, urban celebrations took different forms and involved diverse programs—for the most part, political or religious. Two of the most well-documented events of this kind took place in Paris during the eighteenth century, designed by Jean-Nicolas Servandoni, a prominent architect and stage designer.[2] The first celebration was given in honor of the birth of the Dauphin in January 1730. On the request of Philipe V, king of Spain, the celebrations took place in a mansion by the river Seine, and involved elaborate lighting and sumptuous decorations. Servandoni was commissioned to build a structure on the river, between the Louvre and the Hôtel de Bouillon, such that the entire population of Paris could take part in the celebration (fig. 1). The physical structure was in the form of two mountains united at their base, representing the Pyrenees and symbolizing the alliance between France and Spain. Some waterfalls, trees, plants, tritons, Nereids, and other sea creatures populated the composition. The two mountains floated on two boats richly decorated with gold and shells. The boats also supported orthogonal structures representing the temples of Pleasure and Joy, occupied by the musicians. On either side, two floating terraces covered with colored sand and patterns of grass supported two rocks upon which two bronze statues stood: a lion, to symbolize courage and majesty (representing Spain); and a rooster, to symbolize vigilance and ingenuity (representing France). An elaborate display of fireworks was also staged: in an hour-long, two-act exhibition, fireworks were launched from various sea monsters, and the two mountains transformed into volcanoes. Then, from the center of the two mountains, a powerful light simulated the rising sun. At the same

time, a giant rainbow linked the two mountains, and atop of it, the goddess Iris floated on a cloud. The overwhelming presence of these rocks emerging from the river and embracing the sun used "sublime" nature to express the grandeur of the event.[3]

A decade later in 1739, Servandoni was commissioned to stage the celebration of Madame Elisabeth's marriage to Don Philipe, son of Philipe V king of Spain, which was unquestionably the most widely acclaimed public event of the period. Art historian and archeologist, Quatremère de Quincy wrote that it surpassed all events of its kind ever to take place in Paris.[4] As with previous spectacles, Servandoni used the river Seine as his stage, but this time he did not limit himself to one specific location. The entire area between the Pont-Neuf and the Pont-Royal became the theatre for the festivities (fig. 2). A temple devoted to Hymen, the divinity presiding over marriages, was erected in the middle of Pont-Neuf, on the platform where the statue of Henri IV stood. A transparent octagonal music pavilion was lit from inside and floated on the Seine. Fireworks were choreographed from the buildings.

These events, ephemeral as they were, succeeded in transforming, for a few days, the experience of the city. Arguably exploiting latent tendencies for passive voyeurism, they nonetheless were effective vehicles for the constitution of lasting cultural memories. Whether they were meant to commemorate a specific moment, mark a political alliance, or involve the entire population in a theatrical performance, they imposed a different order on the city, momentarily transforming it into a public theatre offering a place for authentic participation, and constituting a temporary means of orientation within the complex and often unstable reality of the time.

Servandoni's urban stagings marked the beginning of a new trend in eighteenth-century Europe, in which cities were understood as increasingly theatrical space. City plans came to include public squares and urban vistas deliberately composed to provide stages for public display—the Piazza Di Spania in Rome, Royal Crescent in Bath, or the square of the Odeon in Paris, to name but a few. These places not only suggested formal staging of the city, but became actual theatres for new urban actors, and brought the notion of the spectacle into everyday life. Indeed, social conventions underwent major changes throughout the century, and the city itself became their stage. Documentation of this shift in the design and collective use of the city can be seen in eighteenth-century writings. In 1749, Henry Fielding spoke of London as a society in which stage and street were literally intermixed, while a few years later Jean-Jacques Rousseau characterized urban man as an actor.[5] This effective "theatralization" of the city is arguably the foundation of what Debord defined as the "society of the spectacle," which, in contemporary terms, he recognized as a condition perverted by an obsession with the image and its consumption. Traditionally however, theatre was never meant to reduce the experience of the world to a consumable image. On the contrary, it was considered not only a mode of entertainment but also an institution for social interaction and political action. The internal hierarchy of the auditorium emulated the social order from which it emerged and permitted the participation of every individual in the community.

Since its origin in antiquity, theatre was centered upon the ritualistic involvement of an entire community in a cathartic process of purification. Large, open-air structures were built to hold almost entire city populations, in which "distant contemplation of the epiphany would have the same cathartic effect on the observer as was accomplished previously

Figure 2 Floating structure designed by Servandoni to celebrate the marriage of Madame Elisabeth to Don Philipe (1739)

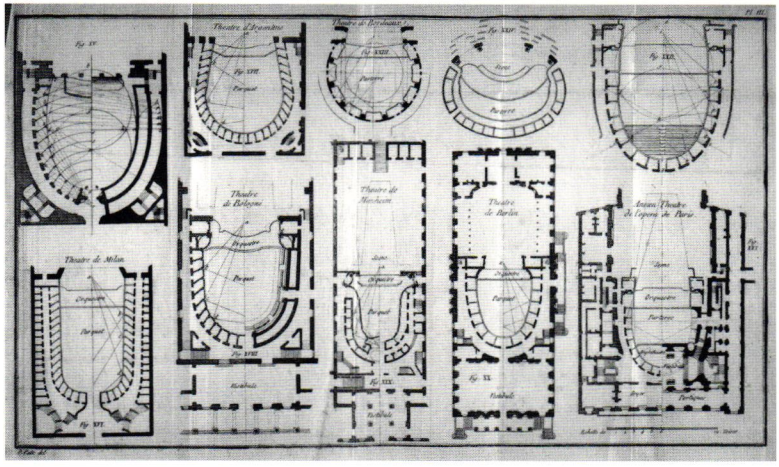


Figure 3 Plate 3 from Pierre Patte's *Essai sur l'architecture théâtrale* (1782) comparing the plan of various theatres.

through active, embodied participation in the ritual."[6] This condition of the theatre as a place for authentic participation however, was gradually transformed as the physical configuration of theatres, and conventions guiding social interaction changed. From the Renaissance onwards, the internal layout of theatres started to reflect variations in social and civic order. The architectural design of theatres explicitly manifested the changing relationships between established theatre patrons, the general audience, and actors on stage.[7] Replacing the previous paradigm of a continuous domain between the stage and the auditorium, the essential features of the "modern" theatre, including the horseshoe-shaped auditorium, the tiers of galleries or boxes, the "picture-frame" stage, and the proscenium arch appeared during the first half of the seventeenth century. While one might think that this new spatial structuring—specifically the proscenium, with its well-contained acting area—might have governed an accordant reorientation of the audience toward the stage, it took almost a century for the distribution and disposition of auditorium seating and the partition walls of the boxes to respond to this change (fig. 3).

In his *Trattato sopra la struttura de'teatri e scene* (1676), the first "modern" treatise on theatre architecture, Fabrizio Carini Motta presciently advised placing the partitions between boxes along the axes of sight-lines instead of at right-angles to the balustrade, as a means of providing optimal views to the stage. However, such apt design insight was rather ignored in favor of greater social concerns. In fact, in many theatres the most coveted seats had poor views of the stage, but good views of the auditorium itself. While perhaps counter-intuitive, such designs and preferences reflected a collective understanding of the audience as equal a part of the spectacle as the action on stage. As further evidence of this understanding, Baroque theatres in most European countries were designed to provide the sovereign with an ideal view to the perspective illusion on stage, but spectators were mostly awkwardly oriented toward the stage, and favored seats with the best view to the Royal box. As even more explicit evidence, the French fashion of the time called for important spectators to be seated directly on the stage, as if to display them along with the dramatic action. This clear preference for social interaction within the auditorium over theatrical experience proper reflected the importance of theatres as sites of public display, and in turn suggests correlations between the contemporaneous trend towards the use of public sites as stages for civic displays. The seating arrangement on stage and in the auditorium was irrational according to visibility and acoustics but reflected a social hierarchy of order and interaction that no architect dared challenge before the last decades of the eighteenth century.[8]

While some important transformations were occurring within the social spaces of the city and the theatre, the spatial ordering of stage design was equally marked by radical and correlative change during the eighteenth century. The introduction of oblique perspective (known as *perspectiva*, or *scena per angolo*) by Ferdinando Galli Bibiena in his treatise *Architettura Civile* (1711) indicated a growing transformation in the relationship between the stage and the audience (fig. 4). A comparison of late seventeenth century to eighteenth century scenic backdrops reveals a remarkable shift from a singular central perspective to a complex composite of perspectival angles, in which multiple vanishing points would draw spectators beyond the limits of the scenic frame. The perspective illusion of the *scena per angolo* projected vanishing points beyond the frame of the stage and drew the walls of virtual cities forward to embrace the audience. The eye of the spectator was intentionally pulled in various directions to create the illusion of an endless extension to the stage. This type of composition created "a sense of expansion in the spectator,"[9] precisely because the boundaries of the virtual space could not be grasped.

This theatrical effect was sought by other designers and further creative spatial effects. Servandoni, sensitive not only to the art of theatricality within the city, but also a renowned stage set designer for the Opera, was credited with bringing the technique of oblique perspective to France. Servandoni further expanded on the illusion by introducing the use of gigantic architectural elements in the foreground, such as bases of enormous columns that were cut off by the proscenium arch but could be imagined to extend far up into the fly tower. Furthermore, to increase the apparent depth of the stage along with the spectators' perception of endless distances, he modified the sizes of architectural elements and their relative distances as they receded into the background. Servandoni effectively created an illusion that the space of the stage spread well beyond the wings and proscenium arch, and into the space of the auditorium. Using such new techniques for spatial definition, Servandoni provide increasingly sophisticated means by which to engage and make complicit the audience in the scenic action.

Clearly a great master of optical illusions, Servandoni's success was largely due to his recognition of the phenomenological qualities of experience necessary for authentic engagement with the image. Interestingly, he continued to pursue this interest and dynamic by interrogating the very devices and methods by which such experiences could successfully be induced. In 1738, he introduced the *optic play*, a dramatic staging that relied solely on the use of sets and lighting effects to induce emotions in the spectators. At first, these dramatizations excluded live actors and even music. Servandoni's initial experiment was to create a spectacle in which the pictorial illusion, created by lighting effects and mechanical changes of scenery, would be the sole element by which to engender experience. The construction of elaborate machinery to change sets and the creation of magical effects through the choreographed apparition of scenic elements opened up new realms in not only stage design and production techniques, but in the very conception of theatrical experience.

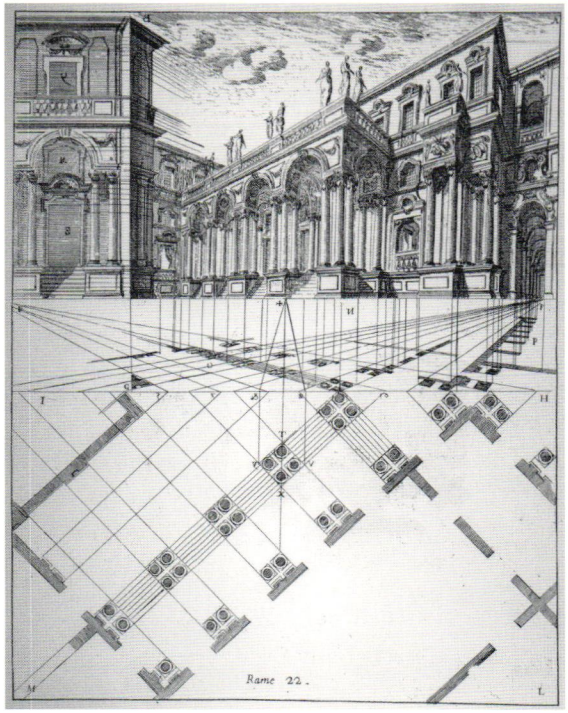


Figure 4 Plate 22 from Bibiena's *Architettura Civile* (1711)

The very first show he produced according to this new staging practice completely rejected the narrative structure of traditional theatrical performance. It was a kind of diorama based on a painting by Pannini of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. The event's program announced "an exact representation" of the interior of the church. The declared objective was to "make the famous basilica known to those who could not go to Italy."[10] To give a sense of the enormous dimensions of the architectural space, Servandoni added kneeling people painted in perspective. Writing much later, Quatremère de Quincy praised this innovative performance for transforming what was normally considered the accompaniment to a drama into the main object of representation. It was, so to speak, a "drama without words that kept the mind interested in the scenic action through the eyes only."[11]

The declared goal of Servandoni's *optic plays* was to impress the eye in order to create visual epics that could involve the spectators by creating emotions, moving their soul. To achieve this, he attributed a specific character to each set, or used a natural element to dominate a scene—the view of a prison to inspire sadness, or the Temple of the Sun to induce admiration, or the suggestive signs of a particular season to produce the feeling of excessive heat or cold. A single scene with neither actor nor narration could evoke the burning heat of the sun, or the biting cold of winter through a simple representation of lonely, bare trees rising from snowy rocks. Witnessing such performances, Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, renowned architect and theoretician of the time, describes their visceral effect: "What emotions do we not feel in the contrast between deep shadows and limpid light, or between the delights of calm weather and the confusion of winds and tempest? Every nuance, every gradation, affects us."[12] Servandoni's *optic plays*, like his urban staging of public celebrations, relied on the potential of images as a means of engaging every individual in the event. Furthermore, his images also served to ensure an active participation of the spectators in the spectacle. In the *optic plays*, the illusion always required the individual viewer to complete the story, while the events staged in the city served to collectively reaffirm political structure and international alliances such that every individual could grasp his/her place in the order of things.

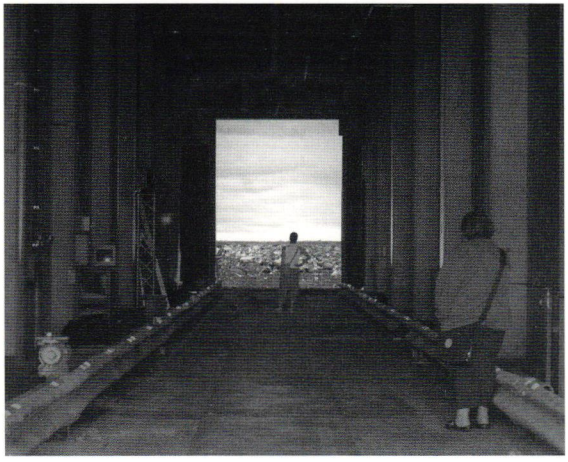


Figure 5 Isabelle Hayeur, *Issue*, 2004. [see Media DVD]

If we are to accept Debord's claim that our contemporary society suffers from a passive dependence on the world of images, and if "all that once was directly lived has become mere representation,"[13] it might be instructive to take this historical look at the origins of the spectacle to offer new insight into the potential of the image in the creation of meaningful experiences that transcend their simple representational value. As Giorgio Agamben, in his enlightened look at Debord's diagnosis of the contemporary society optimistically suggests, the spectacle may still contain "something like a positive possibility – and it is our task to use this possibility against it."[14] He suggests that the final stage of the "age of the spectacle" would be a state in which we could see things for what they are, without desire for materialistic consumption—a state in which the spectacle could become once more a place for authentic participation. Just as Servandoni mastered the art of inducing collective and individual experience through the image, so might we begin to harvest the potential that lies therein.

Whether it be through the individual completion of the story, or the collective defining of urban culture, the spectacle has the potential to subvert our tendency toward passive consumption through its latent dimension of active participation. This potential lies specifically in the fact that the spectacle, as image, allows us to distance ourselves from our everyday life and as in Servandoni's civic events, allows the city to be cast in a different light. Ephemeral events emerging from contemporary artistic practices, are effective in precisely these ways, and suggest the manners by which such effects are possible within the complexity of contemporary society, culture and cities.

To cite but one example, *Champ Libre,* a nomadic electronic arts' organization proposes *in situ* installations towards a reconfiguration of our experience of the city by questioning the limit between the virtual and the real and forcing us to inhabit liminal spaces through social and ethical concerns.
In the context of its last Biennale event entitled *Desert,* new media artist Isabelle Hayeur, in her work *Issue* (meaning Exit) staged in the space of an obsolete incinerator in Montreal, provoked reflection through immediate and visceral experience as she juxtaposed the industrial ruin with views of a deserted landscape reconstituted from a nearby garbage dump. Through an interactive video display installed at the very end of the long tunnel that once served to load the residual sediments of the incineration process, the artificial landscape receded into the distance as one approached it. Her work, like that of many other contemporary artists invested in the spectacle as a means of visceral experience, allows us to imagine latent programs for marginal urban spaces, and changes not only the way we look at industrial ruins, public institutions, and even public places of transit, but also the way we experience in the city itself. Various ephemeral experiments with projected images and soundscapes have demonstrated this ability to extract from the cityscape newly activated modes of experience. Evident in such probing works, the ephemeral event as a catalyst of change in our built environment and in its capacity to suggest latent programs for spaces otherwise reduced to simply image byproducts, might help us recast the spectacle into an active mode of discovery rather than a passive submission to the image.

NOTES

1 Bernard Tschumi, *Event-Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 19.

2 For more on the work of Servandoni, see my forthcoming book, *Architecture in Words* (Routledge, 2006), ch. 2.

3 The description of the 1730 celebrations is based on Gabriel Mourey, *Le livre des fêtes françaises* (Paris: Librairie de France, 1930), 198–212, and J. Bouché, "Servandoni," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 2, (Paris, 1910): 143.

4 Quatremére de Quincy, Antoine-Chrysostome. "Servandoni," *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages des plus célèbres architectes du XIe siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe* 2 (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1970), 2:290–1.

5 *Architecture in Words,* p.61.

6 Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "Chora: The Space of Architectural Representation," *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture* 1, eds. A. Pérez-Gómez and S. Parcell (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 13.

7 On the spatial hierarchy of Renaissance and Baroque theatres, see Melvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: the Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 140–3, 173.

8 *Architecture in Words,* ch. 5.

9 On the altered relationship between the spectator and the stage due to the introduction of several vanishing points in stage set decors such as those of the Bibienas, see Marian Hobson, *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 139–95.

10 Giovanni Nicolo Servandoni, *Description abrégée de l'église de Saint-Pierre de Rome* (Paris, 1738).

11 Quatremère de Quincy, "Servandoni," 2:288.

12 Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, *The Genius of Architecture; Or, The Analogy of That Art with Our Sensations,* tr. David Britt (Santa Monica, CA: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992), 71.

13 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle,* tr. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 12.

14 Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End; Notes on Politics,* tr. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Cesarino (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 82.

David Serero

Variable Geometry
Acoustical Domes

Traditionally, domes are seen as architectural elements, which allow for the covering of large spaces by the structural assembly of discrete components. I recently developed a new kind of dome, which does not relate to structure but instead to acoustics. In collaboration with an acoustician and a programmer, I have been developing techniques to simulate soundfields of a given space and construct domes based on these fields. Suspended from the ceiling of an existing space, the *Acoustical Dome* is an experimental device, whose geometry allows for the variation of position in space and an adjustment of form to modify the acoustical behavior of the hall.

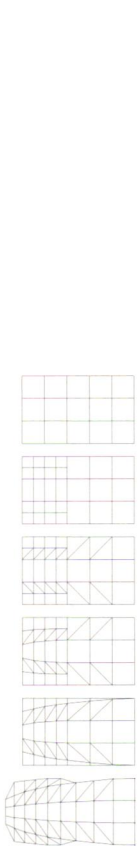
Here, space is not passive to music; it proceeds in an interactive mode by which a musical composition is imprinted in a form, and the room's geometry can be modified for each performance—or each public—in real time. It is the type of event—a music concert, a lecture, a song—that inflects the computation, that folds and unfolds the *Acoustical Dome* under the vault of this space. The surface's tessellation and its increasing subdivision affect the number of folds and trigger a reconfiguration of the fields of reverberation and reflection. The form of the *Acoustical Dome* is generated from both a digital simulation of acoustic patterns and an analog model of foldable composite panels.

This project defines architectural form not in a final state, but rather as an ephemeral and variable condition, where the possibility of its transformation is inscribed inside of its geometry. Integrating ornamental patterns with acoustical form, the *Acoustical Dome* allows for an interaction between the volume of a room and the propagation of sound in space. The *Acoustical Dome* therefore maintains an open and flexible relationship between music, the spectator and its surrounding environment.

Figure 1
The geometry of the *Acoustical Dome*, derived from a square 3x5 grid

Figure 2
Acoustical computation diagram

Figure 3
Acoustical computation of the Grand Salon at Villa Medici, Rome



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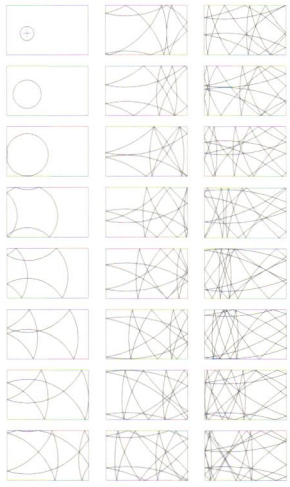

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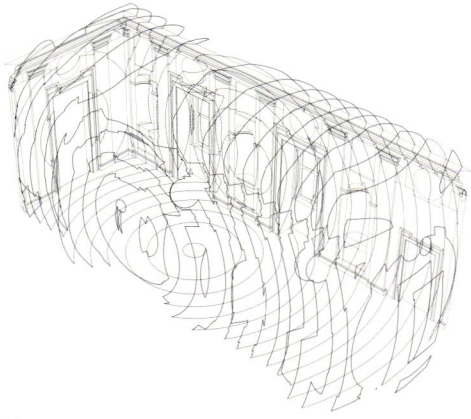

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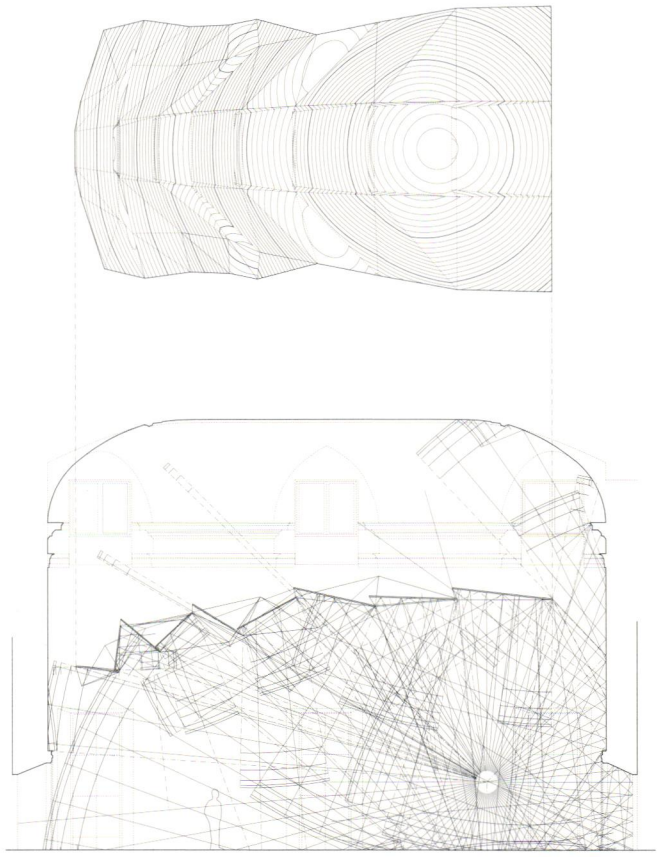

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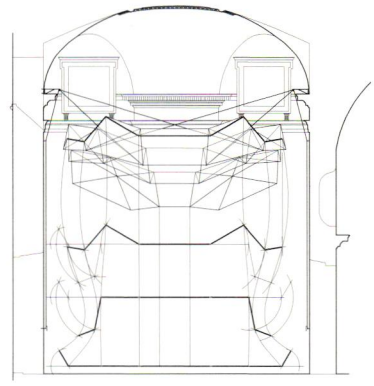

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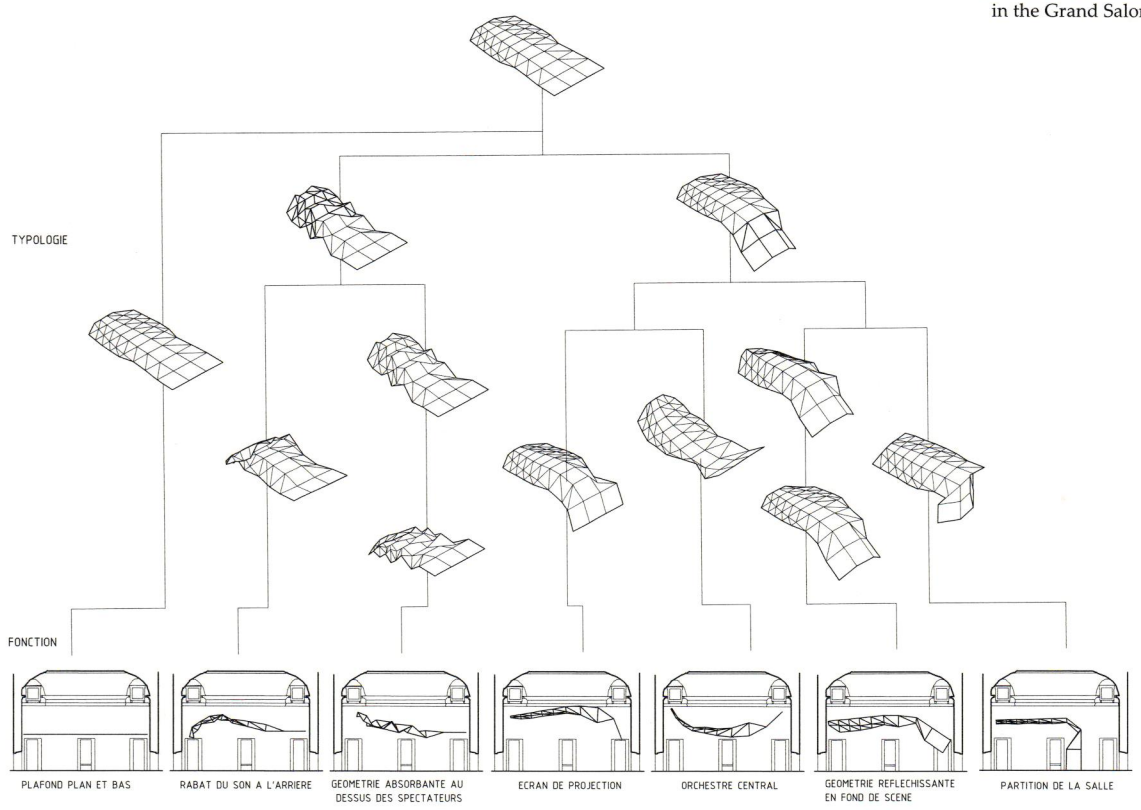
Figure 4
Reverberation simulation of Grand Salon with the *Acoustical Dome*

Figure 5
Transversal section showing the process of transitioning the *Acoustical Dome* between states

Figure 6
Functional multiplicity
of the *Acoustical Dome*

Figure 7, 8
Process for geometric calculation
of dome shapes, based on
acoustical simulations

Figure 9
Axonometric view of the
Acoustical Dome device
in the Grand Salon



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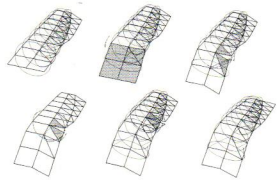

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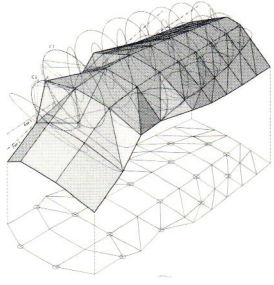

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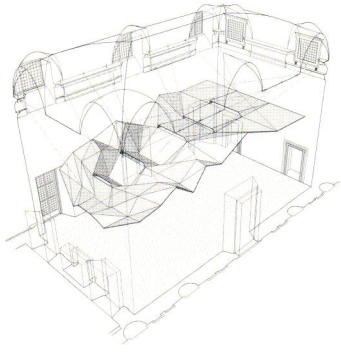
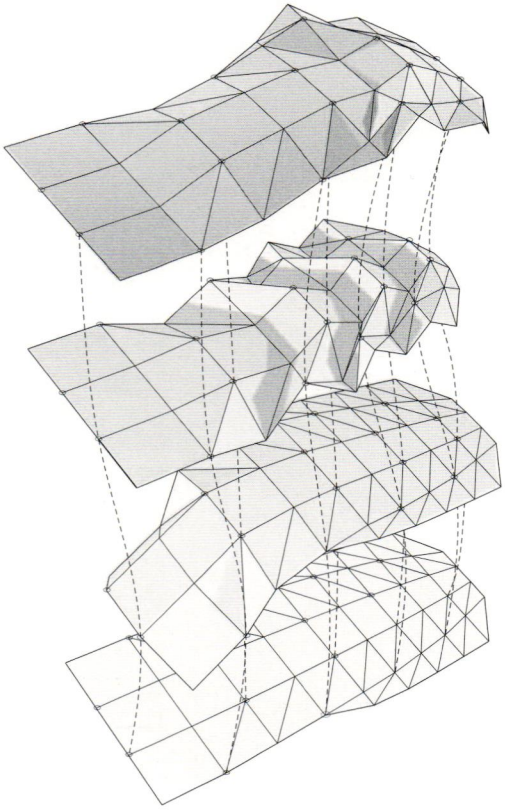


9

Figure 10
The form of the *Acoustical Dome* is controlled in real time by 12 points precisely linked to a network of cables and CNC winches

Figure 11, 12, 13
The *Acoustical Dome* in situ in the Grand Salon at Villa Medici, Rome



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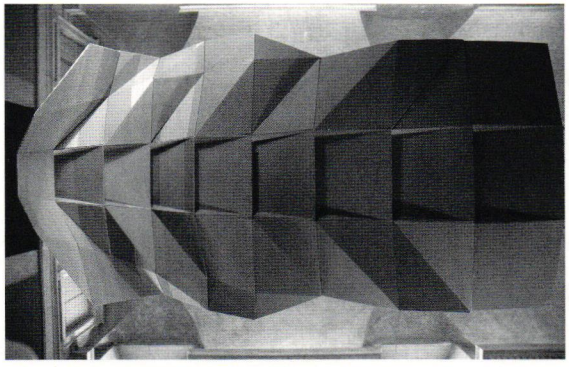

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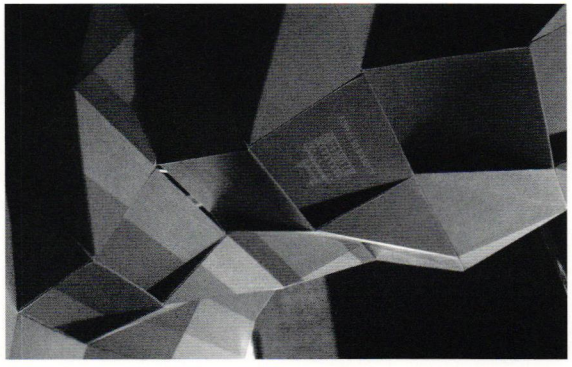


13


MAY 4 KENT '70

Scott A. Sherer

Remains
Smithson's *Partially Buried Woodshed* after 35 Years

Introduction

From the mid-1960s, Smithson produced art, lectured, and published influential essays centered upon the relationships between material objects, perception, mythology, and history, which he often explored through the dialectical relationship between natural materials and conceptual frameworks. One such work was *Partially Buried Woodshed* (hereafter, *PBW*) at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, which began its life in January 1970 as an old woodshed emphatically covered with twenty truckloads of dirt and then left to the natural effects of weather, gravity, and the sundry effects of human interaction.[1] Over its thirty-five years and counting, *PBW* has become well-known as one of the few earthworks Smithson completed before he died in a plane crash in 1973 and also as a discursive work of art consistently engaged with the complexity of the cultural spectrum. Moreover, *PBW* is exemplary of Smithson's interest in entropy as an intellectual and aesthetic concern.

At present, *PBW* has deteriorated into a few foundation stones and precious few fragments of cement nestled in the earth on a hillock, protected by a stand of trees, overgrown bushes and the routine neglect of commuter car culture. Conceptually, *PBW* remains an active subject in history books, a source of inspiration for many contemporary artists,[2] and a significant work within Smithson's oeuvre.[3] On a critical level, *PBW*, in tandem with its entropic deterioration, has persistently served to convey and confirm fissures between ephemeral experience and representational discourses.[4] Singular images, and singular perceptions, extricated from singular moments of the work's temporal duration, have threatened to become iconic (mis)representations of *PBW*, begging the question of the constitutional role of information, documentation and interpretation in the production of history.

Though *PBW* continues its decay as the result of natural forces, vandalism, and controversial institutional interventions and though photographic records and oral histories themselves continue to fade, Robert Smithson would be chagrined that much literature asserts the work as "lost."[5] For, deeply palpable within the work and within Smithson's body of work is his interest in the complexities of history and of time experienced beyond the stringency of a linear dimension. In many of his writings, drawings, and sculpture projects, such as *Nonsites* and *Displacements*, as well as his most famous work, *Spiral Jetty* (Great Salt Lake, Utah, 1970-present), Smithson articulated the paradox of experience as the fluid absence and presence of phenomenal and conceptual information. Amidst the proliferation of attenuated discourses surrounding the work, this essay reconsiders *PBW* as an ephemeral object whose material and conceptual character remains dually and constantly within the remains of the work, regardless of its physical and temporal state.

Site

In his 1968 gallery installations, *Nonsites*, Smithson represented geographic sites on the fringes of inhabited spaces through the use of maps, photographs, written description, and the arrangement of geological samples. His interest in site, space, time and processes continued into his 1969 projects—*Asphalt Rundown* in Rome, *Glue Pour* in Vancouver, and *Concrete Pour* in Chicago—produced directly in outdoor environments. In these works, processed materials were engineered to engage with natural processes of gravity in order to highlight the relationships between human interventions and the mysteries of geological time. At Kent State, in January 1970, exceptionally cold weather prevented Smithson from executing his original plan of producing a mudflow on campus. However, entreated by students not to return to New York, Smithson substituted this plan with his longstanding desire to bury a building. Students and faculty worked fast to gain the necessary permissions to use an old woodshed on newly acquired property at the far edge of campus and to orchestrate the piling on its roof of twenty truckloads of dirt excavated from a nearby construction site. When the center beam cracked, Smithson ceased his direct orchestration, and *PBW* was born. After this dramatic moment, *PBW* would begin to "acquire its own history"[6] both as a physical composition of man-made and natural elements and as a subject in representational discourses.

Although Kent, Ohio is commuting distance from Cleveland and Akron, a couple of hours from Pittsburgh and Columbus, and a morning or an afternoon drive from Chicago, Toronto, or Washington, D.C., the site of *PBW* remains mostly, both locally and nationally, off-the-beaten-path for other than the most dedicated art enthusiasts. Like other artists who created site-specific projects, Smithson was aware of the complexities introduced by the limited access to his work. However, while the exploration of entropic processes beyond cultural history may seem distinct from the needs and desires of parades of viewers and critics (and their interpretations), entropy as a measurement of difference requires witness, and only through such witness can its critical function be realized.

Indeed, Smithson specifically chose the site for his famous *Spiral Jetty* for its proximity to the historic site of the hammering of the Golden Spike that linked the continent's railways, recognizing that this site would likely remain significant in popular memory. As art historian Jennifer L. Roberts argues, by employing the site as a site of witness, Smithson could meaningfully incorporate mythology (such as the local myths regarding the Great Salt Lake's unique characteristics) and geology directly in the composition. And by this choice of site, and its attendant place within cultural memory and tourism, Smithson could successfully convey his conceptual critique of the perception of cultural history as simply a linear

succession of events and narratives of the natural world and man's involvement in it.[7]

Process

Early on, Smithson's conceptual interest in the non-linear dynamics between lived experience, memory, and entropy was evident. In his essay "The Monuments of Passaic," originally published in *Artforum*, December 1967,[8] he uses verbal and visual representations to recount a trip from Manhattan back to his birthplace, Passaic, New Jersey. Smithson was careful to note the details of his journey, from the train ticket booth number to the name of the contractors on a rusty sign above an old bridge. Smithson was fascinated by the "monuments" of the industrial landscape such as concrete embankments and rusted pipes. In his descriptions, the physical traces of Passaic's history enter into a layered dialogue with the effects of time, temporal registers, and Smithson's own interpretations. Smithson remarked upon entering the city: "When I walked on the bridge, it was as though I was walking on an enormous photograph that was made of wood and steel, and underneath the river existed as an enormous film that showed nothing but a continuous blank."[9]

Compared to the liveliness of Manhattan, Smithson often returned to New Jersey's industrial landscapes, to seek out examples of cultural artifacts in decline, onto which he could project his own interpretations.[10]

For Smithson, the derelict structures did not inspire romantic visions of the past when all was shiny and new; instead, he saw these aged artifacts as engaged in a constant present, moving towards an endless future, remarking "buildings don't *fall* into ruin *after* they are built but rather *rise* into ruin *before* they are built."[11] Remaining skeptical of the evidence of both physical properties and of discursive arguments as apt descriptors of historical change, Smithson concludes "The Monuments of Passaic" with an allegory. He asks his readers to imagine a sand box filled with black sand on one side and white sand on another and then to imagine a child running hundreds of times in a clockwise manner until the sand is mixed into shades of gray. Smithson notes that if the child were subsequently to run counter-clockwise, the sand would not be restored to its original discrete division. Extending this lesson about entropy, and material change over time, Smithson continues to develop a critique of representation as guarantor of the preservation of experience. He notes that even if his sand box experiment were to be filmed, "sooner or later the film itself would crumble or get lost and enter the state of irreversibility."[12] Smithson never ceased his fascination with the critical relationships between material objects, their discursive representations, and the inevitable effects of time, human action, and natural forces.

Time

Bound to the interwoven fabric of memory, physical location, experiential quality, and natural elements, the site-specific character of Passaic's "monuments" became an instrumental consideration in Smithson's subsequent works. In his *Yucatan Mirror Displacements* (1969), Smithson extended his explorations to relatively unmarked locations beyond the familiarity of contemporary suburbia.[13] Placing industrial mirrors in untamed jungle and beach settings and photographing them, Smithson created work with no clear claims to temporal or spatial specificity. In the essay, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan," published in *Artforum*, September 1969, Smithson

notes that if one were to visit the sites where he made his installations and photographed them, nothing but "memory-traces" would be found. In an even more tenuous spatio-temporal position than the oxidizing monuments of Passaic, the mirrors of the Yucatan would be gone and reflected light would be erased, and only "the dimension of absence [would] be found." Both the installation and the essay paradoxically mark the impossibility of representation or description of the fully rendered work. Always, Smithson meditates, "Yucatan is elsewhere."[14]

Such meditations mark a prescient understanding of the changing conceptual character of site-specific art. The architectural historian and theorist, Miwon Kwon argues that site-specific works in the 1960s and 1970s were "obstinate about 'presence,' even if they were materially ephemeral, and adamant about immobility, even in the face of disappearance or destruction."[15] Kwon goes on to identify the trend that has emerged over the past thirty years in which the physical location of a site-specific work has often paradoxically become a secondary characteristic: "site-specific work has become increasingly transformed from a physical location—grounded, fixed, actual—to a discursive vector—ungrounded, fluid, and virtual."[16] Over the years, *PBW* has demonstrated this potential of site-specific works to generate significance in local environments and across discursive frameworks. Indeed, the site-specific character of Smithson's project substantiates the importance of recognizing the shifting coordinates of geo-cultural markers of time and space.

History

Not long after the dirt began settling on the roof of the woodshed, Kent State and *PBW* began to occupy new national and global positions. The announcement of U.S. bombings in Cambodia on April 30, 1970, sparked nationwide demonstrations against U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Protests and riots in downtown Kent and on campus prompted administrators to mobilize the Ohio National Guard. On May 4, a student demonstration ended with Guardsmen opening fire and killing four students, Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer, and William Schroeder, and wounding nine others. The famous Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph by John Filo of fourteen-year-old runaway Mary Vecchio's harrowing scream over the body of Jeffrey Miller, marked a turning point in public opinion regarding Vietnam. As this haunting image became iconic worldwide, Kent State was secured a permanent position in popular consciousness.[17] While the world and Kent State were marked by this event, so too was *PBW*. Sometime that summer, an individual, who continues to remain unidentified, inscribed "MAY 4 KENT 70" in white spray paint on the lintel of the woodshed. These words—and photographs of *PBW* with this inscription—transformed *PBW* from being an exercise reflecting Smithson's interest in entropy into an exemplar of the fraught politics of the time and a memorial honoring tragedy.

With local and global attention turning to more pressing matters than a graffitied earthwork on the edge of a college campus, no other significant events marked *PBW*'s early years until 1975 when a fire, most likely arson, destroyed much of the wooden structure. Only after vigorous interventions by faculty along with the input of Smithson's widow, Nancy Holt, did a fifteen-member University Art Commission vote to save and leave standing the remaining portion of *PBW*. In an effort to prevent further abuse, *PBW* was shielded from the sight of passers-by with a barricade of fast-growing cedars. Another interpretation is that by screening *PBW* from street traffic, one more painful reminder of May 4 would be less visible, which might

further help the local community heal from acute trauma. Perhaps due to its physical screening, or perhaps due to the inevitable fading of memories, in the following years *PBW* was largely forgotten and continued to decay on its own accord. *PBW* was left to the actions of gravity, rain, and snow—photographs from the early 1980s show that the cracked center beam finally collapsed—until sometime in January or February 1984, when in circumstances that still remain unclear, a groundskeeper bulldozed the remaining wooden structure.[18]

In Process

As a project originally intended to demonstrate the relationship between man-made and natural materials, *PBW*'s character became dramatically charged after the May 4 incident and the inscription of "MAY 4 KENT 70." Relative to the period's political and cultural tumult, Nancy Holt has described *PBW* as "intrinsically political," and she has claimed that Smithson would have seen the work as "prophetic." Holt suggests: "Obviously, the students, or whoever did the graffiti—it's an example of graffiti that enhances—the students obviously recognized the parallel [*sic*]. Piling the earth until the central beam cracked, as though the whole government, the whole country were cracking. Really, we had a revolution then. It was the end of one society and the beginning of the next."[19] Supporting this recognition of *PBW* as a political work *avant la lettre*, in the September 2005 issue of *Artforum*, historian Richard Meyer criticizes theorist Rosalind Krauss's entry on '1970' in his largely positive review of the textbook, *Art Since 1900*.[20] Krauss briefly describes *PBW* as a site-specific project that acknowledged the conditions of its site, but while Meyer appreciates Krauss's situation of *PBW* in an expanded field of landscape and architecture,[21] he challenges Krauss's neglect of the broader social and political context. Meyer laments Krauss's choice not to locate her discussion of *PBW* relative to the "four student protestors shot to death by National Guardsmen at Kent State in May 1970 and the ways those deaths inevitably changed and charged the symbolic force of Smithson's half-buried ruin."[22]

Meyer's comments point to the difficult negotiations inherent in the construction of history, and specifically *PBW*'s history, relative to the complexity of contemporary intellectual, aesthetic, political and social practices. Cognizant of these complexities, and in turn *PBW*'s place within them, Renée Green's installation, *Partially Buried in Three Parts* (1996, 1997, 1998) takes Smithson's *Partially Buried Woodshed* as a point of departure for the investigation of contemporary subjectivity as a legacy of cultural discourses and partially accessible or prejudiced histories.[23] Itself a complex layering of material, memory, experience and time, *Partially Buried in Three Parts* develops outward from personal and historic subject matter. Green's mother was a graduate student at Kent State in spring 1970, and Green remembers waiting nervously for her mother's return on the day of the shootings. The installation is an accumulation of materials that reference the events of May 4, 1970, both directly and obliquely—James Michener's *Kent State: What Happened and Why* (New York: Random House, 1971); concrete fragments collected from the site, reproductions of the photographs in Michener's book; period furniture, albums, and videotape from her interviews of individuals who had been at Kent during the time of the shootings. With this accumulation and juxtaposition of materials, references, and memories, *Partially Buried in Three Parts* engenders the complex relationships inherent in the dynamics of *PBW* and in turn contributes to them by layering upon them

the specificity and the cultural relevance of her contemporary subjectivity.

Interpretations and the physical structure of *PBW* have been constantly subject to the failures, particularities, omissions, and reconstructions of history. Participants in these acts, the expected and unanticipated human and environmental actions that have altered *PBW* both as a discursive conceptual project and as a site-specific work, correspond directly with Smithson's exploration of the relationship between intellectual and sensory behaviors: "look at any word long enough and you will see it open up into a series of faults, into a terrain of particles containing its own void."[24] In a further exploration of this relationship, Smithson in *Enantiomorphic Chambers* (1965), considers the phenomena of sight as metaphor for rational knowledge. The enantiomorph, "either of a pair of crystalline chemic compounds whose molecular structures have a mirror-image relationship to each other,"[25] forms the conceptual basis of the installations, in which reflective surfaces cancel each other's representation, reducing sight to blindness.

Cite

This emphasis on the inherently fragmentary, imperfect, and incomplete character of representational methods parallels closely what Jean-François Lyotard describes as the postmodern: "that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms."[26] In a series of essays, originally published in *October*, and now collected in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, Craig Owens elaborates on the properties of the postmodern, suggesting the importance of allegory—in traditional literary criticism, the supplement to another text with the result of both a new interpretation and a perversion of the old. He describes allegory as the "single, coherent impulse" in postmodern artistic practice. In his essay "Earthwords,"[27] Owens specifically cites Smithson's practices as pursuing such an allegorical impulse, characterized by strategies of "appropriation, site specificity, impermanence, accumulation, discursivity, [and] hybridization."[28] The identification of this allegorical impulse remains useful for considering Smithson's work in its many forms. For, as Owens notes, allegory has multiple manifestations—attitude, technique, perception, and procedure—that have in common their signaling of the continuous character or interpretations within any practice as well as the dislocations inherent within any representational practice.[29] Similarly, Smithson's multiple fascinations and their multiple manifestations point to the continuous and disjunctive properties of their presence, interpretations and representations. Smithson's fascination with crystals evident in *Enantiomorphic Chambers* was due to his appreciation of them as the accumulation of minerals that literally and conceptually transcend linear definitions of time and relate to the mysteries of geological processes and the futuristic fantasies of science fiction. By extension, the fractured history of *PBW* suggests its allegorical reading as an object continuously suspended between its physical and conceptual presence, accumulating a material and discursive history as it projects itself into an unimagined future of matter and memory.

Afterword

To visit the site-specific location of *PBW* is to return to a location and to see in this location, in its dissolution, and its dispersal, the production and layering of experience and meaning. The multiple modes of experiencing *PBW*—by walking on wet earth or by reading or seeing or thinking about it—challenge any

presumptions of authority derived by any particular experience. *PBW*'s histories over time bring into sharp relief the uneasy relationships between the ephemeral character of lived experiences and the arguments of representational discourses. In November 1970, on an envelope of news and photographs of the current state of *PBW* with "MAY 4 KENT 70" emblazoned on the woodshed's lintel, Smithson wrote, "They took some wood and left some words."[30] Years later, with those words and the remaining wood both melted into the earth, *Partially Buried Woodshed*, even in its state of diminishing presence, continues to offer powerful engagement with the representational and experiential production of history.

NOTES

1 Original dimensions, 18 ft. 6 in. x 10 ft. 2 in. x 45 ft.

2 For example, see Alex Coles, "Revisiting Smithson in Ohio: Tacita Dean, Sam Durant, and Renée Green," *Parachute* 104 (Oct/Dec 2001): 128-38.

3 Demonstrating *PBW*'s significance in Smithson's oeuvre, the catalogue of the *Robert Smithson* exhibition organized for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2004, reproduced an historic image of *PBW* as its frontispiece. The *Robert Smithson* exhibition organized by Eugenie Tsai with Cornelia Butler for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 12 September-13 December 2004, then traveled to The Dallas Museum of Art, 14 Janurary-3 April 2005, and to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 23 June-16 October 2005. See Eugenie Tsai, ed., *Robert Smithson* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004). Also, a photograph of *PBW* is used for the cover of Suzaan Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

4 With Christine Havice, Director of the School of Art at Kent State University, I coordinated *Acquiring its Own History: a symposium on Smithson's Partially Buried Woodshed after 35 Years*, April 7-8, 14-15, 2005. Among other events, the symposium included panel discussion with local community members and lectures by Kentucky State University faculty and by visiting scholars Robert Hobbs, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Suzaan Boettger, Bergen Community College. In addition, I curated *Structures of Experience: an exhibition in response to Robert Smithson at Kent State University*, Kent State University School of Art Gallery, March 28-April 15, 2005.

5 Regarding local debates on this issue see Dorothy Shinn's *Robert Smithson's Partially Buried Woodshed* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University School of Art Galleries, 1990) and Carol Hummel and Barbara Moser, *Partially Remembered Woodshed* (DVD: 25 minutes, 2005), archived in Kent State University Libraries and Media Services: Robert I. Smithson, *Partially Buried Woodshed*, Papers and Photographs, 1970-2005. Regarding non-local interpretations of this "lost work," see Coles, "Revisiting Smithson in Ohio."

6 Brinsley Tyrrell, emeritus professor of sculpture, who hosted Smithson with his wife Lillian Tyrrell in 1970, recounts Smithson's desire for *PBW* to "acquire its own history" (conversation with the author, March 2005). Much of the literature regarding *PBW* remains flawed. The most accurate account is Dorothy Shinn's *Robert Smithson's Partially Buried Woodshed*. Local source material may be located in Special Collections and Archives in the Kent State University Libraries and Media Services: Robert I. Smithson, *Partially Buried Woodshed*, Papers and Photographs, 1970-2005. Also, of note is the oral history collected in Nancy Holt, Jane Crawford and Robert Fiore, *Sheds* (DVD: 22 minutes, 1970/2004), produced in conjunction with *Robert Smithson*, organized by Eugenie Tsai with Cornelia Butler for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2004.

7 Jennifer L. Roberts, "The Taste of Time: Salt and Spiral Jetty," Tsai, *Robert Smithson*.

8 Reprinted as "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey," ed. Nancy Holt. *The Writings of Robert Smithson* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 52-57.

9 Ibid., 53.

10 Eugenie Tsai, "Robert Smithson: Plotting a Line from Passaic, New Jersey, to Amarillo, Texas," in Tsai, *Robert Smithson*, 12.

11 Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey," Holt, *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, 54.

12 Ibid., 57.

13 Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan," ibid., 94-103.

14 Ibid., 103.

15 Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity," eds. Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung. *Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985* (London: Blackwell, 2005), 32-54. [originally published in *October* 80 (spring 1997): 38-63.]

16 Ibid., 39.

17 After May 4, 1970, Kent State as an institution, of course, was forever changed. Monuments to the dead and wounded remain, a bullet hole in a sculpture by Don Drumm remains visible, permanent exhibition and resource material devoted to May 4 are prominent in the main library, and every May 4, classes cease at mid-day and the student-directed May 4th Task Force holds annual campus-wide commemorations.

18 Debate continues whether the decision to bulldoze was that of an administrator or that of an individual unaware of the importance of *PBW* who was "just doing his job" to insure public safety relative to unsafe material and/or to "beautify" the landscape.

19 Nancy Holt, interview with Dorothy Shinn, Shinn, *Robert Smithson's Partially Buried Woodshed*, 5.

20 Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004).

21 The influential "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" is reprinted in many anthologies, including Rosalind Krauss. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986).

22 Richard Meyer, "October Revolution," *Artforum International* 44.1 (September 2005): 57-58, 324.

23 Brian Ellis, "Excavating the 1970s," *Art in America* (September 1997): 96-99, 122.

24 Smithson, "A Sedimentation of Mind: Earth Projects," Holt, *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, 87-88.

25 See Robert Hobbs, "The Works," *Robert Smithson: Sculpture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 59, 61.

26 Jean-François Lyotard, "What is Postmodernism?," trans. Régis Durand, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 81.

27 Originally published in *October* 10 (Fall 1979): 120-30.

28 Craig Owens, *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

29 Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism," ibid., 53.

30 Ron Horning, "In Time: Earthworks, Photodocuments, and Robert Smithson's Buried Shed," *Aperture* 106 (Spring 1987): 76.

Kiril Ass

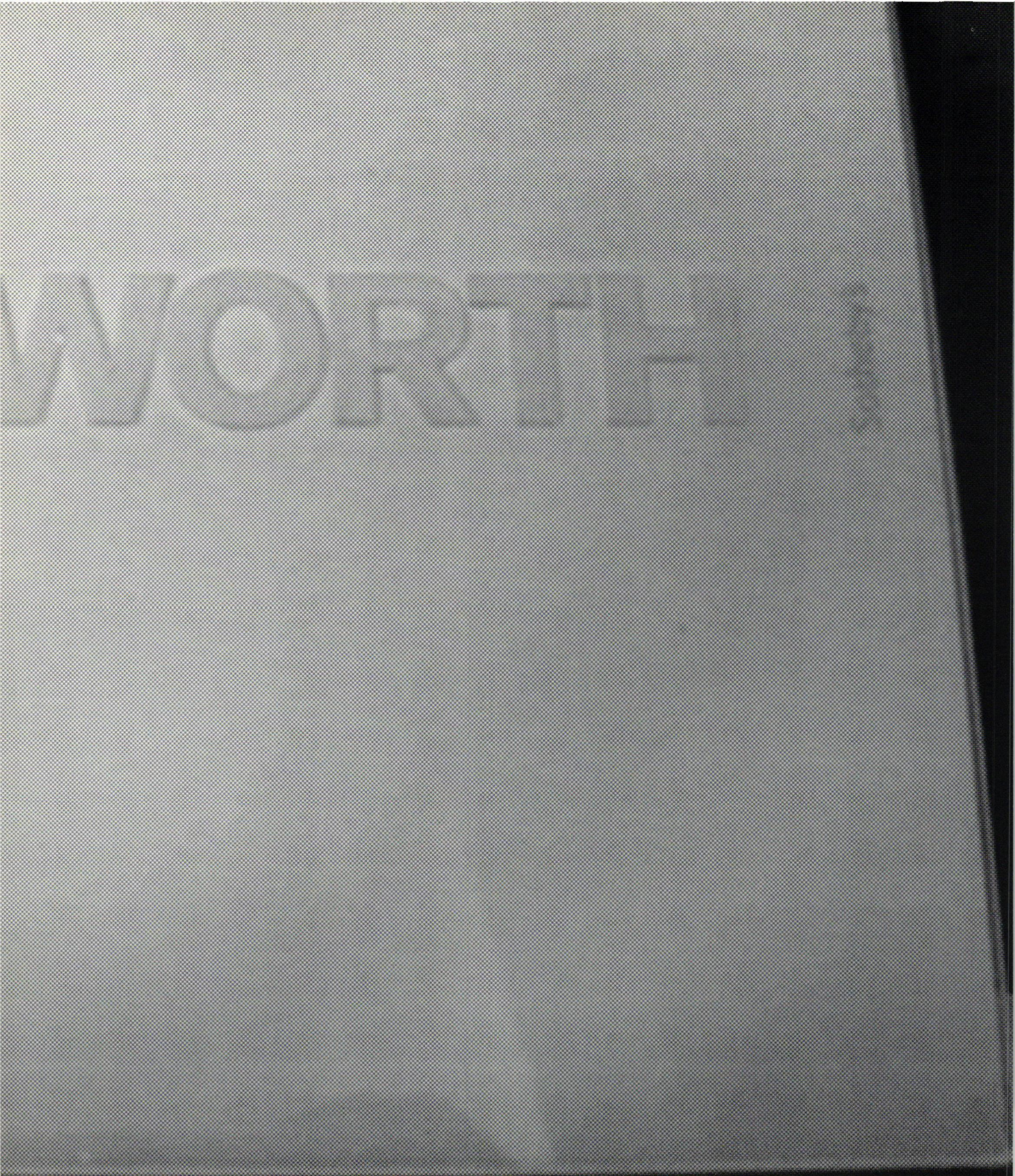
A Watch-Tower

The watch-tower was an investigation in antique building and design methods.

Firstly, it was sketched schematicaly and sent on to the builders, who were then left to their own devices, thus bringing design work to its old way of collaboration between architect and craftsman.

Secondly, it was built solely for the purpose of establishing proper levels for the floors of a forthcoming villa—allowing the architect and the client to agree upon views from the different stories.

This approach turned the design process into an exercise of understanding the site and establishing a deep connection with it. The site was experienced not only horizontally, but also vertically.



Irene Sunwoo

Taming the Farnsworth House

Upheld by architects and historians as the apotheosis of Mies van der Rohe's famous dictum "less is more," the Farnsworth House (1945-1951), located in the suburbs of Chicago, is an icon of twentieth century architecture. Epitomizing high modernist ideals of structural clarity and minimalist aesthetics, the house's iconic status has catalyzed its transformation into a highly desirable object. Fueled by his passion for modern architecture, Lord Peter Palumbo acquired the Farnsworth House in 1972, commencing an architectural collection that would come to include houses by Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier. The later appearance of Mies' *tour de force* in a Sotheby's 2003 art auction further reified this type of demand for architectural masterpieces. And, as the victorious bidders, preservationists demonstrated that such demand is at the very heart of historic preservation, itself an industry of architectural consumption.

Although the personal collection, the art market, and the preservation of architecture differ in their compositions and operations, these contexts all position the Farnsworth House within a "system of objects," or a body of objects that together galvanize cultural, psychological, and experiential effects.[1] Upon entering these "systems" the Farnsworth House no longer functions as a house—that is, as *architecture*—but instead, as a possession, and more specifically, as a collectible object performing within a personal or national collection of buildings, or within a market of collectible objects. The notion of a house as collectible object challenges conceptions of both architecture and the practice of collecting, engaging various issues, including spatiality, display, consumption, production, and function. The aim of this article however, is not to formulate a definition of the architectural collectible, but to uncover its mechanisms as a means of critical inquiry into the consequences of the ways in which value is invested in architecture, as well as the consequences of its consumption. Using the Farnsworth House as a case study, the primary subject of analysis will be its auction at Sotheby's, which situated the house within an ambiguous zone between aesthetic object and real estate. As its aesthetic and commodity values were reciprocally inflated, its functional value was increasingly de-emphasized, suggesting that the introduction of the Farnsworth House into the conflated realms of art collecting and real estate was predicated on the obfuscation of its function, and consequently, of its identity as an architectural object.

Perhaps from its very inception, the Farnsworth House straddled a fine line between art object and functional house. When Edith Farnsworth (1903-1977), an unmarried Chicago nephrologist, decided to build a weekend residence for herself in the early 1940s, she recognized the opportunity to create a structure of aesthetic merit.[2] After researching current developments in modern architectural design and seeking recommendations for suitable architects, Farnsworth hired the German émigré Mies van der

Figure 1 Mies Van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, 1946-1951.

Rohe (1886-1969). Despite her initial aspirations and enthusiasm for a cutting-edge house, Edith Farnsworth's well-known reception of the finished project proved that her faith in progressive design had subsided. From the infamous lawsuits between client and architect over construction fees, to her addition of insect screens (against Mies' wishes) as a result of the house's tendency to overheat in the summer, Farnsworth's criticisms and frustrations have become intrinsic to the history of the house, but have also exposed its flaws.[3]

Architectural enthusiasts enamored by the structural clarity of the house and its minimalist poetics have often reduced Farnsworth's occupation to a gross misunderstanding of modern aesthetics. Functional problems and aesthetic judgments aside, what scholars and critics have deemed a "temple" or a "jewel" was for Edith Farnsworth a house, if only for the simple fact that this is how she used it. For Edith Farnsworth, the architectural commission was defined by needs that preceded any formal conception of the project. Her desire for an avant-garde work of architecture was, therefore, secondary to her desire for a weekend retreat. Her ownership of the house was always defined by its use—or misuse—and it was through its mis/use that it was incapable of claiming simultaneous success as both an effectively functional dwelling and an object of aesthetic perfection. But how could this failure be reconciled?

In 1972, after nearly twenty years as proprietor, Edith Farnsworth sold her weekend house (fig. 1) to Lord Peter Palumbo, a wealthy real estate developer and

vocal enthusiast of modern architecture.[4] As testimony to his passion, in 1986 Palumbo purchased Frank Lloyd Wright's Kentuck Knob (1954), Pennsylvania, and in 1988, Le Corbusier's Maisons Jaoul (1951-1955), Neuilly-sur-Seine. These houses, together with the Farnsworth House, formed a transcontinental collection of architectural masterpieces designed by the forefathers of twentieth century modern architecture, replete with interiors that Palumbo preserved according to the architects' original designs.[5] While Palumbo's collection was undoubtedly impressive in terms of content and scope, comprised of objects acquired directly from the original clients, its dissolution was necessary due to his failing health and the physical demands of maintaining the three residences. Opting to retain Kentuck Knob, Palumbo relinquished ownership of the Maisons Jaoul, for which he found a buyer in 2000, and of the Farnsworth House, whose fate proved much more complicated. After failed attempts to sell the house to the state of Illinois in 2001 and subsequently through the real estate market, Palumbo decided to offer the house at auction through a joint effort between Sotheby's International Realty and Sotheby's Auction House.[6] On December 12, 2003, Sotheby's *Important 20th Century Design* auction was immediately followed by the auction of Mies' Farnsworth House at the company's New York premises.[7]

Because the sale of the house was technically a real estate transaction, Sotheby's was obliged to offer it in a sale autonomous from the *Important 20th Century Design* auction, but treated the Farnsworth House as an adjunct lot to the latter. This was due in part to the fact that a real estate sale requires a set of legal procedures distinct from those of a sale of art or design objects. A prospective bidder on a Josef Hoffmann chair, for example, could register with Sotheby's as a bidder on the day of the sale, and if successful, issue payment within seven days.[8] In comparison, participation as a bidder in the auction of the Farnsworth House demanded a substantial amount of legal paperwork and financial commitment both prior and subsequent to the sale, in order to legally protect both Sotheby's and Palumbo. Auction participants were required to purchase a $250 Bidder's Package, which included "property descriptions, disclosures and required legal documents, terms and conditions of sale, buyer registration form, purchase and sale agreement, maps and surveys, insurance policies and title insurance." Registration for bidding entailed the submission of a completed Contract of Sale, proof of sufficient funds to purchase the house, a $250,000 Bid Deposit paid to Sotheby's, and an agreement to pay an additional deposit of $250,000 (known as a Hammer Deposit) immediately after the sale. Sotheby's would return Bid Deposits in full to unsuccessful bidders, and as stipulated in the "Conditions of Sale for The Farnsworth House," the winning bidder's deposit would be transferred to the Chicago Title Insurance Company and credited towards the final purchase of the house. The "Conditions of Sale of The Farnsworth House" further specified that the successful bidder would be required to incur any additional charges resulting from the sale, which might arise in the form of brokerage or consultancy fees. Potential buyers were advised multiple times to investigate the physical condition of the house, for Sotheby's would not be liable for the house following purchase. If the winning bidder, however, failed to fulfill the terms of these conditions or the contracts corresponding to Sotheby's sale, Palumbo would receive the initial deposit of $250,000 along with the Bid Deposit of $250,000.[9] Although relegated to fine print, these technicalities obstinately sustained the Farnsworth House's identity as a piece of real estate.

The complex legal aspects of real estate sales inhibit auction houses, such as Sotheby's or Christie's, from administering the sale of buildings within the context of art auctions more often. Exceptions are made, however, for certain works that auction houses deem as both historically significant and expected to elicit considerable response from bidders. Aside from the recent sale of the Farnsworth House, perhaps the only other previous appearance of architecture in the art market was Christie's 2000 sale of Philip Johnson's Rockefeller Guest House (1949), New York,

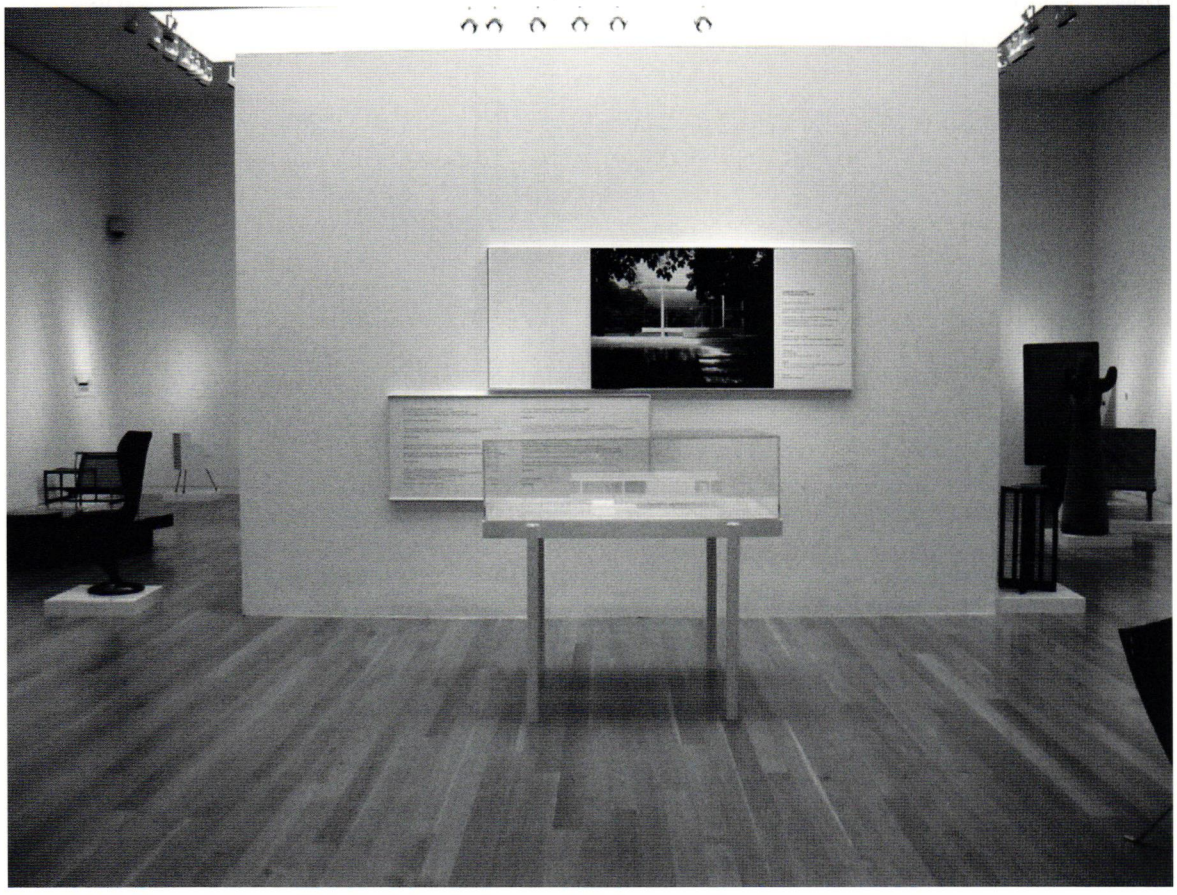


Figure 2 Lot #800, Farnsworth House model and exhibit, *Important 20th Century Design* Sale. Sotheby's, New York, 2003.

commissioned by Blanchette Rockefeller.[10] Like the Farnsworth House, the sale of Johnson's Guest House was technically a real estate transaction, and thus required its own individual sale. However, it was appended to Christie's *Masterworks: 1900-2000* auction, which was administered by the company's 20th Century Decorative Arts Department. Christie's launched an extensive marketing campaign to promote the sale of the Rockefeller Guest House. The sale garnered interest from many clients, and the house was sold for $11.1 million. With an initial estimate of $3.5-$5 million, the sale was considered a success, and as a result, served as a blueprint for Sotheby's auction of the Farnsworth House in 2003.[11]

Indeed, there was perhaps a need for a model. Architecture's incompatibility within the art market is evident not only in its inextricable legal conditions, but also in its incongruity with the departmental divisions of auction houses. Some departments offer typological specialization, for example, 'Jewelry' or 'Wines,' while others further specialize by historical, geographical, or stylistic parameters, such as 'Old Master Paintings,' 'Oriental Carpets' or 'Pre-Colombian Art.' Departments that deal specifically and solely with architecture and its various manifestations however, do not exist. Yet, despite the lack of architectural departments within auction houses, architectural objects such as door handles, windows, and wall

panels, are not excluded from the art market, but are frequently grouped within the domain of the decorative arts.

Despite this ambiguous conflation of architecture and the decorative arts, the sale of the Farnsworth House at Sotheby's illustrated the discrepancies of scale, medium, and exhibition techniques between the two disciplines. The alignment of the house with other sale lots of *Important 20th Century Design*, which ranged from honey pots to chairs to lamps, denoted Sotheby's conception of it as a saleable art object. As such, Mies' open plan composition was distilled to a set of qualities that was similarly extracted from other lots in the auction, conforming the spatially complex architectural work to fit within a typology of objects of a significantly smaller scale. Sotheby's catalogue for the *Important 20th Century Design* sale defines the Farnsworth House in the following manner:

Materials/Medium:

white-painted steel, glass, travertine, plaster ceiling, precast concrete planks, primavera wood. Comprising living, sleeping, dining and kitchen areas; free-standing service core that includes two bathrooms, the mechanical room, a fireplace, and built-in cabinets; furnishings designed by Mies van der Rohe and Dirk Lohan. On 58+ acres. Landscaping by Lanning Roper and comprising a variety of tree and wildflower species indigenous to the area. Grounds also comprising a visitor's center, pool, tennis courts, and boat house

Provenance:

Edith Farnsworth
Acquired directly by the current owner, 1972

Awards:

Winner of the Twenty-Five Year Award given by the American Institute of Architects Jury for Extended Use, 1981

Exhibited:

The original model of the Farnsworth House was exhibited in *The Architecture of Mies van der Rohe: Models, Montages, Collages, Original Drawings*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1947

Estimate:

$4,500,000-6,000,000[12]

Stripped down to its material properties and its abridged history, the house, once denigrated as a "glass cage on stilts" in the American postwar press, and many times lauded as a "temple" by historians, became a relatively unassuming Lot #800 at auction, a disembodied set of qualities, spaces, and objects that paradoxically obscured and eviscerated the object that they sought to describe and represent as a unity.

The sale of the Farnsworth House created not only a peculiar situation in terms of its cataloguing, but also within the actual space of Sotheby's New York premises, for as a building it was both figuratively and literally out of place. In the days preceding the *Important 20th Century Design* sale, the offered lots were exhibited in Sotheby's galleries as per customary practice. The exhibition displayed Lalique glassware, Wiener Werkstätte furniture, Christopher Dresser tableware, Isamu Noguchi furniture, and many other objects. These items were all present at the exhibition and available for inspection by prospective bidders. However, for the Farnsworth House, being both firmly bound to its site in Plano, Illinois, and itself of a scale large enough to accommodate many of its fellow sale objects, participation in this exhibition was physically impossible. To assert the house's presence in the galleries, Sotheby's commissioned a plexi-glass architectural model, which stood on a custom made pedestal, replete with legs in the form of I-beams to evoke Mies' architectural vocabulary. The model was displayed along with a photograph of the house in the exhibition and during the actual sale (fig. 2).[13] Further asserting the significance of the house, despite its absence, the thirty-three-page entry for the house in the *Important 20th Century Design* catalogue was also reproduced by Sotheby's in a limited edition catalogue devoted solely to the Farnsworth House (fig. 3). While it is not uncommon for auction houses to issue special, independent catalogues for unique lots, the Farnsworth catalogue was unusual in that it was strategically designed by Sotheby's marketing department as an object in its own right, with its own aesthetic qualities intended to mirror those of its subject. The catalogue's orientation was meant to echo the horizontality of

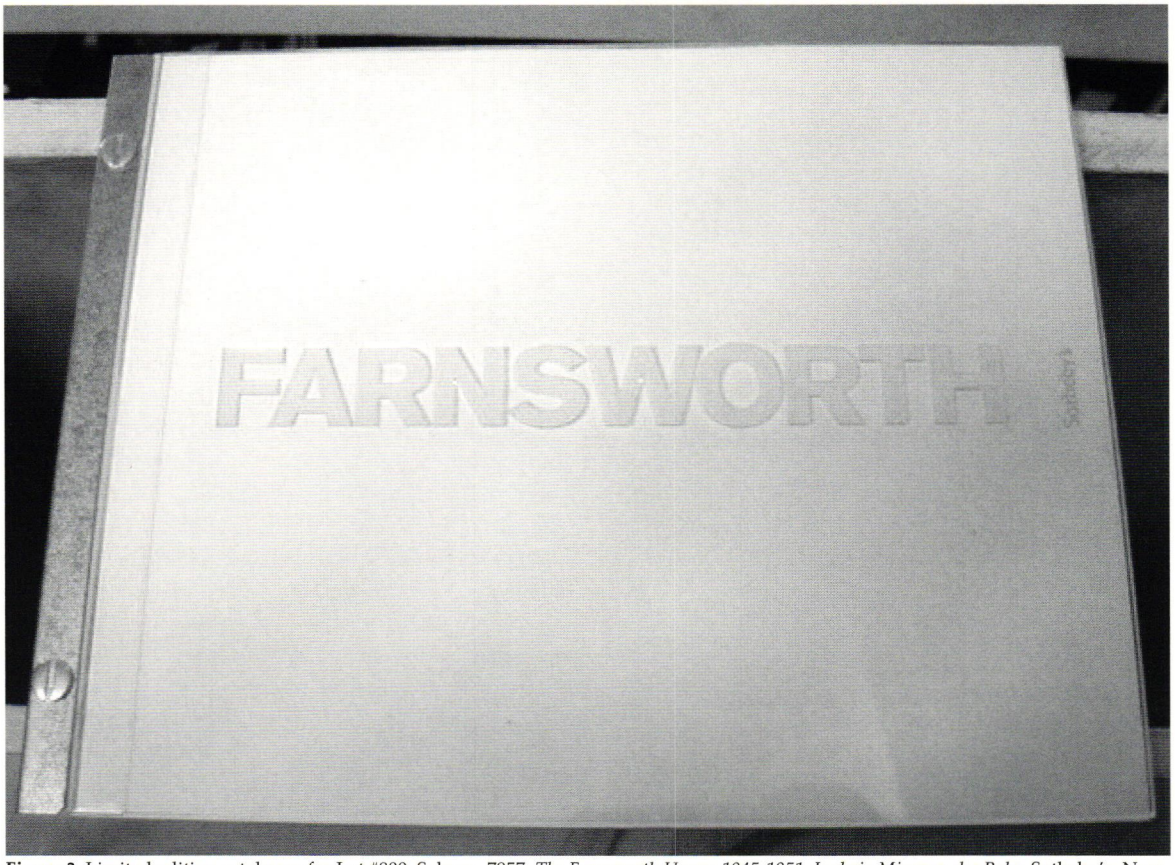


Figure 3 Limited edition catalogue for Lot #800, Sale no. 7957, *The Farnsworth House: 1945-1951, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe*, Sotheby's, New York, 2003.

Mies' structure, and its plexi-glass cover and metal binding to evoke the architect's choice of materials.[14] Arguably an art object in and of itself—a rarity, crafted, designed, and with a price tag of $150—the catalogue, like the model, functioned as a simulation of the house in an environment in which the house itself could not physically participate.

Sotheby's auction of Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House distinguished the house as more than just a piece of real estate by explicitly aligning it with the art objects offered at auction, and by conforming the house to the conventions of an art auction. But we must ask what is achieved by identifying a house, a place to inhabit, as a work of art? Does this identity crisis between art object and real estate perhaps reflect a division in cultural perceptions of architecture, revealing architecture's capacity to function as two different types of commodities? Does it suggest that there can be such a duality of perceptions towards a single work, or that a single work can simultaneously take on two different roles?

Let us further investigate the auction as a market for architecture by considering its participants and how, for Sotheby's, the potential owners could transform the house. Sotheby's did not have an existing roster of clients interested specifically in complete architectural works. Specialists in the auction house's 20th Century Design Department therefore compiled a list of

potential buyers, but rather than drawing from a list of regular 20th Century Design clients, specialists drew from that of Sotheby's Contemporary Art clients. Acutely aware of the house's historical significance, the difficulties of its inhabitation, and the extensive care that it required, the specialists exclusively sought buyers who would recognize these properties and treat the house appropriately, and share an implicit understanding that its functional aspects could be a potential threat to its value as a work of architecture. The auction house pursued clients whom they believed would appreciate the Farnsworth House the way they would a work of art, and therefore, for whom its function as a place of dwelling was not of primary concern, and equally who would not actually live in it. Ultimately, Sotheby's was determined to find a buyer who was capable of caring for an architectural masterpiece, and the auction house therefore recognized the selective solicitation of bidders, the presentation of the Farnsworth House as a collectible art object, and the attendant diminishment of its function, as ways to guarantee its preservation.[15]

In the context of the art market, the disparity between the Farnsworth House's availability as a piece of property and its aesthetic, historical, and cultural significance relegated its practical function as a dwelling. This is particularly evident in the exhaustive catalogue entry for the house. The description for Lot #800 abstracts the functional aspects of the house, such as spaces for sleeping or eating, portraying them as part of its material composition. Complementing this description are numerous construction photographs, an essay, an interview with Palumbo, and quotes about the house from various members of the architectural community, from Zaha Hadid to Werner Blaser to Philip Johnson. This inflation of the house as a product of labor, an artifact of cultural and historical value, and an object esteemed by architects, eclipsed its status as a dwelling, projecting an alternate identity as a prize commodity whose value is finally articulated by the price tag that rather crudely concludes its catalogue entry.

But to what does this price tag correspond? Where does the value actually reside? What is actually on sale? Simply a house? Or something more? Or even, perhaps, something less? Let us return to the actual description of the Farnsworth House in the catalogue. Did potential buyers truly yearn for the glass, steel, and travertine? Were they interested in something aside from the tennis courts and indigenous vegetation included with Lot #800? The catalogue entry's composition indicates that Sotheby's is clearly aware that form and function are not enough to attract clients. The house has prestige. It is well respected. It has history. It *is* history.

The perception of the house as a historical artifact motivated its ultimate joint purchase by the Friends of the Farnsworth House, the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, and the National Trust, with a winning bid of $6.7 million.[16] Under the authority and ownership of its new set of proprietors, the Farnsworth House presently functions as a historic house museum within a national collection of buildings, ranging in scope from Abraham Lincoln's former residence to an eighteenth century synagogue to Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House. Together, these works comprise a spectrum of buildings that serve to illustrate a national architectural legacy. Yet, what also encouraged preservationists to obtain the Farnsworth House at auction was fear that an independent art collector might purchase the house, dismantle it, and reconstruct it on another site, extricating it from its original site and the cultural community of Illinois. Mistrustful of Sotheby's identification of the suitable qualities of the art collector as architectural consumer, preservationists recognized the vulnerability of the house at auction—a situation in which stewardship would be solely determined by the highest bid. They thus acted in strong recognition of the fact that the ownership, the acquisition, *the very consumption* of architecture had the potential to activate a drastic transformation of the Farnsworth House. Ownership was something that transcended the price tag on the house, but at the same time, it was only through the price tag that ownership could be claimed. At the auction, preservationists were

certainly complicit in this dual process of consumption and transformation, for historic preservation thrives on a market for architecture, consuming architectural objects and transforming them into cultural artifacts, and moreover, perpetuating a desire for those objects that give cultural history dimension. Perhaps as a result of such an architectural market, the distinction between the old and the new is increasingly blurred: while clients today may build their own new *Gehry*'s, a different type of client, inspired by the auction of the Farnsworth House, recently attempted to sell an old *Gehry* at Sotheby's.[17] The concept of historical value becomes distorted as it is invested in an architectural object immediately after its realization, or even before its conception.

What this discussion of the Farnsworth House's transformation has attempted to illustrate is the many ways in which architecture is desired and consequently, the many ways in which it is consumed. In the treatment of the Farnsworth House as a collectible object, Palumbo, Sotheby's, and preservationists manipulated its status as an inhabitable house in order to assert their own convictions about the value of architecture. In the context of Palumbo's collection of modern houses, the Farnsworth House participated in the creation of a private architectural dream world of dynamic proportion. In the arena of the art market, Sotheby's commodified the Farnsworth House, marketing it to art collectors as an art object. Viewing the house's commercial availability as a threat to its authenticity and to cultural heritage, preservationists crusaded to acquire the house for a national collection of historic sites. The historic preservation of Mies' glass and steel "poem" initiated its inaction[18] as a museum, preventing any deviant identities from surfacing in the future, and suppressing both its capacity to be possessed and the ephemerality of its function.

The Farnsworth House has seamlessly transformed from weekend house, to personal collectible of modern architecture, to art commodity, to its present duality as public museum and historical artifact. Yet, throughout these changes the house has retained minimal vestiges of its mutations. Ironically, its most conspicuous signs of aging appeared in its youth during the occupation of Edith Farnsworth. However, the dwelling marked by Edith Farnsworth's inhabitation is something quite different from the historic house museum, a building pristine and public only through its *un*-inhabitation. Its subsequent guardians—Palumbo, Sotheby's as its seller, and preservationists—have all sought to maintain an illusion of the house's eternal youth, presenting it as an original and eternal totality. It is as if the Farnsworth House has aged in reverse through a repudiation of growth, development, and activity. It is as if the continuous consumption of the house has made it more authentic than it ever was before—as if only by its constant commodified reinvention could it ever truly be itself.

This paper was presented at the conference *Aesthetics and Consumer Culture* at the Cleveland Institute of Art, 5-6 November 2004, and I am grateful for the invitation to discuss my research. I would also like to thank Mark Cousins and Diana Periton, both from the Architectural Association, London, who provided guidance during the completion of my research project, of which this article represents a portion. Finally, Victoria Rodriguez-Thiessen, Assistant Vice President, Sotheby's 20th Century Design Department, was an extremely valuable source, and I would like to thank her for her assistance.

NOTES

1 See Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (New York: Verso, 1996; Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1968, as *Le système des objets*).

2 "[I]t would be unbearably stupid," she wrote in her memoirs, "to 'put up' some contractor's cottage which could only ruin the site." From Farnsworth's unpublished memoirs, quoted in Alice T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House: a Social and Architectural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 133.

3 For further details of the history, design and construction of the Farnsworth House, see Friedman, 126-58.

4 Negotiations began in 1968, but the transaction was not finalized until 1972.

5 See Paula Dietz, "The Keeper of 3 Architectural Icons, Collecting Houses by Le Corbusier, Mies and Wright," *New York Times* (December 12, 1989). In the case of Kentuck Knob, also known as the Hagan House, Palumbo went so far as to retain the original client's housekeeper.

6 The coalescence and mechanics of this collaboration have formed nebulous patches in my research. Because this information is largely confidential, or on the cusp of confidentiality, both Sotheby's International Realty and Auction House have been unable to disclose the details of this venture.

7 The *Important 20th Century Design* was Sotheby's Sale no. 7947, and the Farnsworth House was Lot #800 in a separate sale, no. 7957.

8 Victoria Rodriguez-Thiessen (Assistant Vice President, Sotheby's 20th Century Decorative Arts Department), interview by author, June 22, 2004.

9 Sale catalogue for *Important 20th Century Design* (Sale no. 7947) (New York: Sotheby's, December 12, 2003), 254. The regulations regarding failure to procure payment on non-real estate objects differed slightly. See specifically "Conditions of Sale," *Important 20th Century Design*, 262-3.

10 In 1949, Blanchette Rockefeller hired Johnson to design a townhouse on East 52nd Street in which she could entertain, host guests, and display her art collection. After multiple changes in owners and uses, the residence was sold at Sotheby's in 1989 for $3.5 million to the art dealer Anthony d'Offay. After eight years as its owner, Blanchette Rockefeller donated the townhouse to the Museum of Modern Art. The museum used the space as a guest house and then sold it to a private owner in 1964. During the 1970s, Philip Johnson rented and inhabited the house until it was sold again to a private owner, who later offered it at auction in the sale *Important 20th Century Furniture, A Philip Johnson Townhouse* at Sotheby's on May 6, 1989. See "The Rockefeller Guest House," *Masterworks: 1900-2000* (New York: Christie's, June 8, 2000), 265-79.

11 Rodriguez-Thiessen, interview by author, September 1, 2004. Ms. Rodriguez-Thiessen was also employed by Christie's 20th Century Decorative Arts & Design Department at the time of the sale of Johnson's Rockefeller Guest House.

12 Catalogue entry from *The Farnsworth House: 1945-1951, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe* (Sale no. 7957), appended to *Important 20th Century Design*, 248. After he purchased the house, Palumbo added the visitor's center, pool, tennis courts, and boat house to the property.

13 Sotheby's gave the model to Palumbo as a gift after the sale.

14 Rodriguez-Thiessen, interview, June 22, 2004.

15 A similar conviction had been expressed when specialists at the auction house Phillips de Pury & Luxembourg attempted to obtain Richard Neutra's Maslon House in Rancho Mirage, California for an auction of twentieth century design objects. Phillips was not able to obtain the house, and consequently, the house was sold through an estate agent, and was subsequently demolished in 2002. Both Victoria Rodriguez-Thiessen and James Zemaitis, current Director of Sotheby's 20th Century Design Department, were employed by Phillips at the time, and were actively involved in attempting to secure the Neutra house for auction. Rodriguez-Thiessen, interview, September 1, 2004.

16 Including Sotheby's commission, the final purchase cost $7,511,500. Immediately following the auction, an easement was affixed on the house, which prohibited any structural alterations and prevented its relocation to another site.

17 In the past few years, auction houses have been approached by an increasing number of clients who wish to sell houses or buildings designed by important architects, including Frank Gehry, in art auctions. However, because of the legal complexity of such transactions, auctions houses usually decline participation in such ventures. Rodriguez-Thiessen, interview, September 1, 2004.

18 See Emilie Gomart, "The Invention of Preservation, Two Opposites: Intervention vs. Neglect," Rem Koolhaas, *Content* (Cologne: Taschen, 2004), 458-9.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Bert de Muynck

Ephemera and Experience

Sunday, September 11, 2005

I am overlooking the Kremlin from the tenth floor of Hotel Rossiya. Below me runners are warming up for the marathon, I decide to order a coffee. A gunshot sets the marathon in motion. The masses split. Two groups start running in different directions, one under the bridge heading north, following the wall of the Kremlin, the other one on top of the bridge, heading west in the direction of Ul. Bolshaya Ordynka.

In a couple of hours, a conference *Capturing the Moving Mind: Management and Movement in the Era of Permanently Temporary War* (organized by a group surrounding the online journal *Ephemera*) is taking off. The next ten days I will be on the Trans-Siberian train, from Moscow to Beijing (with a one day stop in Novosibirisk to attend a seminar at the Novosibirsk State University), accompanied by an international group off activists, artists, researchers, musicians, academics and mobile communications experts. I will be talking about architecture, power, ideology and representation. Case study: the relation between Moscow and Beijing. Instances in which the representation of political ideology during the twentieth century (Moscow from 1918, Beijing from 1948) left a clear trace on the city. Their urban history, proposals, structures and theories embody the rigid influence of a volatile ideology.

In my mind this is all about ephemera; ephemera and infrastructure (the Trans-Siberian train), ephemera and representation (the issue of capital city) and ephemera and experience (a conference on the Trans-Siberian train). In front of me the blurb of the conference is spread out over the table, my eyes get stuck on the following:

> ...the difference between organizers and participants is already unclear and seems to change from event to event.... We are doing this in the era that underlies not the importance of moving bodies (it tries to digitalize human body) but the importance of moving ideas, in the era that aims at destroying the limits that the physical space sets to the production of wealth.... The idea is to provide a context of autonomous self-organization on the train. This is how we intend to allow you to self-organize movement. There will be structured talks and presentations too, but we would like you to start thinking in collective terms, not to think the journey as a means to present past work, already thought thoughts, already made move and said words, but as a way to create something new, a larger and collective project, collective mind in movement, a memory.[1]

Tomorrow the train leaves and in a couple of months Hotel Rossiya will disappear.[2]

Tuesday, September 13, 2005

After one day, I realize that this moving event is something more than a conference. This railway, the rhythm of the train, the changing landscapes, the

interactions with strangers and participants are all imposed contingencies that demand constant interrogation and shifts in perspective. At the same time, the train functions as a kind of protective shell removing the participants (their discussions and creations) from the world that flits by outside. We drive through Russia and have stopped at Yaroslavl, Perm and Ekaterinburg, each time for half an hour, time enough to buy food, Baltika and Black Russian and hang out on the platform.

The rhythm of the train is being supported by the incessant clang of metal on metal. I walk to the end of the train, stare through the window (the one which has the full bilateral view) and feel Russia sliding past my

eyes, disappearing behind the horizon. I suffer from green tunnel syndrome.

What is Russia like? I could not say; even when this knife cuts through it; even when I slice it like this. I understand that modernization is not happening if one doesn't participate in it. That is to say, if we position ourselves outside of it. The train is one such instance, alternating the experience of the double exposure with the traveling shot.[3]

> In this great battle for concessions in East Asia and Pacific, the Russian capitalists had no intention of being hedged aside. They therefore commenced the building of the Trans-Siberian railway in 1891 with money advanced by French capitalists, and looked covetously towards China's north Manchurian province. In 1896, the Russo-Asiatic Bank, again a Muscovite corporation operating with French capital, obtained a concession from the Peking Government to build a railway right across Manchuria, linking up with the Trans-Siberian line with the terminus at Vladivostok. "The railway was first and foremost a strategic railway, to advance Russian imperialist interests in the Far East."[4]

After a few days, one is familiar with the space, finds a rhythm in the art of slamming doors between wagons, enjoys this Russian railway variant of the *Barynya*,[5] bounces and discusses wherever there is time, space, place, food and company.

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Laying on a hotel bed, in the outskirts of Novosibirsk. During the first two days I was almost unable to write due to two problems; a trembling train and low computer battery. Our wagon had only one plug. We lived with twenty people in one wagon, two a cabin. It demanded some serious "self-organization" to decide who needs a charge more than others.

Thursday, September 15, 2005

Back on the tracks. This writing is about playing jazz above the keyboard, wrist-twisting and mind-moving. Space becomes precious in this environment and writing is the only way to find it. I write along with what the train commands me to do: capturing the bends and radial forces, experiencing China at the end of the corridor. We drive through Siberia, cold wind blows through the windows, right into the cabin, over my fingers, into the keyboard, straight into my spine. It is 2:47 AM Novosibirsk time, 11:47 PM Moscow time.

Is there anything worse than being trapped in speed, in progress and in a moving forward condition?

When entering the train after our Novosibirsk stop, the walk through the corridors felt like coming home. Something changed; people have swapped cabins, new combinations have been formed and new relations

established. I believe this is the new train order, the new spontaneous community that sticks and collides together trying to define proximity and distance.

I am thinking about the impossibility of disconnecting the moment from the passage, making ephemerality the sole state of reflection, of understanding reality, dynamically fuelling the idea of self-organization, of keeping track of the speed with which one is traveling. Today the ephemeral shows its real face; it can be solely instant, continuously and uninterruptedly creative when it moves without a cause. The ephemeral has a truly revolutionary power for reshaping our world, but only if we are able to understand it as a transition between the experience of the moment and that of passage.

Friday, September 16, 2005

Friday morning, or is it Friday noon? Just a short walk through the corridors is enough to experience the confusion about the time zone we are living. Are we in Moscow-time or Novo-time? Nobody really knows and the structure to put everybody into the same schedule is lacking. It is 1:19 PM Novo-time, 10:19 AM Moscow-time. Some participants just woke up, others are already cruising the cabins since the early morning. Seems like roaming the different rhythms become part of this journey. All effects of the traveler's insomnia, a *no sleep 'til Beijing* attitude.

The landscape is hillier than yesterday, slow slopes fill the horizon and small bushes emerge at the horizon. We are driving through half-open planes, now and then we hit a village, and see the emergence and disappearance of pipes that are hitherto stacked in the landscape. We are passing through large cities (Malinogorka? Krasnoyarsk? Zima?), the foreground is filled with these wooden improvisatory houses (the generic version) the background is rationalized and industrialized.

The last days have been filled with associative and forced stories. There have been artists running through them, politicians becoming protagonists, and the masses were their setting. There is this freedom to openly speak about them. They are not surrounding us, they don't pressure us and the media is absent, which leads paradoxically to a condition in which we can openly speak about them. All that has been said is an ephemeral mash-up of memory, knowledge, myth, fantasy and pure lies. Sounds like reality to me.

Saturday, September 17, 2005

Peter Petralia[6] enters the space between two wagons. It is 5:30 AM. He tells me that people should be waiting for him on the platform of the next train station. As we

come closer to the stop, Peter thinks nobody will show up to meet him that early in the morning. We enter Irkutsk. The door of the wagon opens and the next ten minutes are of a different speed; ten people, one camera crew and an art installation are celebrating Peter's entry. Peter gets interviewed for the local television (what is local around here, the area between the Ural Mountains and the Mongolian border?) awhile a girl plays with fire. We leave. Next stop is Lake Baikal. The horizon alters by the different shades of morning blue, this must be Saturday, and I feed myself with an exciting joy for the day that will bring us to Mongolia. Even now, looking outside, seeing kids playing in the fields, some cars, a bunch of goats, electricity poles and

clouds, I feel sadness, a depressing astonishment, a heart-braking amazement about what surrounds me.

The culture of our little community on the tundra is defined by the loose ideas that are born out of a slow territorial zapping (the terrifying beauty of this unstable condition transforms moving into thinking, ephemera into eternity).

The whole trip reminds me, in long-stretched version, of a fragment of a Russian movie I saw a couple of years ago. Imagine—a balloon takes off, swirls around a church, and floats high above a river. On ground level a group of peasants stare mesmerized into the camera. In my memory this must be the Russia of the

twenties and thirties. If I look around, I do not think we are in the middle of the first decennium of the twentieth-first century. Maybe I have a completely false image of what this century looks like.

There is a sign that says 4329 km, our distance from Moscow. The Trans-Siberian railroad was built 600 kilometers a year, built by 60,000 to 80,000 workers a year (amongst them 9,000 prisoners and 4,500 deported people). Moscow holds its grip on these vast territories, making the people conscious that there is only one capital. There are people on this train that make up stories how they think it might be so wonderful to just be able to jump out of the train, check the bushes, check what is behind the horizons, roam in the dark deepness of the forest, or maybe even in the kitchen of the rural people. And then just jump back on the train. It could be so easy to just see a metaphor for our civilization at large, a simple transformation of the condition in which we find ourselves.

When I look outside I see rivers running through swamplands and the bric-a-brac villages in between them; at my left, I feel the corridor and beyond that the openness of bushes, small grass, occasional animals and randomly positioned hills. This looks like the ideal setting for a golf court. At the horizon a smoking obelisk becomes visible, announcing a clustering of civilization around it. As we move, the power plant changes direction, moves from one side of the train to the other, hides behind hills, gives us a glimpse in the curves and suddenly just seems to sit there, in order to shrink immediately again. The only way of seeing it is by moving one's head, a short negation, a redirecting of the fixation to free a small memory that sticks itself to one's brain. Nature and mankind have another attitude when it comes to memory, especially by this particular way of traveling, it becomes a zone to move through, a matrix of a natural irregularity that can't be captured by the mind.

Sunday, September 18, 2005

7:00 AM. My alarm goes off, first thing I think is that I am not going to miss the stop at Ulan Bator, capital of the great Mongolian Empire, held tightly between Russia and China. Probably the most mythical stop of this trip. Even if just for half an hour. People do a lot in half an hour; some people do nothing in half an hour. For Ulan Bator, half an hour is nothing.

What about the irreversibility of traveling? Which is not comparable with any other kind of irreversible actions, like writing, thinking, talking or sketching. All these can be turned back, rearranged, discussed, debated and changed and through these actions we control them, let them free and position them as well as to ourselves as to the persons we encounter.

The life of a traveler is per se a lonely one, ending up in a total collapse of thoughts and actions. It kicks the reference out of every situation.

This is our only day in Mongolia, soon to arrive, this evening in China, tomorrow noon in Beijing.

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

Beijing. I am sitting in a hotel room, outside the sound of cars, the sky is cloudy (as it has been here like this the last 24 hours) and the movement has stopped.

It has been a week without media, without the stalking of the world event, without television, internet, without all the streams that keep my mind busy. The absence—deliberate, forced, imposed, self-made or not—has created a sphere in which they aren't that necessary to understand what the world is about. One could say we created a parallel world, driven by different projects, ambitions and encounters, but I do not see it like that. It has created the world.

> It is tempting, following the formulation of a participant, to characterize the event in temporal-historical terms: a bunch of people from the twentieth century, hurtling past nineteenth century villages on their way (like the business leaders of our times) to find the twenty-first century in Beijing. But a mere stroll around Beijing, let alone Moscow, reveals the limits of this elegant summation.
>
> In these former second world cities, the first world implodes upon the third. All the global divisions can be found in a single locale. As the local participants in both Moscow (Michael Chernyl) and Beijing (Zhiyuan Cui and Wang Hui) insisted, the concept of capitalism is too wide to explain what is happening in these urban laboratories. If, as Deng Xiaoping once said, 'we do not know what socialism is,' perhaps today we need to add, 'we also do not know what capitalism is.'[7]

Woke up in the middle of the night and felt I was trapped inside a train. Some experiences leave the body only after a couple of days.

I sit in the future, where construction and slums perform the dance of progress. After a couple of days residing in a closed wagon and cabin with some forty people, the warm wind of Beijing is blowing gently through my mind.

NOTES

1 "Capturing the Moving Mind: An Introduction." *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization* (September 2005) <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/conference/Intro.pdf>.

2 The Rossiya Hotel closed its doors on Dec. 31 2005, despite an earlier announcement that it would stay open until July 2006. Today workers are moving in to tear down the 1960s hotel, under the pretext that the Hotel was an eyesore in the Red Square neighborhood.

3 Afterwards I realized that this instance is caused by the simultaneous combination of the effect of 'double exposure' and the 'traveling shot' as Paul Virilio reflects on both of them in *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*: "Double exposure was a technique of the silent movies that saw itself somewhat as the translation into images of the theatrical aside. Destined to reveal their thoughts and feelings, it makes the face of the stars seen in fixed close-up even more inhuman, literally pierced by battle-landscapes, sea, sky, roads, unchained elements… but finally this process reproduces the visual sensation you feel at day's end, when, during a trip, you look at your own reflection or that of another in the train or automobile window, traversed by the tumult of a landscape fleeing like an arrow. Double exposure will significantly be replaced by the "traveling shot," realized from a moving automobile." Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (Paris: Semiotext(e), 1991) 57-58.

4 Georges Padmore, *How Russia Transformed Her Colonial Empire* (London: Dennis Dobson Limited, 1946), 9-10.

5 The *Barynya* is a Russian folk-dance, legendary for its combination of *chastushkas* (Russian poetry) with frenetic dancing, fancy stomping and squatwork.

6 Peter S. Petralia is a writer, director and performance maker based in Brooklyn, NY. He is the artistic director of Proto-type Theater Inc. [www.proto-type.org] for which he has created several critically acclaimed performance works. He is currently working on a multi-year research into invisibility and disappearance (invisiblemessages.blogspot.com).

7 An observation by *Capturing the Moving Mind*-participant Brett Neilson ["A Window on the World," *Il Manifesto* (October 2, 2005)]

Monika Codourey Wisniewska

Manuscript
Technologies of Space and Body in Transit *

* article includes Media component [see DVD]

In these times of constant mobility, urban metropolises are turning into intersections of transit and migration of goods, capital, services, cultures, knowledge and especially people. New concepts of urbanity with a transnational range are emerging. Moreover the relationship between geographic and social space is shifting. Social realities with specific qualities are appearing beyond traditional descriptions of locality, implying new spatial correlations between the local and the global as dense moments of transnational space (fig. 1).

International airports are examples of these emerging transnational spaces and can be understood as compressors of space and time, conduits between physical locations in the world. At the same time the extraterritorial zones of airports, called transit zones or airside, become an important

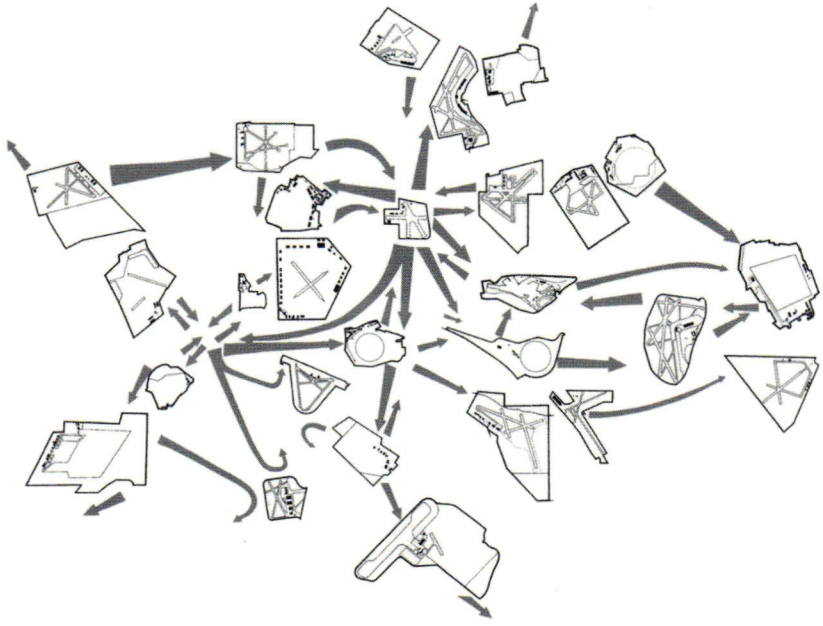


Figure 1 *Terminal City*, illustration of *Geographies of Kinetic Elite*, Re-make of *Naked City*, Guy Debord, 1957, with Terminal Hubs.

threshold controlling the flow of people in a free market economy (fig. 3).

It is impossible to mark the border on the footprint of an airport. The border mutates into an abstract space permeating the physical territory of the airport and beyond. Nowadays, rather than a geographical boundary of the state, airport borders are a transit condition of the mobile body.

This abstract border space, within which mobile bodies operate, is created by a bureaucratic system of inclusion and exclusion particular to transnation states (fig. 2). Transit zones at airports emerge because of a complex set of factors: border crossing as well as increasingly stringent security and safety regulations. The innumerable thresholds within these transit zones are points of congestion governed, and increasingly supported by technological systems of identification.

Within the transnation state, the movement of bodies is the constant subject of streamlining and procedualization. Increasingly, the conventional system of control, inclusion and exclusion based on Face-to-Face interaction between the controlling and the controlled, is being replaced by the algorithmic precision of database logic. The paradigm of 'pattern matching' ensures precise verification of the uniqueness of a body, in turn offering new potentials for permeability and flux.

These different orders of legal and economic categorization create manifold sub-territories—the so-called "low-cost" airport; the division of lounges into Business, Senator, HON and First Class; a luxuriously styled separate terminal for "premium travellers;" detention camp, et al.—only accessible to select groups of travelers. These sub-territories and their implicit mobility patterns circulate in the airport's structure, distributed within the architecture according to their typologies of comfort, aesthetics, control, etc. (figs. 5, 6)

The rules and regulations of transit zones apply to people as well as to airfreight. In the case of goods, extended zones excluded from national jurisdiction, support the "just-in-time" economies of free trade zones. Within the transnation state, the flow of goods within global markets is free of borders or boundaries It is efficient and it is furthered through the individual purchase of goods in duty and tax-free stores located throughout its transit zones (fig. 7).

Nowadays, the airport is more than just a mixture of complex infrastructures and the emergence of city-like functions and structures. It is a transnation state spatialized through a new order of architecture, a manifestation of technology of abstract procedures of transition, inclusion and exclusion, adopting emergent patterns of socio-spatial mobility in a globalized network.

The field research was done at the Frankfurt Main Airport, and it is largely based on interviews with border control officials (BGS and ZOLL), Fraport AG, Lufthansa and Caritas employees. The results of the research were the point of departure for the creation of maps of the diverse transit conditions of air travelers and served as the basis for production of a video devoted to the subject. The analysis of spatial reorganization of the airport was the basis for a media installation, *Data Record of Mobile Identities*, initiated in cooperation with Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, Germany and developed in collaboration with Bettina Boknecht.

Related Projects:

1. Video: *The Frankfurt Airport Transit Condition: Emerging Socio-Spatial Mobilities* [see Media DVD]
2. Media Installation: *Data Record of Mobile Identities*

http://www.mobile-identities.info

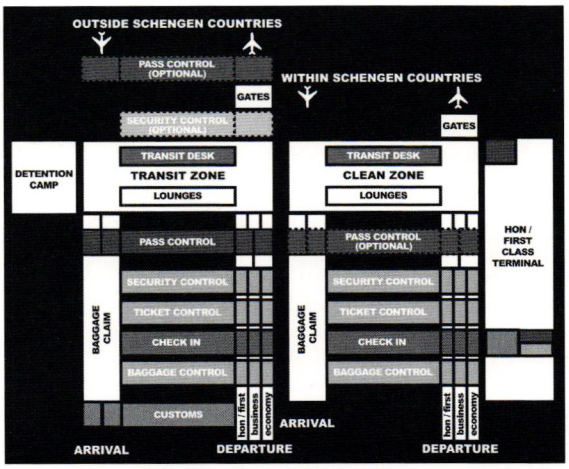


Figure 2 Airport Security Thresholds Diagram

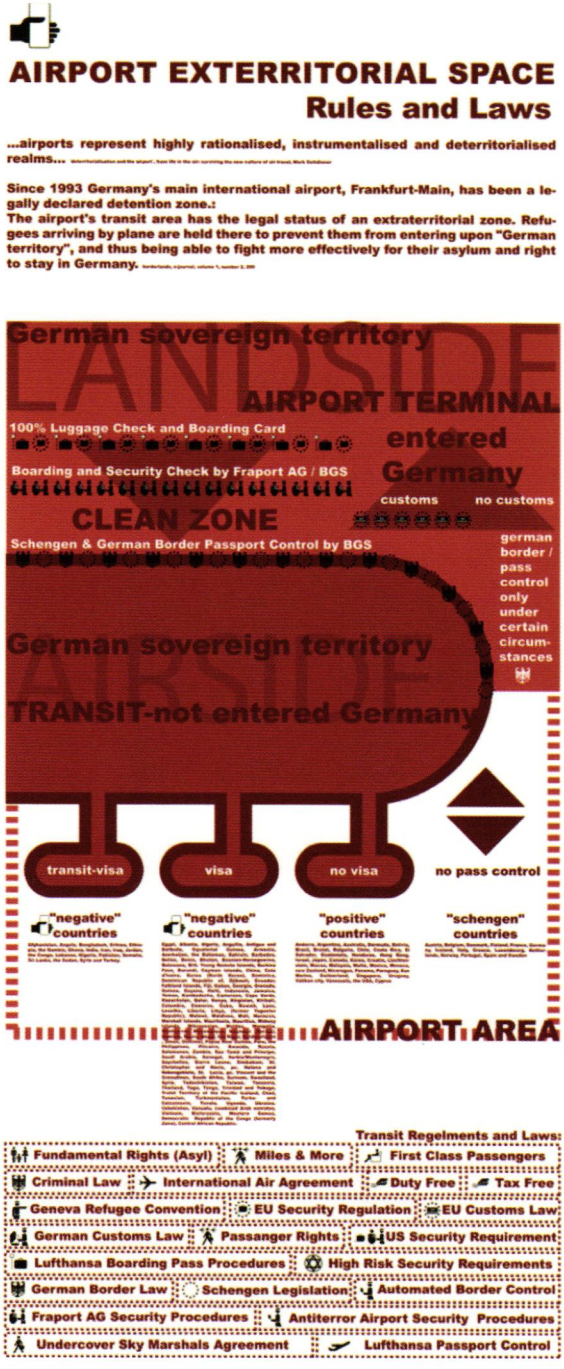


Figure 3 Conceptual Map of Airport Extraterritorial Space; Rules and Laws

Figure 4 Conceptual Map of Kinetic Elites in Transit Space; Spacial Segregation

Figure 5 Conceptual Map of Refugees in Exterritorial Space: Realities and Regulations

Figure 6 Conceptual Map of Ex/Import Processing Zones: Airport Trade Regulations

Mark Cottle

Seven Views of Twelve Months
Ephemera, Phenomena, and Experience

There is a delicate empiricism which so intimately involves itself with the object that it becomes true theory.

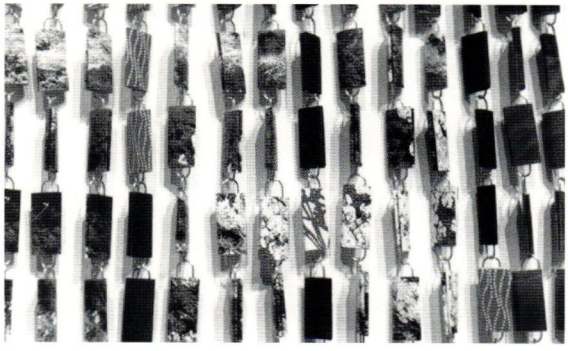
Goethe[1]

... the sensory embrace of images, the bodily engagement that most people (except Kantians and modernists) have with artworks.

Christopher Pinney[2]

So come, my friends, be not afraid.
We are so lightly here.
It is in love that we are made;
In love we disappear.

Leonard Cohen[3]



Storyteller

In "The Storyteller," Walter Benjamin describes two kinds of storytellers: the sailor and the farmer. He claims these two types persisted in the roles of the journeyman, still traveling as part of his apprenticeship, and the master craftsman, now resident, who had once journeyed himself.

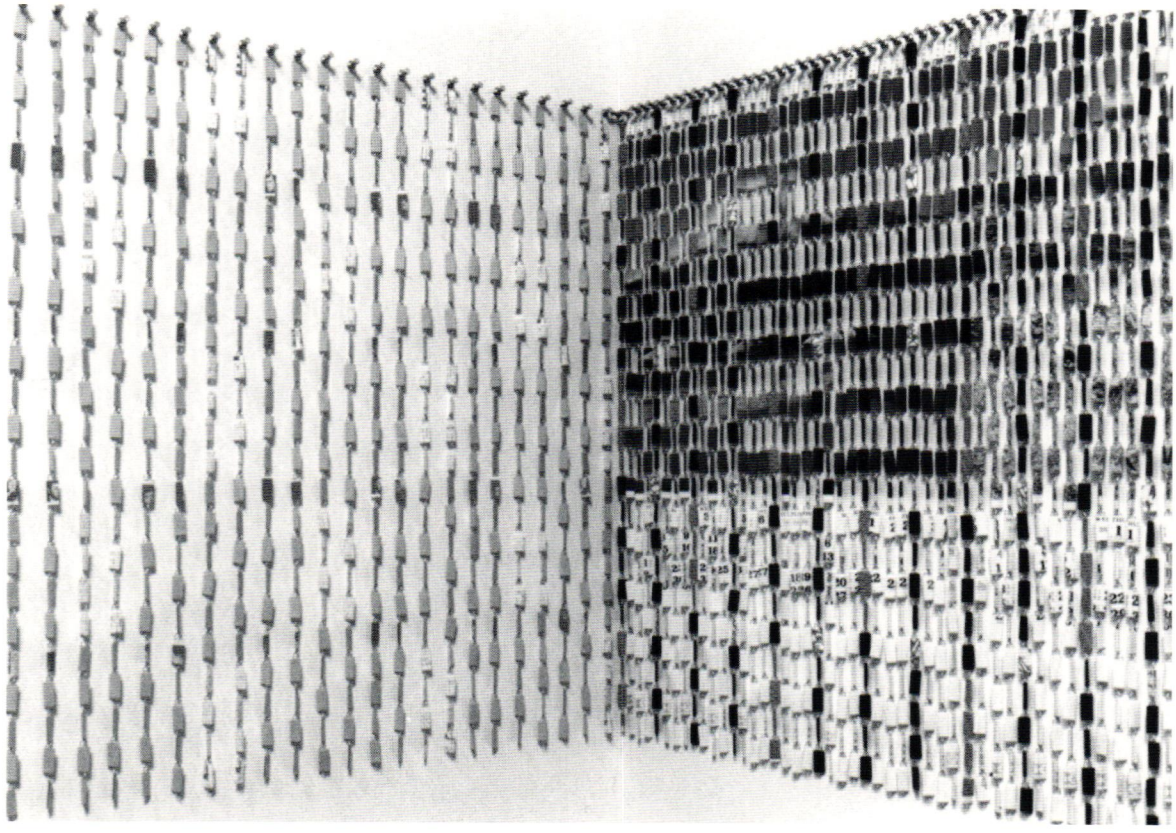
He suggests that these two sources of knowledge and experience, are each somehow part of the other. The atelier "combined the lore of faraway places, such as a much-traveled man brings home, with the lore of the past, as it best reveals itself to natives of a place."[4]

Benjamin differentiates stories from mere transfers of information by stipulating that a story be an expression of lived experience. If not lived by the teller, then lived in the telling. Further, these experiences do not require explanations. Perhaps one could consider the humble calendar a significant story.

Writing in the late 1930s, he observed that "the communicability of experience is decreasing. In consequence we have no counsel either for ourselves or for others." After all, he goes on to say, "counsel is less an answer to a question than a proposal concerning the continuation of a story which is just unfolding. To seek this counsel one would first have to be able to tell the story."[5]

Ephemera

This work explores both ephemera—the residue of time-stamped material culture, and the ephemeral—fleeting, shifting, registrations of sensation, through the grid of perception and experience. Using the bead curtain as the primary apparatus, ephemeral material is folded into palpable thickness, bringing it to the edge of legibility and substance. This alchemical transmutation of paper into ethereal presence registers the flickering moment between appearance and disappearance.



The installations pursue a series of oscillations—paper to pixel, hand to machine, analog to digital, between abstraction and figuration, and between representation and perception: the perception of the image of a body or figure (optically) and the perceptions of one's own body (haptically).

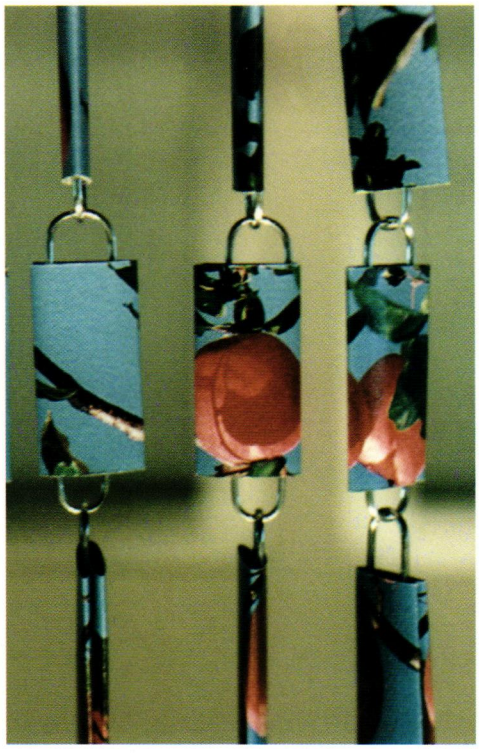
Constructs

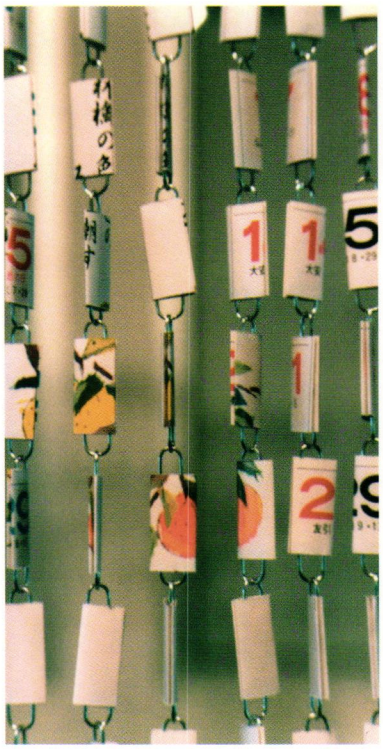
The installations are comprised of bead curtains, made by hand from papers and paperclips. Multiple parallel strands, suspended and plumb, produce a surface tension that holds in place the planes and volumes of the installations.

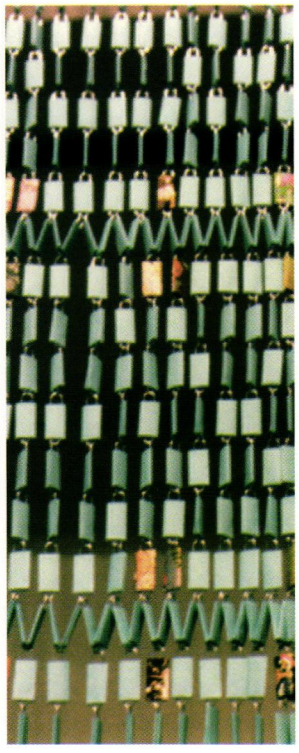
From the beginning the work has been understood as an extrapolation of the threshold. The disposition in the gallery has reflected this, fluctuating between a spatial alliance with the gallery's walls and the object/body dimensions of a column, or clothing.

Located discursively within artistic practice, these installations nonetheless share with architectural inquiry two principal concerns: the relationship of the human body to the built environment, and the processes of making, of constructing and construing materials and space. The medium for this involves an expanded notion of the detail as fragment, interruption, point of focus, icon; as unit, sub-division, aggregation, texture, surface.

Photographs tend to favor the pictorial image (even though part of the point of shredding an image into beaded strands is to dematerialize its master narrative, to examine details and shift the focus for a moment from the story we know to the stories in it that we don't know). In person, one perceives shifting shadows and reflections cast on the walls and floor, soft sways when the air-conditioning kicks on or someone opens a door, delicate clicking sounds as one brushes up against them. And, to the touch, temperature, texture, and weight.







One's itinerary, moving through and among the beads, and the interaction of one's own body with their phenomena, allows one to construct an experience of physical and imaginary spaces. It privileges the agency of the experiencing subject and at the same time questions it. 'Caught up' in the work, one can sense a momentary delamination, a blur between one's own skin and the aerosol of ephemeral material and data.

Calendars

The installation *Seven Views of Twelve Months* employed calendars from Japan, combined with origami and chiyagami papers and flyers of cinema schedules handed out in the Tokyo subways.

Format A marked the threshold in a floating plane of seven panels—each one of the pages of the calendar—while *Format B* flowed around three walls of the gallery space in a panoramic band.

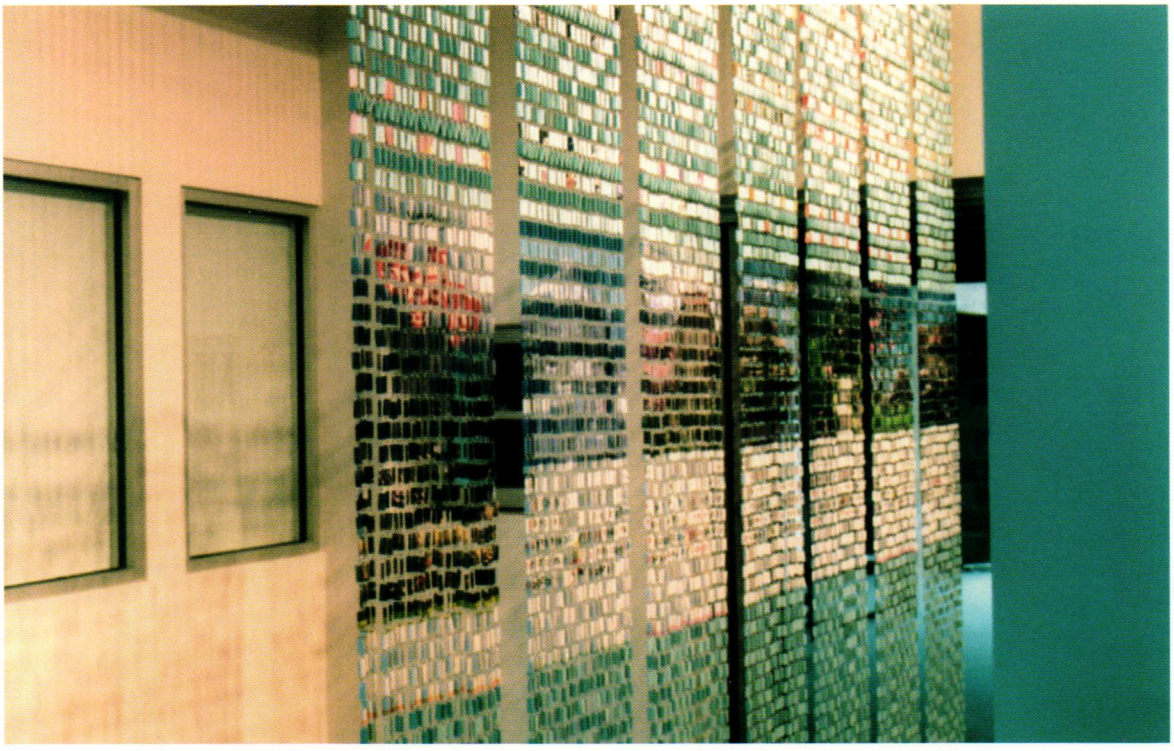
These calendars depicted rural landscapes: January/February featured snow on Mount Fuji. March/April displayed cherry or plum blossoms. For one pair of months it was a mill and/or a stream; for another pair a persimmon orchard. In each scene a traditional farm building with a thatch roof figured prominently. Simultaneously exotic and familiar, they recalled the calendars of New England landscapes from my childhood: red barns, white-steepled churches, covered bridges, lighthouses, autumn foliage….

I have often wondered why images are so essential to a calendar—be they of puppies, sexy firemen, or Hindu deities. Perhaps because they allow this quotidian object to operate as a household shrine, a domestically-scaled aperture to other realms, other times, offering a frisson of the sublime in daily doses.

Labor

A large part of the pleasure in work done by hand is that one can see clearly the evidence of one's labor. Making these beads requires no great skill or effort. But they do take time. And there is really no way to speed it up. Slowness is, in fact, one of the attractions.

Labor is an important component in the conceptual



apparatus of the work. By enlisting the volunteer efforts of friends to make the work with me, it acquires an entirely different dimension. It takes the pieces further in the direction of craft, in the sense of a series of unauthored artifacts. In the work of so many hands it would be difficult to identify a single signature. Since the work was its own recompense, labor has value according to the amount of time spent, rather than according to whose time it was (as though one person's time were really worth more than another's).

For another, the time spent together making the beads—talking, eating, and listening to music—is rewarding in itself, and it affects the work in a manner described by Benjamin in "The Storyteller." Storytelling was much more than a way to pass time. In concert with the work of the hands, it was a reciprocal craft, working in tandem to render a densely textured, graspable comprehension of the world.

Collapsed Acts

Hand-work imbues artifacts with tactile experience —what Ruskin called "the correspondence of workmanship with thought". The social interaction that produces them is imbued in them as well; labor and desire are folded within.

As emanations of the exotic, the ecstatic, and the erotic, within the quotidian, the installations suggest the ephemera and experience of shrines. In the way they embellish space. In the way they embody registrations of time, duration, and scale. And in the traces and imprints of the body (and the hand) that are embedded in the imagery, in the fabrication process, and in one's experience of them.

Dedicated to the memory of Annie Cottle, 12 October 1933 to 27 October 2005

NOTES

1 Walter Benjamin. *One-way Street and Other Writings* (London: Verso, 1997).

2 Nicholas Thomas and Christopher Pinney. *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 158.

3 Cohen, Leonard. "Boogie Street," *Ten New Songs* (Los Angeles: Columbia Records, 2001).

4 Walter Benjamin. "The Storyteller," *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 85.

5 Ibid., 86.

Aug 20th

Monday

CANADIAN PACIFIC R'

TELEG

All Messages are received by this Company for transmission, subject to th conditions have been agreed to by the sender of the following message. under these conditions.

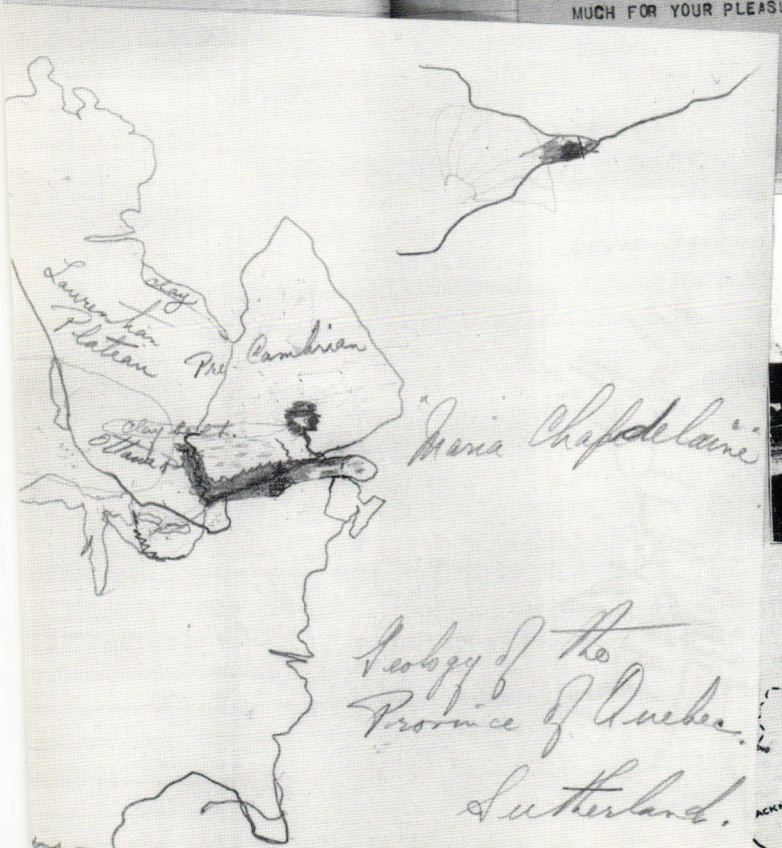
268RAV 38 NIGHTLETTER

JACKMAN ME AUG 20 1923

R
MRS GODON IRELAND
18 ST ANNE QUEBEC

AFTER A PLEASANT DAY WE ARE SAFELY AND COMFO
YOU WERE WITH US. RONALD. HUNDRED AND TWENTY M
MUCH FOR YOUR PLEASURE-GORDON CROSSED THE BO

MADELINE.



The main house at Lake Parlin

Charlie Hailey

Scrapbook (1923)

There is no history book – just a scrapbook of cherished fragments.
-- British Broadcasting Company (1933)

August 1, 1923

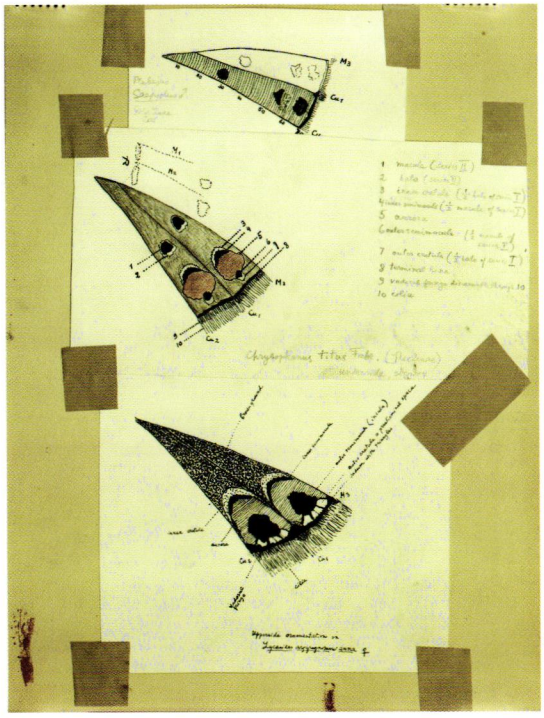
Mary Ireland sets out by automobile from her home near New Haven. After crossing the Canadian border into Quebec and then returning south to the Maine coast, Ireland arrives home on or near the 23rd of August. The story of her trip is interesting, though not exceptional, and Ireland herself is an obscure figure, however geographically inspiring her name might be. Eight years earlier, pioneering journalist Emily Post had traveled to the west by motorcar, and the phenomenon of leisurely, peripatetic auto-trips, or "flivving," had been popularized this same year by *The Atlantic*.[1] Ireland's resulting scrapbook, the self-authored record of her journey, is nevertheless quite extraordinary—leaving us to wonder, more than eighty years on, what "scrapbooking" means in our own contemporary itinerancies.[2]

May 8, 1923 [3]

Vladimir Nabokov travels to France and meets his future wife Véra. In the previous year, an assassin's bullet struck Nabokov's father in Berlin, leaving the raconteur of memory to reconstruct his father's life through the scrapbook composed by his mother.[4] After passing through "various [temporal] vicissitudes," this "large bedraggled scrapbook bound in black cloth"[5] demonstrates the Nabokovs' shared obsession with butterflies and frames the young Vladimir's autobiographical impulses of writing and lepidoptery. Ephemera of word and insect are bound in a scrapbook mentality that allows for a provisional recording of transience—the pinned butterfly in its immortal sleep "transcending dust"[6] and the folded map pressed annotatively into Mary Ireland's record-book. This essay interrogates the scrapbook as a mode of fixing transitory experience.

November 1946

Nabokov carries out research at Harvard University's Museum for Comparative Zoology. At his laboratory bench during this time, he produces wing-segment studies representative of the detailed drawings pasted into his sketchbooks and annotated with analytic descriptions.[7]



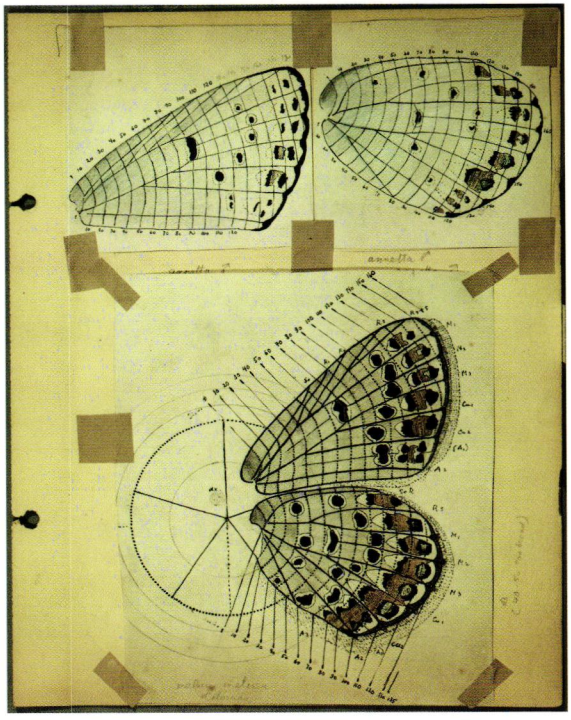
August 20, 1923

Mary Ireland receives a telegram from her friend Madeline Curtis. In the text of the "Nightletter," Madeline describes the day's journey with her husband, Ronald and Mary's husband, Gordon. The trio has left Mary in Canada and traveled to Maine:

> After a pleasant day we are safely and comfortable at Lake Parlin wishing you were with us. Ronald. Hundred and twenty miles last part slippery too much for your pleasure. Gordon crossed the border, coat and all, without comment.

In the scrapbook, this telegram faces the previous page (also dated August 20) on which Ireland has transcribed her own day's events that are concurrent with the divergent travels of her husband and the Curtises:

> 8:30 Breakfast with Madeleine [*sic*] & Ronald Curtis = Clarendon...11 AM—"Lady Bay" sets sail—for Jackmans. Serene-padded chair, drinks, lamp, bottle [illegible word]...4:30 Chateau. Laundry, St. Lawrence

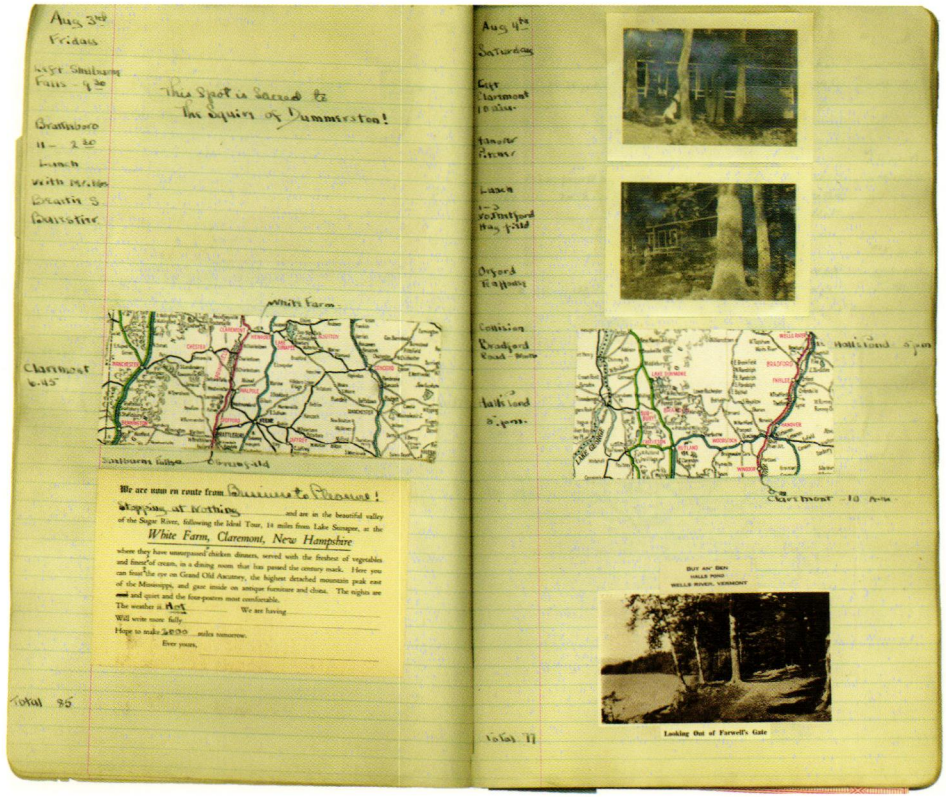


> Guide Book—Laval University. Jules Paymant of Laval Seminary—guide & friend. Supper Y.W.C.A. with 'Grammo' who had come from the farm 40 mi. from Grand Rapids to see the tides in the Bay of Fundy 'that come in faster than a horse can gallop.'

> L'éloignment des pays répare en quelque sort la trop grande proximité des temps.
> - Racine, Second Preface to Bajazet

Mary Ireland's scrapbook maps her real and imagined tour. The resulting hybrid scrapbook-map collapses the time of her travels into an enduring present.

Her encounters with the unfamiliar through her self-imposed exile (*éloignment*) allow for a synthesis of times. The process of composing the scrapbook occurs in a "real time" at the temporal confluence of her past journey, her past perfect life (with its perhaps stultifying *proximité des temps*), and her future aspirations. The real-time synthesis found in the immediacy of scrapbooking mends the disparate times of Ireland's experiences through the spatial distance afforded by travel. This construction of time begins where Ireland herself started—with the details (material and phenomenal) collected on the tour and with the manner these fleeting "scraps" transform the map. Put another way, the tour, in its trace of scrapbooked ephemera, reconfigures the physio-temporal map of the original itinerary. Ireland's scrapbook serves as an example of how the tour conditions a series of maps—from the printed map itself to the mental map of places to the penultimate map reconfigured in the exercise of scrapbooking. Maps inform, narrate, and even alter the traveler's itinerary; but the translation of actual experiences back through maps holds a particular importance in the construction of spatial narratives with the residual fragments of the tour. As a rich confluence of map and personal tour, Ireland's compendium, essentially the mapping of a meta-narrative both real and imagined, is a fragmentary reading of places woven together by Ireland's account of her experiences as a tourist.



August 4, 1923

Three days into her excursion, Ireland notes a "collision" after lunch near Bradford, Vermont, just before reaching Hall's Pond at 5 PM. Throughout the scrapbook (though to a greater degree in the first week of the trip), the left-hand margin registers the more factual aspects of the journey. In this way, the perhaps unremarkable collision shares textual space with dates, arrival and departure times, lunch appointments, and daily mileage (in this case, 85 miles on August 3rd and 77 miles on August 4th). In these two days, Ireland travels north from Shelburne Falls, through western New Hampshire, and on to Bradford.[8]

Precedents provide a critical and historical ground for Ireland's scrapbook-map. The composition of her scrapbook suggests a sophisticated and highly visual map-making sensibility reminiscent of Piranesi's *Campus Martius* in which the fragments of maps, texts, and artifacts form a composite *topographia* of the 'fields of Mars' as well as the eighteenth century architect's own mental landscape.[9] While Ireland maps for us a very personal mental landscape, she also measures her trip with quantitative and descriptive information in the tradition of itinerarium maps. Ireland's scrapbook begins with a rigorous set of entries logging events and mileage in the columnar format reminiscent of seventeenth century pilgrimage texts, which marked time and place through marginal notations and formed "text-maps."[10] Underscoring a devotional undercurrent of her journey, Ireland refers to one of the postcards picked up in the trip's early stages as a "souvenir of my pilgrimage." But this format is short-lived in the scrapbook-map, and the author's travels do not follow what Tom Conley has referred to as the itinerarium's "uni-lateral narrative trajectory."[11] Ireland's map instead traces a non-linear logic of time and place, made possible by her quite literal adaptation of "dissected maps" in which places and events are re-arranged to demonstrate the tour's significance.[12]

August 1923

"Intensive Flivving," in *The Atlantic* magazine:

> By poking around, I mean setting out with no definite objective, or else with an objective so ridiculously easy of access that there will always be time to stop anywhere on the way; and then driving as slowly as you like; and whenever you see anything that excites your curiosity, getting out and investigating it....[13]

Ireland's scrapbook maps the interaction of three distinct but overlapping time sequences: Ireland's trip (from her own perspective as the narrator), her husband's divergent itinerary, and her recollected tour after the journey has been completed. Not unlike the retrospective and educational narratives of *chronologies colleés*, her obsessive collection of material affords her a critical and reflective appraisal of the meaning of her trip.[14] In this way, she follows in the epistolary tradition of Emily Post's mapping of her westward exploration of early American road culture. In 1915, the editor of *Collier's* magazine had asked Post to write about her passage from New York to the Golden Gate Bridge. In addition to these accounts, the traveler-journalist also included hand-drawn maps highlighting particular events and places along her tour.[15] This connection with Post's work also exposes an ambiguity in Ireland's intention. Post's maps served a journalistic purpose, but the intended audience for Ireland's scrapbook is unclear. We might assume that Ireland's work is no different from nineteenth-century 'common-place books', which were typically private documents of family history.[16] As a more actively conceived poem-map however, Ireland's book transcends the simple mnemonic purpose of recording everyday family life and approaches the editorial format of a guidebook telling the story of a nascent auto-culture from a uniquely female perspective.[17] Here, Ireland's account parallels that of Post's, in its performance as a general guide for women travelers carrying out progressively independent journeys across the country and in its legibility as a specific portrait of one woman's impressions. Ultimately, it is this autobiographical impulse narrated within the mapped geographies that drives Ireland's scrap-booking and map-making.

This drive is as evident in the book's materiality as within its narrative content. Ireland's scrapbook-map employs a mix of media ranging from tourist postcards to personally sketched maps that imply a meta-textual narrative. In the decade after Ireland's tour, James Agee and Walker Evans will echo the effective nuance of such a method as the travelers recorded their photographic and textual mapping of the 1930s rural South in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Preparing to assemble what they had accumulated on their travels, Agee wrote:

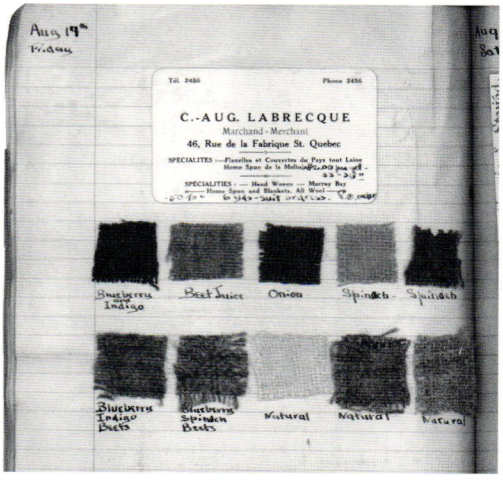
> If I could do it, I'd do no writing at all here. It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odors....[18]

Ireland attends to Agee's petition with a tangible

collection of ephemera from her tour, including cropped map fragments,[19] personal photographs, hand-woven blanket swatches, a fold-out map of Quebec's geology, telegrams, newspaper clippings, railway maps, shipping and rail schedules (with "notes for unaccompanied women"), and tourist brochures (such as the "Itinerary for visitors to Quebec").

August 19, 1923

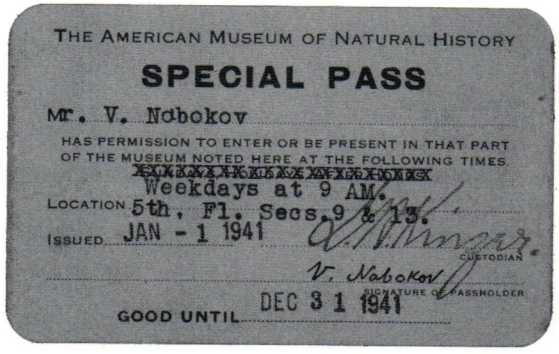
Ireland visits the shop of Auguste Labrecque, who specializes in "home-spun" wool blankets. Placed next to wool swatches, the business card has been annotated with the price of $2 per yard.[20]



January 1, 1941

The American Museum of Natural History in New York issues Nabokov a "special pass" to access its fifth-floor collection.[21]

Through the material ephemera, her annotations and juxtapositions, and her interpretation of the scrapbook medium itself, Ireland has developed a method for mapping the digressive itineraries of her tour and in the process has re-made both the map and the journey's narratives. Standard travel annotations such as mileage and events ("Collision at Bradford Road North") occur alongside carefully cut pieces of the original touring map over which the author has traced the routes in red and black ink. These lines often extend outside the map's frame to suggest the next stage of the trip on subsequent pages. In the first few pages of the scrapbook, Ireland begins systematically with a rigorous pairing of dissected maps and postcards.[22] By August 4, she has added personal pictures and has chamfered one corner of a rectilinear map fragment as a key for a destination (New Hampshire's "Old Man of the Mountains") unseen until four entries later. Across the Canadian border, Ireland uses a different map and subsequently relies on a more diverse set of navigational devices, from tourist literature to a hand-drawn map sketched from memory but derived from Sutherland's "Geology of the Province of Quebec." With the advantage of retrospect and by eliding chronological time, Ireland consolidates information on particular places. An exemplary continuation



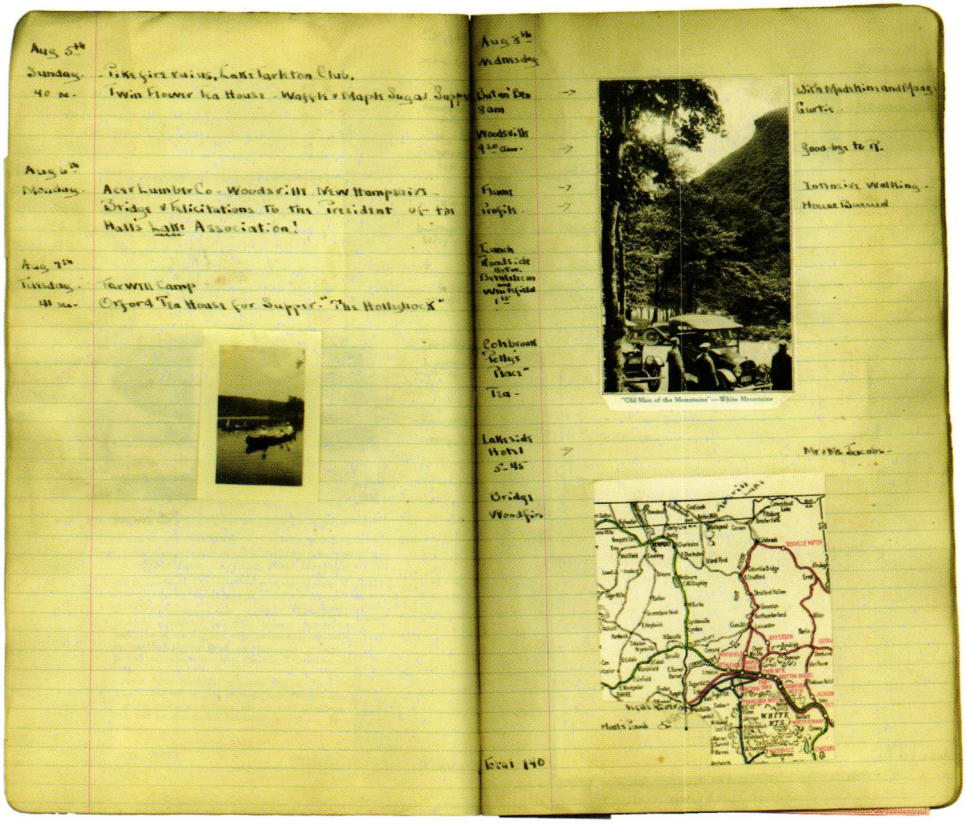
of the August 20 entry includes a map of Maine's Lake Parlin region with a photograph taken of one of the resort's main houses and an earlier telegram extolling the Lake's attributes. Ireland consciously uses the map of Maine as a narrative framework for recollecting her tour, or what we might call a Proustian 'presencing' of the past.

August 8, 1923

Ireland views the Old Man of the Mountains in Vermont. In the scrapbook entry, she describes "intensive walking" with Madeline Curtis, says

"good-bye to R. [Ronald Curtis]," and witnesses a burning house.[23]

As registers for her personal narrative, the tour maps anchor the non-linear temporal and spatial data. Ireland's itinerary documented in the scrapbook



simultaneously looks forward and back and shifts scales. Her stop in Lake Parlin serves as a midpoint or threshold between her time in Canada and her arrival in coastal Maine. The maps related to this stopover (a detailed map of Lake Parlin placed next to a larger map showing the Maine's coast) provide the background for postcards from Ronald Curtis and notes about her own interest in working with charities and hospitals. Illustrating this Janusian perspective, Ireland places along the mapped coastline postcards describing "wild waves" and her own annotations such as "150 miles to the ocean." As she looks forward to the coastal experience and reunion with family and friends, she also reflects back on her Canadian encounters with the broader social responsibilities of charitable work.

August 23, 1923

Perhaps not having fully understood the earlier clue that her husband has traveled to the coast with the Curtises (on August 20), we realize at this point that Mary Ireland is traveling alone. We can infer she is touring by train, given the evidence of documents pasted in the scrapbook—a description of Casco Bay Lines as providing both rail and sea passage, and a route schedule book folded open to the "notes for unaccompanied women." Why did her path diverge from that of her fellow travelers? It is conceivable that her interest in charity work drew her back to Canada—a possibility suggested by the floor plan of a charity hospital included within the scrapbook. Complicating the question, Ireland includes a telegram from her husband Gordon, who writes on August 22, "glad to hear starting home tomorrow." And yet we find in the scrapbook's pages

an unfixed and undated photograph of a couple at the beach—we wonder if this image portrays the Curtises or the Irelands. Suggesting that in retrospect her tour actually forms a complete personal history, Ireland's final scrapbook page is a comprehensive regional map that includes northern Massachusetts, southern Quebec, and Maine.

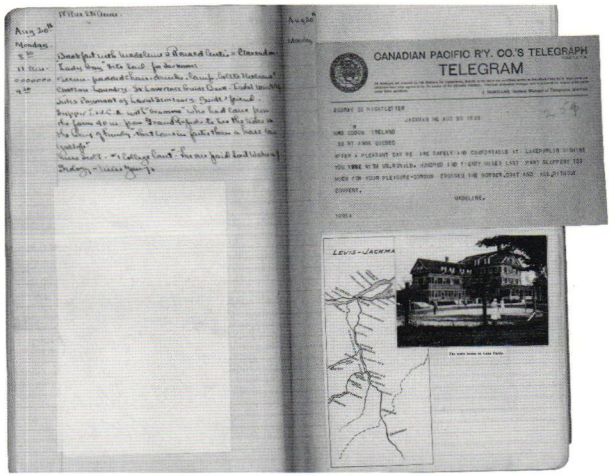
August 16, 1923

Along her itinerary, Ireland's path crosses that of a bridge operator who has just accepted a job in Havana as an engineer.[24] This meeting and Ireland's inclusion of the bridge operator's geographic shift reflects the open edges of the narrative, the scrapbook, and the maps themselves. Here, we might be tempted to say that the scrapbook allows us to enter Jorge Luis Borges' own fantasy of the one-to-one map of the world.[25] But, in the case of Ireland's scrapbook, the full-scale quality relies on an experientially-derived reference system of place, time, and memory rather than the more dispassionate, though no less biased, production of a representative map. As such, Ireland's story is a localized and personal world-map. The resulting proximity of the narrative, as a material artifact for us and as a tangible record for her, yields a simultaneously reflective and exteriorized examination of our own potential "place" in the story. In the resulting scrapbook-map, we read other places, but we also re-read ourselves.

Ireland's scrapbook takes the form of map as autobiography. As a corollary to J.B. Harley's idea that maps are "transcriptions of ourselves,"[26] the scrapbook directly maps the author's thought processes, encounters with disparate places, and the stories associated with each place. At one level, the scrapbook-map is a personal history recording biographical information for future readers probably related to the author. But as we have seen, Ireland's story delves deeper into the meaning of her trip and the medium and processes of map-making itself. As an epistolary document, the author corresponds with an unspecified recipient, or interlocutor. She essentially uses each constellation of fragments as a type of telegram—a writing across boundaries (scales, geography, familial ties, and cultural difference) and times (her own past and future and each place's present and past). The conversation and encounter on the Canadian bridge also reflect the importance of literal and metaphorical boundaries that Ireland narrates in her recreated map. Ireland seems to identify with the bridge engineer's career change that parallels her own solitary and inchoate exploration of charity work in Canada. Her inclusion of these stories delineates and expands a narrative map extending from actual places visited to the unreachable sites left to imaginary journeys—in this case, Havana. Assembling places both actual and imagined, Ireland's autobiographical scrapbook-map combines the didactic guidebook, transcriptive logbook, and lyrical personal narrative.

August 20, 1923

What does this say about the relation of tour and map and ephemera and time? Tourism as a critical artistic practice has the potential to re-bind fragmentary experience of places. For Ireland, the map itself



becomes a device for retelling the tour and for retying fragments of memories and places. This procedure occurs at two levels: the literal cutting and deploying

of fragments of ephemera within the text and the metaphorical understanding of the scrapbook as a narrative map, a storytelling device to convey her experience. As Lucy Lippard has pointed out, tourism is a way to experience the "disparate surfaces of everyday life" and reintegrate our "fragmented world."[27] Ireland's document recalls Harley's Ordnance Survey Map, which "has become a graphic autobiography; it restores time to memory and it recreates for the inner eye the fabric and seasons of a former life."[28] Repairing the weave of time and memory, Ireland's reconstruction of her tour's map allows the permanent presencing of her past journey. Reading her journey, we pass seamlessly through and along Ireland's experience of places and events, made non-linear in her methods of eliding disconnected moments and layering parallel stories.

February 1920

Vladimir Nabokov publishes his first scholarly article in the British journal *The Entomologist*.[29] Drawing from discoveries on his family trip a few years earlier, Nabokov exhaustively documents the butterfly and moth species found in the region of Crimea.

August 3, 1923

Cryptically noting that the site is "sacred to the Squire of Dummerston," Mary Ireland leaves Shelburne Falls at 9:30 in the morning. Between 11 AM and 2:30 PM, she has lunch in Brattleboro with Mr. and Mrs. Beattie S. Balestier and arrives in Claremont at 6:45 PM, completing the day's travel of 85 miles.

If we tour the disparate bits of experience in order to find ourselves again, then perhaps the arrangement of the scrapbook's residual bits and pieces (indicators of fleeting episodes) acknowledges the paradox that we must forget to remember.[30] In her scrapbook, Ireland cuts, displaces, and crops the geographies and spaces of her travels for the same reason filmmaker Chris Marker documents his own real and imagined tours, "to repair the web of time where it had been broken."[31] Ireland's document and the more contemporary filmic scrapbook are "immemorial" artifacts that by definition extend back beyond memory. Marker reinvents the form of the scrapbook in his dated but altogether relevant CD-Rom project *Immemory*, a digital *ars memoriae* that looks at the fragility of moments "suspended in time."[32] Immersed in their own cultures of itinerancy, Ireland and Marker share methods of scrap-booking that are both rigorous and poetically rambling. Marker travels as the eternal "bounty-hunter of the banal," and Ireland sets out ostensibly to visit the Curtis family but her "flivving" tendency mirrors the hypertextual movement through the temporal ambiguities of *Immemory*. Through their fleeting materials and episodes, both documents allow us to travel in place, a virtually absolute time of duration.[33]

July 1923

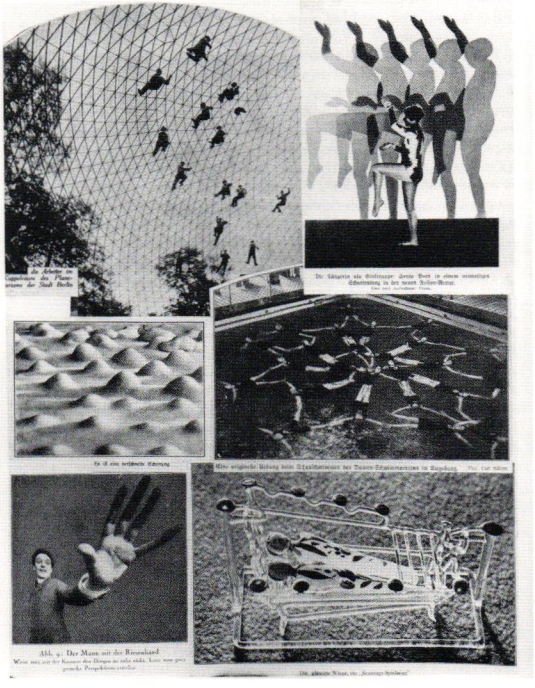
Also tied up in the scrapbook's (and Marker's) "immemory" of the forgotten past is the idea that memory is necessary for time to exist. After his encounter with Einstein in April 1922, Henri Bergson publishes the second edition of *Durée et simultanéité* the following year. Bergson identifies duration as a kind of memory that creates the necessary connections between the beaded moments of time. Made in the scrapbooks by the "scraps" themselves, these connections serve to continue the previous experiences into the "immediately after." Ireland's beaded moments occur as annotated times and events in the left-hand margin and more poetically as photographed episodes. In one such case, between August 7 and 8, we move from the canoe excursion to an image of the Old Man of the Mountains (its foregrounded viewers clearly caught up in their sublime experience) to a map fragment with its own town-beads slung within the colored road network. Providing the background for Bergsonian duration, the scrapbook format (as book and beaded scraps) allows for the "perpetually renewed forgetfulness of what is not the immediately prior moment."[34] We absorb this immediacy of past and present, and

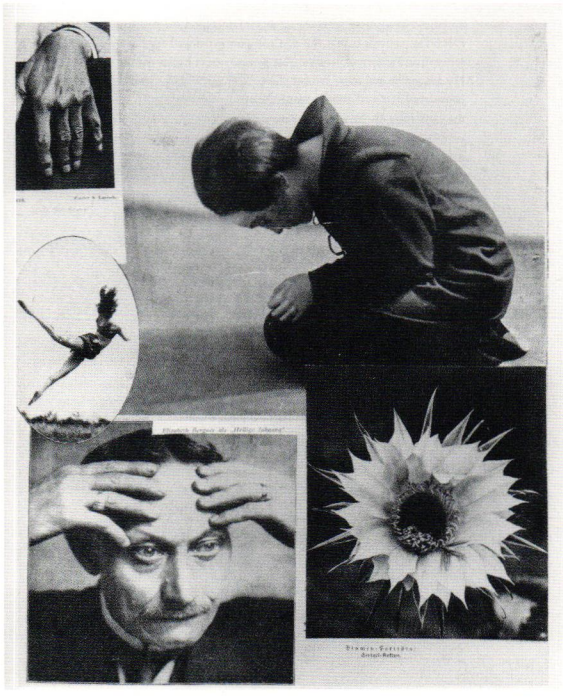
then we turn the page. Here is the paradox of the confluence of remembering and forgetting, and here is our own scrapbook of "real time."[35] The Bergsonian scrapbook combines perception and conception in the lived time of its writing and subsequent reading. Re-reading its contents, we continue to live in the scrapbook—not in the way that Fredric Jameson says that we are immersed in process, but in the way that Ireland's scrapbook exists in the limbo of immemory between her arrival home (not documented in the scrapbook) and future departures of recollection inspired by her scrapbook-map.

May 6, 1923

Before departing for France (where he will meet his wife), Nabokov writes, "we are the caterpillars of angels."[36] Through his butterflies, those ephemera of duration, Nabokov traces his own immemorial path and process. In 1906, Nabokov caught his first butterfly and with his mother's help, pinned it for his future collection. In subsequent years, Nabokov will work between the poetic and the scientific to understand the resonance of time and memory. And on January 1, 1941, Nabokov will purchase a special pass to the American Museum of Natural History to access its butterfly collections. Two years later, describing the discovery and documentation of a butterfly, the lepidopterist writes that a poem may eventually die but that it will "ape the immortality of this red label on a little butterfly."[37] Singing the story of the butterfly and combining immemory with immortality, Nabokov captures a temporal suspension that is for the moment beyond memory and perhaps even "out of mind," to be experienced not as something named but as an angelic state of becoming.

In Nabokov's butterfly scrapbooks, as in his poems, the taping of the sketched fragments of butterfly wings might be seen to repair the web of time, broken by the necessary fragmentation and fixing of these scientific ephemera. But it is not simply the tape that holds these fragile moments to the page. Just as Ireland records her





journey by re-inventing a mode of narration, Nabokov anchors his findings (the butterfly wing sectors) with both scientifically established and poetically charged terminology of his own invention. In one example, his annotations indicate twenty-two distinct features with terms such as halo, aurora, scintilla, lacrima, and outer fringe.[38]

c. 1933

Hannah Höch constructs the *Mass Media Scrapbook* with images cut out from her collection of popular publications.[39]

August 4, 1923

For the month of August in 1923, as Ireland makes her tour, Dada artist Hannah Höch vacations with Kurt Schwitters and other friends at the Villa Garund on the island of Rügen. Ten years after Ireland's tour, Höch produces the "mass media scrapbook," composed of highly personal collages and photomontages of mass media clippings collected by the artist since the early 1920s. Two female travelers: one exiled politically, the other engaged in an almost leisurely self-exile. Höch, the avant-garde collagist; and Ireland, the self-taught scrap-booker. Höch's scrapbook presents the Weimar-inspired *New Woman*, and Ireland's scrapbook narrates the story of the *new American flivver*, whose seeming

NOTES

An article for the Hermon Dunlap Smith Center's newsletter Mapline served as the starting point for this expanded essay that includes research carried out during the 2004 NEH Summer Institute at the Newberry Library.

1 Flivving originates from "flivver," American slang for a cheap motor car and (in a secondary denotation) for a person or thing with the propensity for failure (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In its gerund form, the term combines the characteristically perilous travel in the early American automobile with the sense of "flitting" or "flying all about." *The Atlantic* excerpt clipped out and pasted in the scrapbook by Mary Ireland confirms this connotation and can be read as a description of the seemingly aimless flight and "flutter" of the butterfly (see "August 1923" section in the text and note 13).

2 Mary Ireland's scrapbook is in the Newberry Library's collection under the following call number: map 5C G3720 1923. I7 (PrCt).

3 Vladimir Nabokov travels to France and meets future wife Véra Evseevna.

4 Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov was shot on March 28, 1922.

5 Nabokov, *Speak, Memory* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 173.

6 Nabokov, "On Discovering a Butterfly," *New Yorker* (May 15, 1943). The stanza reads: "Wide open on its pin (though fast asleep), / and safe from creeping relatives and rust, / in the secluded stronghold where we keep / type specimens it will transcend its dust."

7 Pages from Nabokov's sketchbooks (Berg Collection, The New York Public Library).

8 Mary Ireland's scrapbook, pages dated August 3 – 4, 1923 (Newberry Library Collection).

9 In the Newberry Library's collection: SC map 2F.G6714.R7:2C3 1762.P5.

10 *Itinerarium Totius Sacrae* (1623) [Case Collection (07) 61001.13]. In typically dialogic format, the text is divided into two columns with the descriptive passages of towns and places to the left and the distances (in English miles) from Jerusalem with section titles to the right.

11 Tom Conley, *The Self-Made Map* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 140.

12 Ireland has structured the scrapbook around a series of map fragments cut from an original auto-touring map. While not used as jigsaw puzzle pieces as with traditional dissected maps, Ireland does set up a didactic 'game' of tying together the disparate pieces. Connections between the travel tour and map games are alluded to by Christine Petto in her slide set for "Map Promotion in Early Modern Europe" <http://www.newberry.org/smith/slidesets/ss32. html >. Early "tour games," such as *Tour Through Europe* published by John Wallis in 1794, share the user-involvement and map fragments in earlier dissected maps of John Splisbury. Examples of dissected maps include Samuel Augustus Mitchell's "Dissected Map of the United States" (1854) and William Peacock's "Superior Dissected Maps of England and Wales" (1875) in the Newberry Library Collection.

13 Mary Ireland begins her scrapbook with this excerpt from *The Atlantic* (August 1923): 278-280.

14 In the late eighteenth century, scrapbooks of prints, maps, and broadsides known as *chronologies colleés* were assembled as folio volumes to help teach history and its chronological development. The Newberry's collection includes an early version of this format, the *Chronologies Colleé: Le theatre d'honneur de plusieurs princes anciens et modernes : avec leurs vies & faicts plus memorables…* (1618), an extraordinary compendium of portraits, illuminated engravings, letterpress text, and Latin and Greek captions [VAULT Case oversize N7604 .C57 1618].

15 See Emily Post's *By Motor to the Golden Gate* (New York: Appleton, 1917).

16 Since at least the sixteenth century, 'common-place books' (also known as 'books of common places') have been used to record passages and textual fragments, which the author hopes to remember or to reference. The degree of arrangement and organization has historically depended on the author's purpose.

17 Reflecting Ireland's apparent goal to map a localized but far-reaching history, the 1930s show "Scrapbook" produced by BBC Radio begins with the premise that "there is no history book – just a scrapbook of cherished fragments."

18 James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 13.

19 The exact edition and sponsor for the maps used by Mary Ireland have not

indirection bears out a nuanced mode of experiencing the world. Both women find in the scrapbook a medium for self-expression that is both timeless and *of the time*.[40] Ireland and Höch each appropriate mass media to construct the scrapbook. To construct her "personal dreams of utopia,"[41] Höch uses mainstream images from Ullstein press publications of the time,[42] and Ireland relies on Rand McNally oil company maps for the scrapbook's main structure.

Without any indications that either woman planned to publish her work, the scrapbooks are highly personalized, private utopias in which the function of remembering is to explore the excitement of media's transformation of visual experience (Höch) and the exhilaration of the traveler's experience as it remakes the retrospective map (Ireland). Ireland's utopia is perhaps more closely tied to a specific eutopia, or "good place," as opposed to Höch's reconfiguration of mass media's "no place" of production. Ireland's work is closely linked to specific places and at the same time the hypothetical construction of a highly personalized place of reflection. Ireland's method offers us a way of thinking about the relation of time and place from within the scrapbook's immemorial conflation of eutopia and utopia as well as its permissive concurrence of past and present. This scrapbook mentality might afford us a method of moving within the often-problematic experience of our own contemporary itinerancies.

been determined, but the style of the map corresponds to the typical Rand McNally oil company maps of the time, such as Gulf, Esso, and Pennzoil.

20 Detail from Mary Ireland's scrapbook, page dated August 19, 1923 (Newberry Library Collection).

21 (Nabokov) American Museum of Natural History, New York. Special pass for Vladimir Nabokov. Signed and dated Jan. 1, 1941 (Berg Collection, New York Public Library).

22 It should be noted that Mary Ireland uses a standard "Record Book" as the basis for her scrapbook.

23 Ireland's scrapbook, pages dated August 5 – 8, 1923

24 Although not specified, this bridge might be the Victoria Bridge, crossing the St. Lawrence Seaway and connecting Montreal with southern Quebec.

25 Jorge Luis Borges, "On Exactitude in Science," *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998), 325.

26 J.B. Harley, "The Map as Biography...," *The Map Collector* 4.1 (Winter 1989): 18.

27 Lucy Lippard, *On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art, and Place* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 13.

28 Harley, 20.

29 The reference for the journal article is: Vladimir Nabokov, "A Few Notes on Crimean Lepidoptera," *The Entomologist* 53 (February 1920).

30 Chris Marker, *Sans Soleil* (1986). In his film, Marker speculates that remembering "is not the opposite of forgetting but, rather its 'lining.'" He then continues with this idea of the confluence of writing and recollecting: "We do not remember, we rewrite memory much as history is rewritten."

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 This scrapbook does not merely record but narrates and guides an assumed readership of cartographically literate fellow travelers. The scrapbook-map becomes our mode of experiencing the author's imagined and actual encounters with distant places. Phillip and Juliana Muehrcke have pointed out how maps allow a traveling-in-place. In "Maps in Literature," they quote from Cervantes' *Don Quixote*: "one can 'journey over all the universe in a map, without the expense and fatigue of traveling, without suffering the inconveniences of heat, cold, hunger, and thirst.'" [*The Geographical Review* 64.3 (July 1974): 324]

34 Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity*, trans. Leon Jacobson (Manchester: Clinamen, 1999), 33. As noted previously, the second edition of *Durée et simultanéité* was published in July 1923.

35 Bergson writes, "This is real time, perceived and lived. This is also conceived time, because we cannot conceive a time without imagining it as perceived and lived." [Ibid., 33]

36 Among Nabokov's poems are "A Butterfly" (written January 10, 1921 and published in 1923), "Letters" (January 23, 1923), "Butterflies" (1926), and "No, life is no quivering quandary" (written May 6, 1923, from which this excerpt is taken). See Brian Boyd and Robert Michael Pyle, *Nabokov's Butterflies* (Boston: Beacon, 2000), particularly pages 103-127.

37 Written in 1943, "On Discovering a Butterfly" describes the process of finding and naming a new species of butterfly. Technically, the red label identifies a taxonomic "holotype," which designates the specimen chosen by the "author of the species" as the "basis of the first description of a new species" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Subsequent discoveries related to the specimen cannot infringe upon this naming convention, and the original name will hypothetically remain forever (see note 6).

38 Brian Boyd and Robert Michael Pyle, *Nabokov's Butterflies* (Boston: Beacon, 2000).

39 Hannah Höch, *Mass Media Scrapbook*, c.1933 (36 x 28 cm), 68, 91. (Berlinische Galerie, Berlin; © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn).

40 Reading Höch's scrapbook, we experience a filmic time that works effortlessly between the utopian and the real.

41 Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 71.

42 In fact, according to Maud Lavin, Höch's 113-page scrapbook serves as an important archive for many of these images, other copies of which had long since been discarded and lost.

Natasha Ruiz-Gómez

Essence and Evanescence in the *Hands* of Rodin

Art historian Leo Steinberg recalls his surprise when, during a 1962 visit to Auguste Rodin's modest estate outside Paris, he encountered hundreds of plaster sculptures that had never been catalogued or shown to the public. The works were languishing in the basement of the home in Meudon where Rodin [1840-1917] is buried. Steinberg writes of the "exhilaration upon first catching sight, atop a tall vitrine, of a forest of Clemenceau busts—not spare casts but all different, thirty-four of them, one serial portrait... unpublished and unexhibited."[1]

Perhaps the most mysterious and delicate works that Steinberg uncovered in Meudon were the hands that Rodin obsessively sculpted (fig. 1). More than one hundred fifty (by Steinberg's count) of these "restless fragments of body" lay side by side in drawers.[2] In most cases, it is difficult to judge whether these smaller-than-life-size works represent the hands of men or women, the young or the old. The sculptures are not finely modeled: the flesh betrays the porousness of clay or the opacity of plaster; their joints are represented by the indentations wrought by the pressure of the sculptor's fingertips; the fingernails are suggested with marks left by the sculptor's own; the ends of the appendages signal amputations, some by violent breaks and others by neat incisions. The material evidence of their sculpted nature demonstrates Rodin's known antipathy to photographic realism.[3] The apparent spontaneity with which these works were made, in addition to their abundance and variety, reveal not a focus on careful craft but rather an interest in capturing the fleeting gesture and its expressive potential. Each hand is positioned differently, with fingers caught in mid-motion, flexing or straightening. Some are grotesque and deformed, others gesture familiarly, but all are self-sufficient and fully realized. Moreover, these small fragments have no orientation and are "more familiar in their absolute motion than for their moorings at the nearest anatomical joint."[4] The absence of a clear orientation creates multivalent meanings—is the owner of the pointing hand giving direction, orating, or expiring? (fig. 2)

Rodin's reasons for sculpting these works are unclear. As the initial discovery of the Clemenceau busts reveals, he often worked in the serial mode, determining with each successive object the form of the next. The hand sculptures, however, do not fit this working pattern, nor are they evidently studies related to a specific commission or an official project. Beyond details from eye-witness accounts, little is known about these undated works except that they were probably created during the last decades of the artist's life.[5] These fragments, which Rodin would often "'pick ... up tenderly one by one and then turn ... about'" in the palm of his hand, seem intensely private and suggest an obsessive revisiting of the subject.[6] Rodin's studies of the hand are evidence of the sculptor's adherence to

Figure 1 (opposite) Auguste Rodin, *Main gauche dite main no. 2, dite main de pianiste* (plaster, 3.3 x 12.8 x 8.6 cm). Inventory #S.1260, Musée Rodin, Paris.

Figure 2 Auguste Rodin, *Main droite dite main no. 23* (plaster, 10.9 x 5.6 x 4.6 cm). Inventory #S.1238, Musée Rodin, Paris.

one of his own dictums: follow Nature. In discussing the way in which he worked, Rodin stated: "I promise myself to draw nearer to nature, that is to say, to truth."[7] The notion that the hand could reveal an individual's unique character most likely appealed to the sculptor in his pursuit of truth.

At the turn of the century, the hand was one of the few parts of the body that was routinely exposed in public; as such, it often served as a synecdoche for the concealed figure.[8] Steinberg hints at this, stating: "Rodin's little plasters simulate motion...by the ceaseless serpentine quiver of bone and sinew, as if the sum of gestures which a whole body can make and all its irritability had condensed in these single hands...."[9] In the nineteenth century, it was believed that hands could reveal a person's character in even the quickest of movements. The notion of a universal language of expression was not new—it had already been in the culture for hundreds of years and had been codified and widely accepted as an indispensable means of judging character.

One of the most compelling ways of reading the body in the seventeenth century was through the conventionalized language of expression. In artistic circles, the most important codifier of expression was the French painter and academician Charles Le Brun [1619–1690] with his *têtes d'expression*. An influential member of the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*, Le Brun inaugurated an important series of *conférences* on the paintings in the royal collection, during which he presented his theories on making art. In particular, his *Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*, which defined a pictorial code for representing and reading expression on a face via the positions of its features, had an incalculable impact on art in France over the following centuries.[10] Significantly, Le Brun codified and published his system in a series of "manuals" that recorded the face in drawings that were easy to read and replicate; a series of parallel horizontal lines parceled the face, while a vertical line divided it into symmetrical halves. "Passions," such as wonder, love, desire, and sorrow, were charted on this grid through the position of the lips, the eyes, the eyebrows, and so on. Thus mapped, a facial expression could easily be transferred and then embellished to create a legible visage in a painting or a sculpture.

Le Brun's interest in systematizing and mapping a language of expression derived from the longstanding belief in the relationship of the face to the soul and, consequently, the revelatory potential of the visage. Yet for artists the body remained a significant means of conveying expression. The established practice of the *Académie Royale* (later the *École des Beaux-Arts*) of drawing studies of nudes—even for figures that would be fully dressed or partially obscured in the finished work—points to the importance of the body in communicating information in art. The rhetorical gestures of the figures in seventeenth and eighteenth century painting serve to heighten emotional impact but also to echo and reinforce facial expressions that might not be legible in a canvas placed high on a wall. Though not treated by Le Brun's *conférence*, the gesture of the hands and the positioning of the body as a whole served a vital purpose.

A century later, Swiss pastor and theorist Johann Caspar Lavater [1741–1801] published his influential

Essays on Physiognomy, designed to promote the knowledge and the love of mankind, the first volume of which appeared in French in 1781. Most likely influenced by Le Brun's theories of expression,[11] Lavater's treatise delineates the principles of physiognomy, broadly defined as the study of the correspondence between individuals' physical features and their moral character and intelligence. Lavater is most famous today for his "science" as it applied to facial features. However, the third volume of his work is dedicated to the extension of physiognomic principles to all parts of the body—the foot, the hand, even the belly—and argues that each evinces the individual's character and intellect as clearly as the face. Each discrete area of the body is as important as the whole:

> And as every part of the body is found to have a relation to the body to which it belongs; as the measure of a single member, of a single little joint of the finger, may serve as a rule for finding and determining the proportions of the whole, the length and breadth of the body in all its extent—in like manner also the form of each part separately taken, serves to indicate the form of the combined whole.... There is only one common form, one common spirit, one common root.[12]

The hand receives particular attention from Lavater, because it, like the face, is not only expressive but also generally exposed.[13] For the individual who wished to study character, the hand came to be seen as an indispensable source of information.

Opposite an illustration of hands that gracefully change orientation—here with palm down and index finger extended, there delicately reaching up—the author delineates the importance of hands for the purposes of physiognomy, emphasizing the hand's singular capacity for "mobility," or expression, and thereby for communicating character:[14]

> Whether in a state of motion or of rest, the expression of the hand cannot be misunderstood. Its calmest position indicates our natural dispositions; its flexions, our actions and passions. In all its motions, it follows the impulse which is communicated to it by the rest of the body. It attests, therefore, likewise the dignity, and the superiority of man: it is, in its turn, the interpreter and the instrument of our faculties.[15]

The engravings of "noble and elevated" hands that illustrate this chapter receive Lavater's close attention. He criticizes the standard academic exercise of drawing

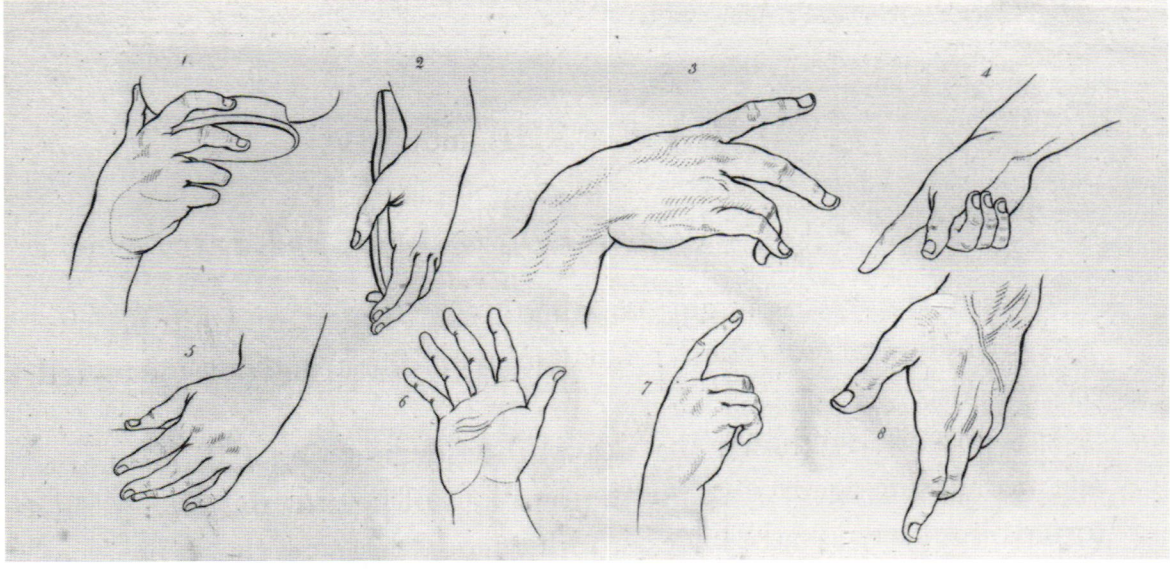


Figure 3 Engraving of eight hands executed by or under the inspection of Thomas Holloway. Illustrated in Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy, designed to promote the knowledge and the love of mankind*, translated by Henry Hunter, vol. 3 (London, 1789–98), 426.

the posed, nude model; he argues that the results—the so-called *académies*—"rarely… present natural attitudes: they deviate from those simple and free movements, which are the effect of our own will, and in which there is always discoverable a marked intention, a determining cause."[16] In other words, forcing the hand into affected postures diminishes its physiognomic value. His detailed analysis continues with a description of an engraving of eight gesturing hands (fig. 3): the third hand "[d]enotes a thinker fed with great ideas, and deficient neither in taste nor dexterity;" the fifth leads him to "suspect a disposition of extreme sensibility, nay even voluptuous;" and the eighth demonstrates "the elevation, the dignity, the wisdom, and the experience which characterized the Apostles."[17] Lavater's tomes, intended "primarily as a moral and prudential guide and, collaterally, as a source book for painters," prompted a new understanding of the parts of the body, their expressive potential, and their role in revealing character.[18]

Lavater's assertions regarding the relationship between physiognomy and expression were criticized in the nineteenth century by the influential French art critic and writer Louis-Émile-Edmond Duranty [1833–1880]. In 1867 he published an essay entitled, "Sur la Physionomie."[19] In this work, Duranty venomously criticizes physiognomy as a pseudo-science; though scientifically discredited by the late nineteenth century, its principles still held great cultural currency and were widely applied by writers, painters, sculptors, and caricaturists throughout this period.[20] Duranty decries Lavater's treatise, faulting it for mediocre illustrations, "instinctual explanations," and a naïve reliance on the purported correspondence between people and animals, and flatly asserts that most physiognomic theories are false.[21] He emphasizes instead the ease with which transient facial expression could be studied and interpreted[22] and essentially advocates empathy as the best approach to understanding others: "Take on the expression of your neighbor and you will feel and think like him, consequently you will know him deeply."[23]

Duranty's essay discusses the contemporary interest in the hand, which by that time had become one of the preferred signs for the study of character.[24] However, he considered the study of hands by "*manuistes* modernes" ultimately futile, claiming that gestural language was obscured by the inscription of the habitual movements of a profession, thus revealing more about one's class than one's character.[25] However, the very fact that Duranty dedicates several pages of his text to the hand reflects the status it had attained as a physiognomic signifier by the end of the Second Empire. It therefore comes as no surprise that Rodin turned to this expressive and energetic member in his private studies of Nature, for the hand's primary vocabulary is the ephemeral gesture, and, as German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel suggested, "[e]verything is in Rodin's gesture."[26]

Rodin's working method emphasized the expressive potential of the body in general and of the hand in particular. He used a technique that he first learned in the classroom of Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran at the *École impériale spéciale de dessin et de mathématiques* (the so-called *Petite École*); inexperienced nude models would walk freely about his studio, and Rodin would ask them to hold a position when he saw one that interested him.[27] By studying their natural attitudes instead of the tired, stock poses of professionals, he hoped to discover a truly universal expression.[28]

Rodin's focus on the language of universal expression is best seen in the diminutive studies of hands at Meudon that so moved Steinberg. These studies are as unique and expressive as faces glimpsed from a café window, yet they are not naturalistically rendered. The hands invite multiple readings: a single piece may suggest the infirmity of old age or a gesture of abrupt hesitation (fig. 4), the nervous energy and agility of a pianist or the hand of a gaunt youth (fig. 1), the despair of a beggar or of a yearning, fugitive movement (fig. 5). Delicate fingers may emphasize clean lines and contours, stumps may signal their own status as fragments, and gestures may even indicate specific illnesses.[29] Rodin's formulation of the modern

fragment as *pars pro toto* was recognized during his lifetime and is arguably his most significant legacy;[30] he once asked, "Why is it allowed to isolate the head [in a bust] and not portions of the body? Every part of the human figure is expressive."[31] Indeed, the hands reflect Rodin's profound contemplation of their expressive power and demonstrate his faith in the primacy of expression over description. Monique Laurent writes in the *avant-propos* of the catalogue to the Musée Rodin exhibition *Rodin, les mains, les chirurgiens* (1983) that these small works should be considered studies of nature, lacking symbolic or didactic content.[32] The indexical trace of Rodin's fingerprints, which conjures the artist's physical role in their creation, lyrically supports this reading.

The very dislocation and solitude implicit in the fragmentary nature of Rodin's hands imbue them with a poetry and potency that fall away when they are pressed into service in busy assemblages or hyperbolic presentations: when the hands are grouped with other sculptural fragments or enlarged and mounted, their fluid, fleeting gestures seem to solidify and stiffen. As "restless fragments" or when incorporated into a whole human form, however, they retain their expressiveness. The figure of *Andrieus d'Andres* from *The Burghers of Calais* [1884–1895], for example, hangs its head and clutches it in a pair of massive hands, a gesture of despair that captures the hopelessness of his situation (fig. 6). The hands are as expressive as the face hidden behind them—they are in harmony with this body both physically and psychically.

In 1900, the French writer and critic Gustave Kahn [1859–1936] devoted an article to Rodin's most famous sculpted hands—those that emerged from his work on *The Burghers of Calais*. Kahn called Rodin "the sculptor of hands, of hands furious, clenched, impassioned, damned" and praised the works as "masterpieces of science and lyricism."[33] A series of photographs by Eugène Druet of the *Main crispée* illustrates the article (for example, fig. 7). The fragment emerges from a sheet, its orientation shifting with each image; the light catches the bulging veins and the tense muscles of the

Figure 4 Auguste Rodin, *Main droite dite main no. 16* (plaster, 7.4 x 3.2 x 2.4 cm). Inventory #S.1327, Musée Rodin, Paris.

Figure 5 Auguste Rodin, *Main gauche* (terracotta, 6.3 x 7.8 x 4.7 cm). Inventory #S.1257, Musée Rodin, Paris.

Figure 6 Auguste Rodin, *Andrieus d'Andres*, detail of *The Burghers of Calais*, 1884–1895 (bronze). Musée Rodin, Paris.

Figure 7 Eugène Druet, *Main crispée surgissant des plis d'une couverture*, ca. 1868 (gelatin-silver print, 40.4 x 30 cm). Inventory #Ph.940, Musée Rodin, Paris.[34]

aching, reaching hand. Poignant images of futility and desperation, the photographs imbue the immobile sculpture of the arched hand with the illusion of movement, as though it had been captured in the midst of a pained gesture. They are captioned "mains d'expression," harking back to Le Brun's grand academic project, suggesting that for Rodin the hand was at least as important as the visage as a locus of expression. Thus the *Main crispée* becomes an embodiment of *fin-de-siècle* angst, an emblem of universal expression, and the reification of the ephemeral.

This article is an excerpt from the author's forthcoming dissertation, "*Morceaux d'Amphithéâtre*: Science and the Sculpture of Auguste Rodin." The author wishes to thank Talia Dorsey for publishing this article and for her astute suggestions; Beck Feibelman, Meredith Malone, Freyda Spira, and especially Christine Poggi for their comments on versions of this essay; Virginie Delaforge and Anne Marie Chabot of the Musée Rodin, Paris, for their kind assistance; and Raffi Yegparian for his tireless editing and unfaltering support.

1 Leo Steinberg, "Rodin," *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 324, 338. According to the catalogue of the Musée Rodin exhibition, *Rodin, les mains, les chirurgiens*, Rodin modeled or sculpted over one thousand hands during his lifetime; the catalogue also states that an early curator of the collection, Georges Grappe, counted over 450 hands in plaster and terracotta. Musée Rodin, *Rodin, les mains, les chirurgiens*, ex. cat. (Paris: Éditions du musée Rodin, 1983), 17, 67.

2 Ibid., 338.

3 See, for example, Auguste Rodin, *Rodin on Art and Artists* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1983), 33–34.

4 Steinberg, "Rodin," 338.

5 The Musée Rodin, Paris, is holding an exhibition on the sculpted hands in the spring of 2006. "Rodin: La main révèle l'homme" and its accompanying catalogue by Hélène Marraud may shed more light on these enigmatic works.

6 Kathleen, Lady Kennet, *Self-Portrait of an Artist: From the Diaries of Kathleen, Lady Kennet* (London, 1949), 42; quoted in Steinberg, "Rodin," 339.

7 "Je me promis de me rapprocher de la nature, c'est-a-dire de la vérité"; all translations are the author's own unless otherwise noted. François Dujardin-Beaumetz, *Entretiens avec Rodin* [1913] (Paris: Éditions du musée Rodin, 1992), 66.

8 With the advent of fingerprinting—a "radically synecdochic procedure"—in the nineteenth century, "the key to identity could be found in the merest trace of the body's tactile presence in the world." Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October 39* (Winter 1986): 34.

9 Steinberg, "Rodin," 339.

10 Charles Le Brun, "Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière," compiled and translated by Jennifer Montagu in Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's "Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 112–140. It was published in more than sixty editions over the next hundred years; Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 19.

11 Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression*, 31.

12 Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy, designed to promote the knowledge and the love of mankind*, trans. Henry Hunter (London, 1789–98), II: 298.

13 Ibid., III: 421.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., III: 422.

16 Ibid., III: 423.

17 Ibid., III: 426.

18 Judith Wechsler, *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 24.

19 Louis-Émile-Edmond Duranty, "Sur la Physionomie," *La Revue Liberale 2* (July 25, 1867): 499–523.

20 For the application of physiognomic principles in the sculpture of a contemporary of Rodin, see Anthea Callen's analysis of Edgar Degas' *Little Dancer of Fourteen Years* [ca. 1880–1881]. Anthea Callen, *The Spectacular Body: Science, Method and Meaning in the Work of Degas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 1–35. The popular familiarity with and wide acceptance of physiognomic principles continued after the end of the nineteenth century. For example, Eugène Ledos published editions of his *Traité de la physionomie humaine* in the first decade of the twentieth century.

21 Duranty, "Sur la Physionomie," 510-515.

22 He asserts, "Lire couramment sur une figure les sentiments qui passent dans l'homme n'est pas difficile, on n'a pas attendu Aristote, Lavater et M. Gratiolet pour deviner qu'un homme est triste, joyeux ou en colère. Mais reconnaître dans la physionomie les sentiments qui logent en l'homme, voilà qui est ardu et tentant"; ibid., 508.

23 "Donnez à votre figure l'expression qu'a celle de votre voisin et vous sentirez et penserez comme lui, par conséquent vous le connaîtrez à fond." Ibid., 516. It should be noted that there is a classist and racist subtext in Duranty's essay, as there are in most physiognomic texts. For example, he writes, "Il y a une physionomie paysanne et ouvrière, une physionomie aristocratique et une physionomie bourgeoise intermédiaire." He later states, "L'oiel bridé des Chinois et des Japonais leur fait sentir les colorations d'une façon particulière et les a rendus les maîtres de l'art décoratif." Ibid., 515, 517.

24 Ibid., 506.

25 "Mais comment les *manuistes* modernes n'ont-ils pas vu que les lignes de la main sont les traces des plis que lui font faire ses mouvements; que ces mouvements sont déterminés par la disposition des os et des muscles; et que quelques-uns d'entre eux sont rendus plus fréquents par les habitudes de chaque profession. [...] Ils ignorent que la main ne se plie pas de la même façon lorsqu'elle tient une plume, une épée, une bêche ou un rabot;" ibid., 507.

26 "...in der Rodinschen Geste liegt alles"; George Simmel, "Rodin" [1911], *Philosophische Kultur* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 1983), 147.

27 He preferred models with no experience and claimed to use only those that chance sent his way. Ruth Butler, "Rodin and the Paris Salon," *Rodin Rediscovered*, ed. Albert Elsen, ex. cat. (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 39, and Dujardin-Beaumetz, *Entretiens avec Rodin*, 66.

28 Musée Rodin, *Rodin, les mains, les chirurgiens*, 67. This was an important aspect of Rodin's own working method throughout his life—in an undated letter in the Omer Dewavrin Correspondence File in the Musée Rodin, he wrote: "Je suis à Paris [l'antagoniste] de cet art théatral et d'Ecole. C'est vouloir me faire le suiveur de gens dont je méprise l'art conventionnel." Courtesy of the Archives du Musée Rodin.

In many significant ways, however, Rodin participated in the academic system and practiced art as an academician would. For example, he would often begin studies of figures in the nude, before clothing them in the finished work. In speaking to a writer who had visited his studio and was shocked to see nude studies for *The Monument to Balzac* [1898], Rodin said, "'I'm in the habit of sculpting my marble children first without clothes; Rude did the same thing. Later I only have to throw a cloth over them and everything vibrates at the points where it touches the body [*tout vibre aux adhérences*]; thus the figure is made of flesh and blood, not a cold effigy.'" Jules Bois, "Etudes de sculpteurs. Auguste Rodin," *L'Évènement* (Paris) (July 24, 1893); quoted in Frederic V. Grunfeld, *Rodin: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1987), 315.

29 For more on this, see the exhibition catalogue from the Musée Rodin, *Rodin, les mains, les chirurgiens*, and the author's doctoral dissertation, "*Morceaux d'Amphithéâtre*: Science and the Sculpture of Auguste Rodin" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, forthcoming).

30 See Albert E. Elsen, *The Partial Figure in Modern Sculpture: From Rodin to 1969*, ex. cat. (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1969), especially 16-28. Rodin's reframing of the fragment as *pars pro toto* is in line with a widespread cultural phenomenon which took the fragment as a metaphor of modernity. While a discussion of this paradigmatic shift is important in relation to the sculptor's oeuvre, it is outside the purview of this essay.

31 Muriel Ciolkowska, "Auguste Rodin on Prejudice in Art," *Englishwoman* (London) (April 1910): 266-267; quoted in John L. Tancock, *The Sculpture of Auguste Rodin: The Collection of the Rodin Museum, Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976), 266.

32 She continues that the abnormalities diagnosed in many of these hands, which the exhibition highlights, serve "paradoxalement...à faire paraître les mains naturelles, vivantes, animées." Monique Laurent, "Avant-Propos," *Rodin, les mains, les chirurgiens*, 11.

33 "le sculpteur des mains, des mains furieuses, crispées, cabrées, damnées" and "chefs-d'oeuvre de science et de lyrisme"; Gustave Kahn, "Les Mains chez Rodin," *Auguste Rodin et son Oeuvre*, Octave Mirbeau, et al. (Paris: Éditions de 'La Plume,' 1900), 28.

34 The Musée Rodin stipulates that any publication of this photograph must indicate that it was taken ca. 1868. However, Musée Rodin catalogues, including *Rodin, les mains, les chirurgiens*, date the photograph to ca. 1898. Since Druet and Rodin only met in 1896, the latter date is clearly more accurate.

Jennifer Rhee

Time Embodied
The Lived Body in On Kawara's *Date Paintings*

An introduction...

Since January 4, 1966, On Kawara has produced over 2000 *Date Paintings*, each one stating the date of its inception. In the span of one day, Kawara undertakes and completes each *Date Painting*; and if not finished by midnight of the date, he destroys the painting. Kawara, a frequent traveler, inscribes each date in the local language of the city in which he is on the stated date, with the exception of paintings produced in countries that do not utilize a Roman alphabet; in such cases he uses Esperanto. Until recently, Kawara always included a contemporaneous local newspaper clipping that he would either rest or paste inside the cardboard box he made for each painting. Kawara then registered the paintings in a journal by title (the date), subtitle, size, and color. A sampling of the subtitles is as follows:

> I have decided to be alone. (1.20.66)
>
> Beatles and their neutrality. (1.2.66)
>
> Two students shot in Santo Domingo. (2.9.66)
>
> U.S. Marines estimated today they have killed 1110 North Vietnamese in last 4 days. (3.7.66)
>
> Numerous sightings of unidentified flying objects since March 16, in Michigan, U.S.A. (3.25.66)
>
> Skirts go up-up-up in Britain. (4.17.66)
>
> 9:00 (2) PERRY MASON: 'Case of the Positive Negative.' Raymond Burr, Barbara Hale, Brian Donleavy. (4.30.66)
>
> Are your ideas on computers worth shouting about? (5.28.66)
>
> I make love to the days. (7.25.66)
>
> Poison. (8.27.66)
>
> Tony Cox and Yoko left New York for Europe early in the morning. (9.1.66)
>
> A garden with artificial flowers and a yellow net in my studio. (9.16.66)
>
> Not With My Wife, You Don't. (11.3.66)
>
> A baby crying through history. (12.3.66)
>
> Take it early. You can feel better every minute of every hour of every day of every month of every year. (1.23.67)[1]

In spite of the paintings' appearance and method of seemingly uncompromising and depersonalized objectivity, these subtitles and their evolution suggest that the works are constituted, in fact, by a deeply subjective presence. For, from the global to the extremely personal, these subtitles are the site of emergence of an undeniable intimacy between their subjects and their author (Kawara). The subject of the subtitles *is* the author, *is* Kawara, as the subtitles exist as articulations of his thoughts and his days—in other words, of his person. Quite a few of these subtitles refer to the *Date Paintings* themselves, such as "'I am afraid of my *Today* paintings' (29 May 1966)", "'I am painting this painting' (18 January 1966)", and "I am dating here' (28 January 1966)."[2] However, after December 28, 1972's subtitle, "*Jag vet inte*," ("I don't know," in Swedish) the subtitles have simply stated the day of the week. In his piece, "Where 'I Don't Know' Is the Write Answer," John Watkins recounts On Kawara's transition from expository and descriptive subtitles to "*Jag vet inte*" to the names of days with an

all too suggestive typographic error: "The latter form of entry [subtitles about the *Date Paintings* themselves] becomes increasingly frequent from early 1971 until '*Jag vet inte*' and finally the artist is simply just names the days [*sic*]."[3] One may assume that Watkins meant to write "and finally the artist simply just names the days." However, perhaps he meant to write "and finally the artist is simply just the names of the days." Or, perhaps most interesting of all, is the possibility that Watkins meant both at once—that while writing the names of the days, Kawara is simply the days named.

Merleau-Ponty's lived body in time and space

French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty locates the phenomenon of existence in what he calls the "lived body." According to him, the body exists beyond its physicality. The body is the means by which one experiences the world, objects in the world, time and space. However, the body does not merely collide with these objects and move on unaffected. The body is constituted by the confluence of forces with which it comes into contact—the temporal, the spatial, the social, the psychic, the political, etc. And it is this body, with its field of experiential forces, that comprises the phenomenon that is the body as lived. And, while certain forces may be more or less universal—such as time and space—these forces only have resonance in their relation to an individual's being. As he writes:

> I am the absolute source, my existence does not stem from my antecedents, from my physical and social environment; instead it moves out towards them and sustains them, for I alone bring into being for myself (and therefore into being in the only sense that the word can have for me) the tradition which I elect to carry on, or the horizon whose distance from me would be abolished—since that distance is not one of its properties—if I were not there to scan it with my gaze.[4]

While these forces constitute the lived, the experienced, of being itself, these forces have relevance only insofar as they are inhabited, or lived, by the subject. Elizabeth Grosz defines her notion of Merleau-Ponty's lived body, stating that it is "a phenomenon experienced by me and thus provides the very horizon and perspectival point which places me in the world and makes relations between me, other objects, and other subjects possible. It is the body as I live it, as I experience it, and as it shapes my experience."[5]

In constituting the critical importance of this subjectivity, Merleau-Ponty disengages time from its abstraction as a universal property by locating time in its specific relation to the subject. Time finds relevance as one of many forces lived by the body. "The course of time is no longer the stream itself: it is the landscape as it rolls by for the moving observer. Time is, therefore, not a real process, not an actual succession that I am content to record. It arises from *my* relation to things."[6] In other words, one is not carried along by the currents of time. Rather, time emerges in relation to one's ever-changing position as subject. Time, like the landscape, rests in the background of one's existence. One's existence is not constituted out of time, but rather time emerges as a crucial description of and suggestion towards one's specifically embodied existence.

According to Merleau-Ponty, the critical understanding one must broach in order to contemplate time as a force lived by one's phenomenal existence "is how to make time explicit as it comes into being and makes itself evident, time at all times underlying the *notion* of time, not as an object of our knowledge, but as a dimension of our being."[7] Kawara engages this precise phenomenological undertaking in his *Date Paintings*, as he explores time not as an abstract "notion", but rather as "a dimension of our being." In order to do so, Kawara presents time not as a transcendent continuum, but as a series of points that are organized, and even produced, through his own existence. It is only through Kawara's embodied being that this time ('underlying the *notion* of time') is de-abstracted, recorded, and thus constituted. As Merleau-Ponty writes (and Kawara paints): "It is of the essence of time to be in process of self-production, and not to be; never, that is, to be completely constituted. Constituted time, the series of possible relations in terms of before and after, is not time itself, but the ultimate recording of time."[8] Constituted time cannot exist outside its recording. Thus, constituted time cannot exist without

a recorder, without a being whose temporal existence can be made specific, without Kawara. Time is always *of* one's being. In the *Date Paintings*, time is always *of* Kawara. Kawara's works are about time only insofar as time is about Kawara's being. The time stated in the *Date Paintings* and the location given through language are very much about Kawara, about his precise location in time and space. And this time that is given, this location that is given, they are Kawara's to share in his works, as only with his existence do they acquire any meaning. They are literally incorporated by Kawara in his existence—time and space are his to convey, as they *are* only through him. As Merleau-Ponty makes clear, one takes possession of the coordinates that comprise one's existence, as opposed to merely existing as byproducts of them: "we must therefore avoid saying that our body is *in* space, or *in* time. It *inhabits* space and time."[9]

In their manifest exactitude, the *Date Paintings* mark the coordinates of Kawara's being, and as such, are intensely constituted by Kawara himself. Kawara positions his *Date Paintings* within a larger constellation, the *Today* series, which include other recent works, such as "I Met," "I Went," and 'I Got Up," which similarly attend to a serial temporality, a precise spatial locating, a meticulous recording of daily existence. "I Met" is a record of the people Kawara met on a particular day; "I Went" is a plotting on a map of the places Kawara went on a particular day; and "I Got Up" is a series of postcards sent out from around the world with the message "I got up at..." followed by the specific time Kawara woke up on the day stated. The *Today* series is not a collection of disparate artifacts and moments, but rather is unified within Kawara's being as corporeal subject. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, one is not a series of points within space and time, but rather space and time merely *point to* one's existence. Kawara literalizes this mapping of points in his "I Went" series. The points on the maps do not comprise a larger mapping of abstracted space, but rather locate Kawara's decidedly physical presence in the world as it encounters spatial and temporal forces. For, according to Merleau-Ponty, "to be a body, is to be tied to a certain world, as we have seen; our body is not primarily *in* space: it is of it."[10] Kawara is not *in* the time and space depicted in his works. Rather, he is *of* time and space, constituted by time and space such that the time and space depicted in his works are *of* Kawara. His works, as expressions of time and space, make explicit the essence of time as both "in process of self-production" and that which is "not to be." For, in the *Date Paintings,* time quickly ceases to exist outside Kawara, as time's passage both authorizes as well as exists only within the paintings as series, as process. The next painting cannot be until Kawara's existence within time no longer holds relevance to the previous painting. Time, from painting to painting, becomes no longer.

Language's wonderful obsolescence, or, a successful language is a disappearing language

Much has been written about Kawara's mistrust of language, his recognition of the inadequacy of language to truly communicate. According to Watkins' conversations with the artist, "Kawara does not believe that authentic communication is possible."[11] And yet, Kawara does not answer this inadequacy by eschewing language for the figural, by attempting to transcend language. Kawara, in fact, turned to language from the figural images that characterized his early work.

We see in Kawara's *Date Paintings* an intense adherence to, a hyper-literalization of, the linguistic. Each *Date Painting* is absolutely subject to the temporality signified by the date of the paintings. If Kawara does not complete the painting by midnight of the date painted, the painting is destroyed. This is Kawara's attempt to capture time, to expand what is temporary into a realm of permanence by a hyper-fidelity to that which is fleeting. The painting can only survive beyond its time if it is purely proper to its time, completed before midnight of the day it states.

Kawara further literalizes language by inscribing each date in the local language of the city in which he is on the stated date. Language, in its significatory capacity as well as its cultural multiplicities, serves to

locate Kawara's consciousness in a precise moment in time and space. As the paintings travel beyond their signified spatio-temporal specificity, Kawara can, in a sense, exist dually in two times and places at once. Ironically, only by wholly succumbing to a finite temporality and spatial specificity can Kawara exist outside of it. And, this signification of Kawara can only be accomplished through language's deferral to meaning. As Merleau-Ponty writes, "the wonderful thing about language is that it promotes its own oblivion: my eyes follow the lines on the paper, and from the moment I am caught up in their meaning, I lose sight of them."[12] I argue that language in Kawara's *Date Paintings* operates precisely by this logic of simultaneous recession and emergence.

Language, in its literality, in its marking of time and place, recedes, as Kawara's artistic process, his expression of the spatio-temporal specificity of his being, emerges. Of late, Kawara's *Date Paintings* include neither the personalized subtitle nor the newspaper clipping from the date and place. Language, Kawara seems to be saying, stands alone. For in his *Date Paintings*, language is both the barrier as well as the conduit to the phenomenological presence of Kawara. The date, something that has such a banal presence and function in our everyday lives, becomes the means by which Kawara's existence is communicated. "Expression fades out before what is expressed."[13] In other words, a successful language is a disappearing language. In the *Date Paintings*, language is the expression that "fades out" before Kawara. And the time that is indicated, the place that is given, serve only to communicate Kawara's being, to mark the presence of Kawara's corporealized existence, his lived body.

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NOTES

1 Dan Cameron, "The On Kawara Story," *Arts Magazine* (October 1986): 38.

2 Jonathan Watkins, "Where 'I Don't Know' Is the Right Answer," Jonathan Watkins. *On Kawara* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2002), 42.

3 Ibid.

4 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1989), ix.

5 Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 86.

6 Merleau-Ponty, 412.

7 Ibid., 415.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 139.

10 Ibid., 148.

11 Watkins, 60.

12 Merleau-Ponty, 401.

13 Ibid.

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thresholds 32
access

Thresholds # 32 aspires to shed light on an interdisciplinary range of interpretations and meanings associated with the theme of access.

Restricted access to certain architectural spaces is a phenomenon found in all cultures at all times, transcending limitations of genre, period, belief system, and nationality. Does the notion of access have any impact on the definition of architecture and more specifically on the theorization of certain architectural styles? How might an artwork or architectural space allow or prevent access? As globalization and technology give us greater "virtual" access, we are becoming arguably more restricted in a physical sense. Why do we still question what is accessible in our world of globalization and "virtual" nomadic wandering?

Call for Papers. For the Spring '06 issue of Thresholds, we seek submissions from graduate students and scholars in a wide range of fields, including media and visual arts, architecture, and art history. We are interested in diverse inquiries related to the concept of accessibility, from purely theoretical and historical analyses to actual works of art and architecture.

To whom is access to a given space granted? Is it offered based on criteria that are economic, psychological, physical, geographical, political, or conferred according to national affinity, identity, religious orientation, ethnic background, and so on? Many minority communities in different societies have been denied access to places outside of their neighborhoods, whether these neighborhoods are actual ghettos or not. How do such physical restrictions interact with the related concepts of history, memory, nostalgia, nationality, politics, and power?

Similar restrictions extend also into the academic realm. Art and architectural history relies partially on archival evidence. How do we evaluate the historiography of art and architecture with regard to the accessibility of archives? In Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression (1995), Derrida reminds us how, through turning Freud's house in Vienna into a museum, the secretive became public. How does the accessibility of such sources affect our perceptions of the past? Moreover, there is a distinction between actual archives (official places for the retention of records, with systems of storage, organization, cataloging) and those that are often accessed through memory. How can a historian access memory, in a collective sense?

Historically, it has been possible to gain access to a restricted place through masquerade and transvestite disguise. Mikhail Bakhtin describes how in the medieval carnival there was a leveling of performer and spectator, a reversal of hierarchy, where boundaries were eliminated and the distances between people were suspended. Throughout the centuries, homosocial spaces gained ground in many Islamic societies due to the inaccessibility of the harem to outside men, and to the forbidden nature of public spaces to most women. Indeed, these processes are strategic rather than incidental. What particular role do politicians, architects, or even the police play in allowing or preventing access?

Submissions may address the above issues, but need not be limited to them.