ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013
PROFILE NO 226

GUEST-EDITED BY JONATHAN MOSLEY
AND RACHEL SARA

THE ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSGRESSION

Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisement for Architecture (Transgression)*, 1976–7

If you want to follow architecture's first rule, break it.

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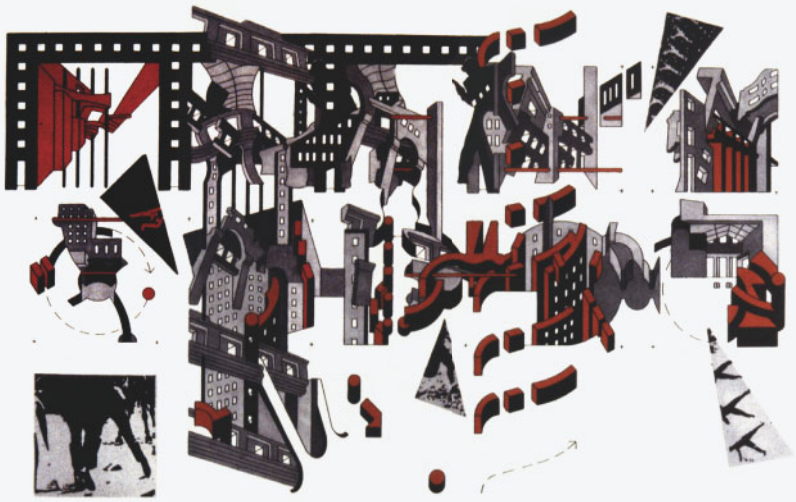

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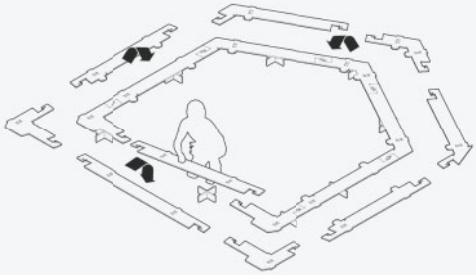

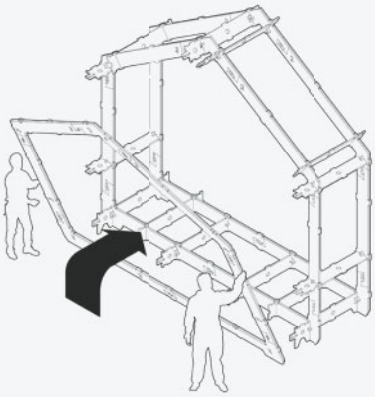

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The architecture of transgression is 'an architecture that disrupts our expectations, that goes beyond, or slips between, visible, accepted norms.'
— Guest-Editors Jonathan Mosley and Rachel Sara

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Front cover: Sophie Warren and Jonathan Mosley with Can Altay, *Rogue Game*, *First Play*, Spike Island, Bristol, 2012. © Sophie Warren and Jonathan Mosley

Inside front cover: Detail from Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisement for Architecture (Transgression)*, 1976–7. © Bernard Tschumi

EDITORIAL

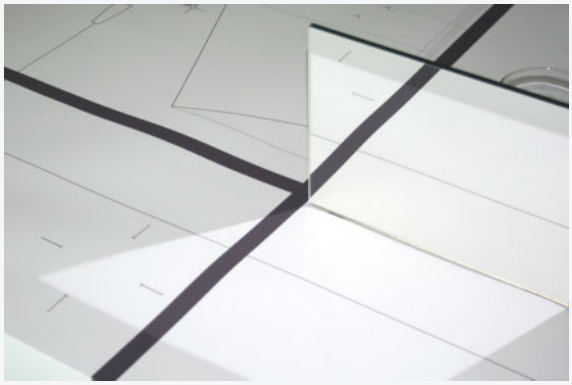
Helen Castle

In 2013, AD opened the year with innovation.[1] It now closes it with transgression. Though innovation and transgression are different by definition – innovation is focused on creativity and transgression is all about overstepping boundaries and conventions – they do share in common a lively and disruptive spirit: innovation relies on a certain of level of playfulness just as transgression requires a daring naughtiness. Perhaps most significantly, innovation and transgression share the same desire to go beyond established limits and to question the given. It is this that makes them most potent for architecture, with the power to provoke and probe current conventions. To have a fertile design culture, architecture has to be a dynamic art that is constantly moving, so that the centre is relentlessly challenged and propelled forwards by those operating at the margins. The best design work never comes out of complacency; it is produced in a jostling atmosphere in which peers and young whippersnappers are constantly angling for position.

It is the way in which transgression stands apart from innovation that makes it most pertinent today, with its focus on crossing social and political boundaries. As described by Louis Rice in this issue, the Occupy Movement in 2011 realised the power of physical occupation of urban space even if it was temporary (see pp 70–5). Most aptly for practice, transgression helps us to test out the possible futures of architecture and design, as suggested by Alastair Parvin's article on open-source architecture (pp 90–5). This can be through the activities of practices, working nimbly at a small scale, in a manner that can be paralleled with the incremental model of digital innovators who in the last decade have by iterative means explored the potential of a project or a product only through increments. High-risk design research that is prepared to transgress all known boundaries, given limits and conventions will become particularly necessary if architecture is to become fluid enough to reorganise and reshape itself in the shifting tides that new technologies bring. AD

Note

1. Pia Ednie-Brown, Mark Burry and Andrew Burrow, AD *The Innovation Imperative: Architectures of Vitality*, Jan/Feb (no 1), 2013.



Sophie Warren and Jonathan Mosley, *Spectator or Player?*, 2012
top left: One door, two doorways, one space beyond; an architectural intervention which brings into question different modes of spectatorship on the threshold to a gallery, forming here an entrance to *Rogue Game* at Spike Island, Bristol (see cover of this issue for an image of the playing arena).

Sophie Warren and Jonathan Mosley, *Utopian talk-show line-up*, 2013
top right: A detail of the setting for the event series, constructed in each location by a graphic framework, a page from the *Beyond Utopia* book, rescaled and then occupied by readers and objects to create a live discursive territory.

Rachel Sara, 'Carnival: Performed Transgressions', in Louis Rice et al, *architecture + transgression*, The Architecture Centre, Bristol, 2012
bottom: This exhibition and essay celebrate the role of carnivalesque events such as zombie walks, street parties, illegal raves, and even knit bombing and skateboarding as transgressive spatial practices that have the power to critique, deformalise and rejuvenate the formal city.

ABOUT THE GUEST-EDITORS
JONATHAN MOSLEY AND RACHEL SARA

Architecture and Transgression is an emerging research and practice-as-research group at the University of the West of England (UWE) in Bristol, UK. The guest-editors of this issue of Δ, along with other colleagues at this experimental Bristol school, are developing exploratory, cross-disciplinary and international projects, collaborations and publications. They are hosting the Architectural Humanities Research Association 10th International Conference on Transgression in November 2013, with associated publications to follow in 2014 (www1.uwe.ac.uk/et/research/transgression).

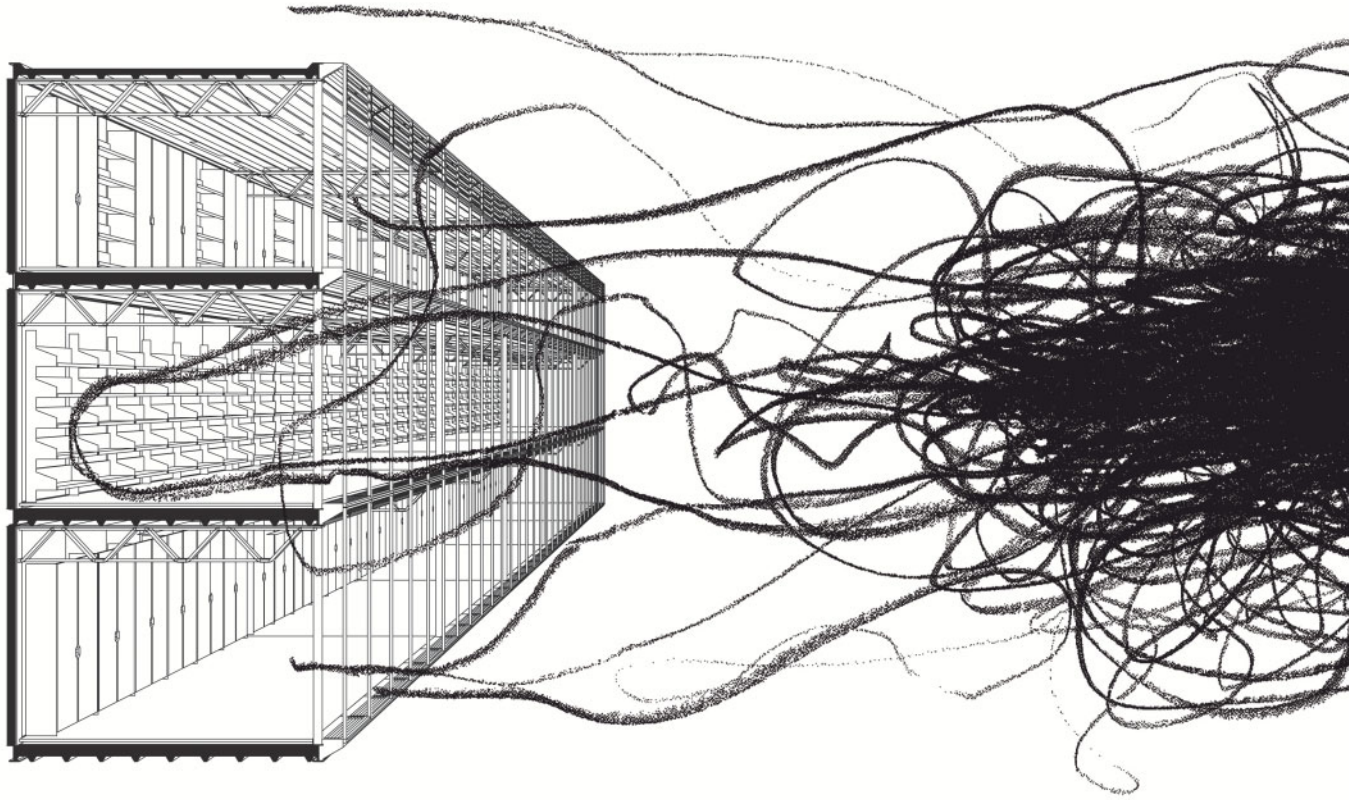
Jonathan Mosley is a practising artist/architect and holds a senior lectureship in architecture in which he leads Design Research and the final-year studio of the Master of Architecture programme. In practice, his collaborative studio, founded with artist Sophie Warren, produces trans-disciplinary projects and acts as a site of critical exchange between architects, artists and theorists. The projects create conceptual and spatial frameworks, employing participatory strategies to construct situations for collective encounter. The studio produces installations, events and publications. An immersive live installation, with Can Altay, that transgresses and displaces the logics of the multi-use sports hall, *Rogue Game* has been exhibited at Spike Island, Bristol (2012); Casco, Utrecht (2011); and The Showroom, London (2010). The game proposes in the same space the simultaneous play of three or more sports. The project *Beyond Utopia*, with Robin Wilson, created an imaginary architectural scheme for a vertical urban common for central London as a planning application. This playful provocation, documented as a screenplay entwining reality and fiction, forms the focus of the book *Beyond Utopia* (2012) published by Errant Bodies Press with responses to the work by Maria Fusco, Brandon LaBelle, Marie-Anne McQuay, Paul O'Neill, Elizabeth Price, Jane Rendell and Lee Stickells. The studio is currently developing an international series of live events of rapid-fire readings that explore how to play Utopia. Part speculative forum, part game show, the *Utopian talk-show line-up* (2013) opens a discursive space as a testimony to the collective desire to imagine difference. The events will take place at Eastside Projects Birmingham; The Showroom, London; Pro QM, Berlin; and the Townhouse Gallery, Cairo (www.warrenandmosley.com).

Dr Rachel Sara is Programme Leader for the Master of Architecture programme at UWE. She studied architecture to doctoral level at the University of Sheffield, and has contributed to a range of academic architectural journals, books and conferences. Her research work particularly explores 'other' forms of architecture; specifically examining architecture without architects through investigations of the performed architecture of the carnival and the transient architecture of the campsite. This influences her studio teaching, where she runs 'live' community-based projects, as well as exploring the relationship between architecture and dance. She is a director of the Design Research Group at UWE, is a PhD and masters supervisor, and teaches Design Research and Design Studio. She was co-curator of the 'Transgression: Architecture without Architects' exhibition at the Bristol Architecture Centre in 2012, and co-authored the associated book, *architecture + transgression*. Δ

SPOTLIGHT

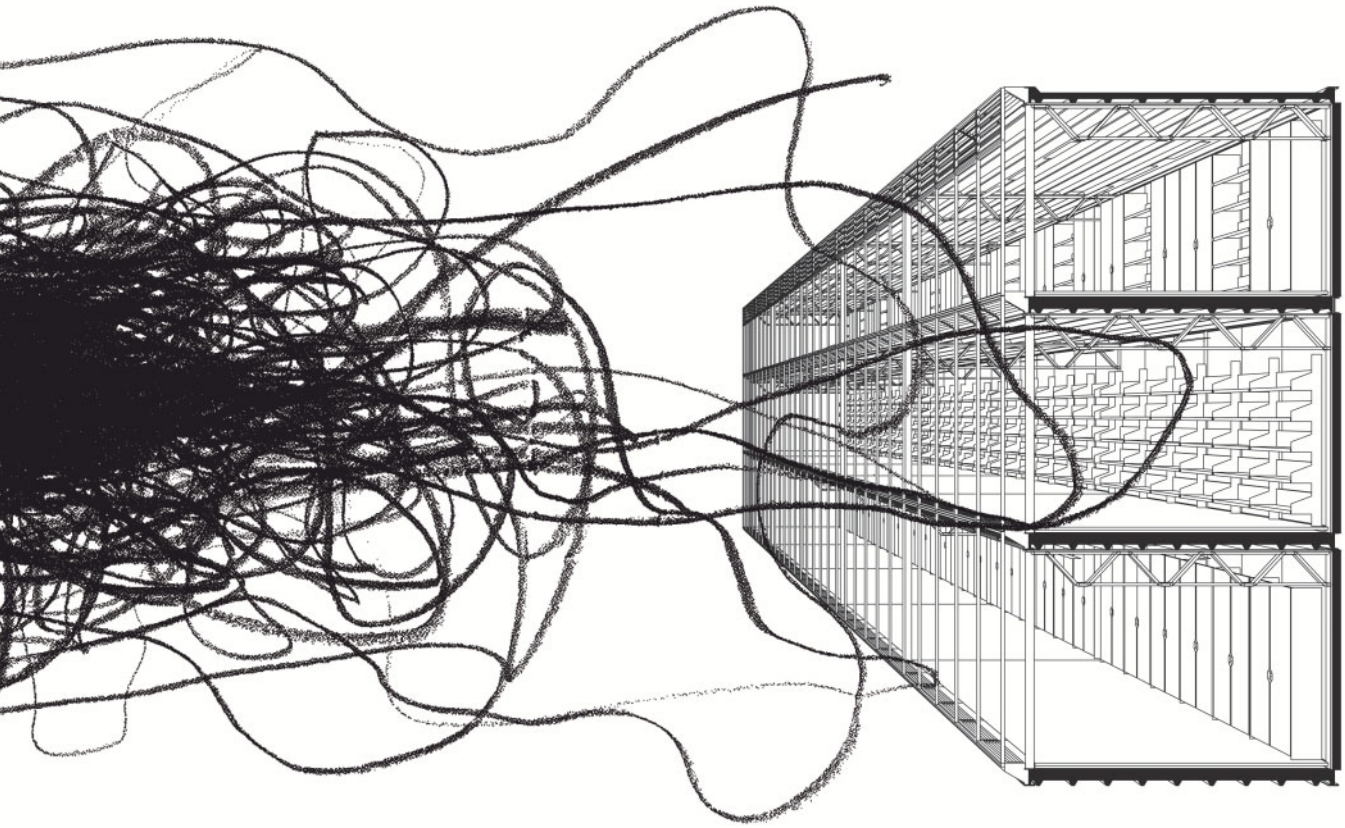
EXYZT

Metavilla, French Pavilion for the Venice Architecture Biennale, Venice, 2006
Shown under construction, the scheme was conceived both as a collective building and living experience within the context of the exhibition and as an embassy for French design.



Didier Faustino/Bureau des Mésarchitectures

Alumnos 47 Foundation, Mexico City, due for completion 2014
The project creates two programmed areas with a more loosely programmed interstitial zone.



Superflex

***Flooded McDonald's*, film still, 2009**
The environment of the McDonald's is at times during the film partially familiar and partially exceptional, with the balance shifting towards the latter with a slow insistence.

Jonathan Mosley and Rachel Sara

THE ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSGRESSION

TOWARDS A DESTABILISING ARCHITECTURE

Sunset with burning building, Helsinki, Finland, 2006
Fuelling our desire for destruction, a burning building represents a violent shift from functional architecture to spectacle. This act of arson was in protest to the building being condemned by the city council to make way for a new concert hall. Previously the building had been used for low-budget events, from flea markets to parties.

A burnt-out house in Detroit, an improvised tent city in Madrid, a living, inhabited exhibition pavilion, a manual for constructing walking buildings, a flooded McDonald's and an incomplete theatre. Framed here as architectural outputs, all unsettle us – both literally and metaphorically – in our desire for stability; they agitate our understanding of architecture. All are unreasonable forms of architecture; they transgress the limits of accepted architectural endeavour.

To transgress is to go beyond the boundaries set by law, discipline or convention. It implies a naughtiness, or wayward behaviour, and acts as a challenge to the establishment. This challenge is not reactionary for the sake of reaction, but acts to question aspects of established practice that typically remain unchallenged. The transgression is therefore neither good nor evil – both are judgements dependent on context and personal position (one man's terrorist is another man's revolutionary); rather, it is a challenge that forces a recalibration of what is accepted, what is the norm.[1] Transgressive acts of architecture might be seen to be pushing at the boundaries of what architecture is, and what it could or even should be.

When the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo led to the toppling of Egyptian President Mubarak in February 2011, we were all reawakened to the political and cultural power of the architectural act; an act of demarcating and redefining territory and of spatial occupation. It was a striking reminder of the potency of transgression as a provocative challenge to accepted norms of behaviour. Bernard Tschumi suggests that:

> there is no social or political change without the movements and programmes that transgress supposedly stable institutionality – architectural or otherwise; that there is no architecture without everyday life, movement, and action; and that it is the most dynamic aspects of their disjunctions that suggest a new definition of architecture.[2]

This act of transgression seemed to have been realised, if not by architects then by the people. Architecture was challenged to reawaken its political consciousness.

Simultaneously, the ongoing economic crisis in Europe and the US since 2008 has led to the partial collapse of existing structures that support the commissioning and production of architecture, and has thus prompted architects to branch out into other areas of practice, from speculative open-source projects to collaborative, temporary design-and-build projects. In order for architecture to remain relevant, to position and reinvent itself in changing times, it has had to move across perceived disciplinary limits, to explore an expanded field of architectural pursuit that dispels notions of reduction. Architectural practice has had to be explored in the broadest possible terms as both built and unbuilt work that affects the meaning, experience or understanding of our built environments, or, as Tschumi eloquently defined it, the 'pleasurable and sometimes violent confrontation of spaces and activities'.[3]

The temporal collision of these two imperatives, the political and the economic, emphasises a current case for exploring transgression in architecture. However, it also reminds us that what is transgressive is entirely dependent on the conventions of the time. In other words, transgressive acts are fluidly defined: they are positioned in relation to their temporal and cultural context. Marginal activities in one place or time are often subsequently subsumed, or as the Situationists would argue 'recuperated',[4] into the mainstream. In this way it is often the activities of the margins that come to be representative of the centre. For example, consider how Marcel Duchamp's 'readymade' artwork of a signed porcelain urinal titled *Fountain*, while scandalous in 1917, has come to exemplify a significant part of 20th-century art practice.

So, the essays and projects gathered together in this issue of Δ have to be understood as an investigation of the architecture of transgression that is bound to a particular moment in time, and a particular cultural viewpoint. Read in 20 years' time, some of these practices will have been recuperated while others will have ceased to have relevance. In this way the edge both reinforces and then redefines the centre, and what is transgressive both appears and disappears.

The concept of transgression is introduced through a powerful essay by the eminent sociologist, Chris Jenks (pp 20–3). An interview with Bernard Tschumi then locates transgression as a concept within architecture (pp 32–7). Throughout the other featured essays and articles, the issue attempts to illustrate and analyse the conceptual study through example. Curating a collection of 'examples' of transgressive

Occupied space, Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, 2011
A temporary, revolutionary mini-city of 50,000 people inhabits a (former) traffic intersection. It was this occupation that came to symbolise the movement to overthrow President Mubarak and his regime.

architecture is difficult. The financial and time investment needed to create buildings means that built architecture is unlikely to provide a radical challenge to existing structures of power (while also being funded by those very same structures). It should therefore be no surprise that the 'architecture' explored in this issue is often differently conceived.

The examples of transgressive architectures that are presented in the issue are introduced through four aspects of practice: intent, role, process and product. With each aspect, an example of transgression has been explored as an analogy to agitate the associated expectations of that aspect and to probe what may be considered transgressive in relation to each. Hence architectural intent becomes revolution; architectural product, Duchamp's urinal; role, cross-dresser; and process, carnival. These analogies are not categories within which to position certain architectural outputs or processes; inevitably the case studies discussed have a tendency to slide between such categorisations, or to sit across all of them. To categorise would also be ironic given the nature of transgression as a challenge to such divisions. Instead, the analogies are used simply as a filter, or a way of looking. Through the exploration of these analogies the potential of transgression for architecture is structured into theoretical areas by which we may recognise, even in their fluxive state, the possibilities of transgression for the progression of architecture.

Revolution implies an ambition to fundamentally change the way in which society works or is organised: it suggests a particular, radical intent, as well as inferring the use of action as a catalyst for change.

Bernard Khoury, B018 music club, Beirut, Lebanon, 1998
This Beirut nightclub reconfigures an underground military bunker on the site of the Karantina massacre.

Revolution

Revolution implies an ambition to fundamentally change the way in which society works or is organised: it suggests a particular, radical intent, as well as inferring the use of action as a catalyst for change. Underpinning the work within this issue is the political intent to manipulate space to challenge. This challenge is variously enacted upon existing structures of power, established processes of practice and normative architectural outputs. The projects presented here dispute Henri Lefebvre's sceptical view that architecture is limited to projecting the dominant structures of power in society.[5]

While all of the projects and essays are included for their critical intent, some are more actively revolutionary. Projects such as the Occupy movement described by Louis Rice (pp 70–5), the office for subversive architecture's urban interventions (pp 110–3), N55's manuals (pp 76–81), Superflex's *Flooded McDonald's* (pp 96–101), and Michael Rakowitz's *paraSITE* project described by Can Altay (pp 102–9), explicitly undertake critical architectural projects and urban interventions with the intent of changing society to a greater or lesser extent, by unsettling the existing situation.

It is perhaps telling that these rebellious architectural projects have largely been undertaken without those disciplined in architecture.[6] In the introduction to his *Architecture and Disjunction* (1976), Tschumi outlines three possible roles for architects: that we become conservative, or in other words that we conserve our role in giving form to the political and economic priorities of the hegemony; that we act as critics who expose the contradictions of society through our practice; and

> Finally, we could act as revolutionaries by using our … understanding of cities and the mechanisms of architecture … in order to be part of professional forces trying to arrive at new social and urban structures.'[7]

The absence of architects from the revolutionary (architectural) projects described suggests that architects largely remain located in the roles of critics and conservatives. It has fallen to those who have not been disciplined in architecture to take on the role of revolutionaries.

Duchamp's Urinal

From time to time an event or object creates such a rupture in the paradigm within which it is acting that it comes to fundamentally change that paradigm so as to constitute a paradigm shift. Marcel Duchamp's submission of *Fountain*, a mass-produced urinal, to the Society of Independent Artists exhibition in 1917 was such an event and object. Ultimately the understanding of what might constitute art, its craft and authorship as associated with the act of making had to be rethought as a consequence of this work. This moment inspired the second aspect by which to analyse the architecture of transgression: the aspect of the architectural product.

Edward Denison and Guangyu Ren describe the work of 2012 Pritzker Prize winning architect Wang Shu as transgressive in the Chinese context of the cult of the new, in a way that invites other Chinese architects to consider the notion of progress and to practise in a different manner (pp 38–43). Similarly, Robin Wilson's comparative essay (pp

During the night, every few hours the roof is retracted, allowing smoke, heat and thumping music out while the mirrored ceiling raises up to allow glimpses down into the underworld, and reflections of car headlights above ground to penetrate beneath.

Lacaton & Vassal, Palais de Tokyo Centre for Contemporary Creation, Paris, France, 2001
In the first phase of Lacaton & Vassal's refurbishment, they stripped back finishes to expose the bones of the building, undoing the notional 'white cube' of the gallery while adding cheap industrial 'readymade' elements such as the Herris fencing to construct high architecture.

44–51) examining a Lacaton & Vassal project, which left a Bordeaux square the architects were commissioned to redesign unchanged, and Construire's 'overdone' animalistic Le Channel complex, challenges the currently accepted notion of an architectural output with two extremes of production.

David Littlefield, in exploring architecture from the demolished homes of mass murderers to the Schröder House (pp 124–9), reminds us that meaning does not necessarily emerge solely from the object or building, but also from the actions that the building witnesses (Duchamp's *Fountain* was merely a urinal until the artist placed it in a gallery). He introduces the notion of transgression as being located in the gap between building and idea (or between the mass-produced urinal and its conception as art). Silvia Loeffler similarly explores this gap (pp 114–9), through the notion of blind spots in the city, where vandalism, graffiti or stencils appear, as the places where desire and belonging collide with the city. Didier Faustino also explores the interstices between the idea of a library and its actual use; between the two chambers of his *Sky Is The Limit* teahouse, and between the two people sealed by *Doppelgänger* in a kiss.

Cross-Dresser

A cross-dresser adopts the clothing and often the characteristics of the opposite sex, but also simultaneously functions as his or her original gender. This quality of inhabiting more than one group or faction at once is the inspiration for the application of this third analogy to an aspect of practice. This aspect explores architecture that is produced by individuals or groups who are not disciplined in architecture, but who step across into the role of the architect, as well as architects who step across to deeply engage with the community with which they are working. The notion of cross-dressing is important as it reminds us that people working in this trans-disciplinary way are not merely stepping outside of their original discipline, but instead are inhabiting both simultaneously.

This introduces the notion of architecture without architects. Activists in the Occupy movement, as well as revellers in the minibar phenomenon described by Can Altay, both act upon space to alter or subvert its meaning and to appropriate it for their own ends in a social production of architecture.

Inversely structured is the community-led, engaged and empowering architecture of atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) described by Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou (pp 58–65), and EXYZT described by Alex Römer and Naïm Aït-Sidhoum (pp 66–9), in which it is the architects that step across in order to participate in collaboration with the community. In a crossing between roles, EXYZT become inhabitants, living in and systematically managing the places they build, whereas aaa facilitate the community taking ownership of the projects. The work of Lina Bo Bardi, as described in the article on pp 52–7, further explores an architecture that is flexible and 'loose' enough to be user-led, with an incompleteness that suggests continuity beyond the role of the architect.

Carnival

The carnival is an event of public urban revelry that is open to anyone who wants to take part. The Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin describes the carnival in opposition to the 'official feast', as an event that:

> celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions … The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this carnival experience, unique of its kind.[8]

He locates the carnival as outside of the official world and thus argues that it revives and renews the established order, as well as parodying it.

As an analogy, the carnival therefore introduces the notion of an architecture that transgresses the normative processes of production in a way that suspends accepted approaches, procedures and hierarchies. Kim Dovey discusses the need for architects working in informal cities to work in a different way, perhaps taking on more informal methods of practice (pp 82–9). Open-source projects like the WikiHouse described by Alastair Parvin (pp 90–5) and the process manuals of N55 (pp 76–81) suggest a manner of operation that circumvents the established model of architecture as a bespoke service to a singular commissioning client.

The liberation inherent in working outside of the established norms and prohibitions is keenly explored by Catie Newell (pp 24–31) whose work, intervening within a burnt-out house in Detroit, reveals an architecture of beauty and poignancy that is certainly in opposition to the 'official' feast of architectural production in both process and hierarchy. Similarly carnivalesque in its transience as well as its liberation from the everyday is *Flooded McDonald's* by Superflex, explored as an architecture of exception. In these works the temporary suspension of the established norms allows us to revisit our understanding of those norms and to recalibrate their meaning.

Towards Destabilisation

The four analogies above suggest an architecture that disrupts our expectations, that goes beyond, or slips between, visible, accepted parameters. They suggest an understanding of transgression in architecture that expands the search beyond Tschumi's initial explorations of the paradox between concept and experience. They also highlight the slippery nature of transgression, since the centre swiftly recuperates what was once marginal. In the moments before this recuperation, at the point of revolution or carnival, transgression can be seen to cast new light on what is considered as the norm, and through doing so both re-energises and prompts a redefinition of the centre. This keeps architecture from stagnating and ensures that we are able to safeguard its relevance, by questioning what it could, and even should, be. Transgression destabilises in a way that invigorates, questions and incites change; the agitation it generates is essential to architecture's evolution. AD

Lacatan & Vassal, Palais de Tokyo Centre for Contemporary Creation, Paris, France, 2012
The second phase of Lacaton & Vassal's refurbishment excavated the lower floors and bowels of the building, extending the space for viewing art into the typically hidden service areas of the building, with their unexpected volumes.

Transgression can be seen to cast new light on what is considered as the norm, and through doing so both re-energises and prompts a redefinition of the centre.

Notes

1. Chris Jenks, *Transgression*, Routledge (London), 2003.
2. Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* [1976], MIT Press (Cambridge, MA and London), 1996, p 23.
3. Ibid, p 4.
4. 'Recuperation' is described by the Situationist International as a process whereby subversive ideas are trivialised then sterilised by mainstream conservative powers so that they may be safely reincorporated into mainstream society.
5. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Blackwell (Cambridge, MA, Oxford and Victoria), 1991.
6. Chris Jenks introduces himself as not 'disciplined' in architecture in his essay 'Transgression: The Concept', on pp 20–3 of this issue of AD.
7. Tschumi, op cit, p 9.
8. Mikhail Bakhtin, 1965, quoted in Pam Morris, *The Bakhtin Reader*, Edward Arnold (London), 1994, p 199.

TRANSGRESSION
THE CONCEPT

Eminent sociologist and author of *Transgression* (2003), **Chris Jenks** provides an essential introduction to transgression as a cultural concept. He explores its philosophical roots, its emergence in the radical uncertainty of the early 20th century, and how it came to be most closely associated with the provocative writings of the French intellectual Georges Bataille.

Interior of a brothel
Notions of taboo and the erotic threaten our sense of order and stability.

I write this as a sociologist, interested but not disciplined in architecture. What I shall attempt in this brief article is an exposition of the idea of transgression as it derives from a particular order of thinking in cultural discourse. This argument will derive from the inspirations of a select and interrelated cluster of European thinkers working against a backdrop of the debate between Hegelian and Nietzschean philosophies. Essentially, Georg Hegel envisioned an inevitable historical process eliding 'spirit' (being) and 'reason' (knowing) in the coherent and systematic progress of humankind. Friedrich Nietzsche on the other hand divorced these two elements, 'ontology' and 'epistemology', prioritised the former, through 'the will to power', and relativised the latter. This grand move has empowered modern philosophies, through both Post-structuralism and Postmodernism, to elevate the impact of individual cognition and simultaneously question all claims to truth. The door to transgression is open.

Transgression is a difficult and at times elusive concept. Though generated in the 1930s it has only in the last 30 years re-emerged with any prominence in the arts, humanities and social sciences.[1] The passage of 'modernity' has embedded a now canonical order/disorder problem within our thinking around intellectual, moral and aesthetic categories in the arts and sciences. No epoch has existed that did not think of itself as modern, however the 'modernity' that is cited in contemporary cultural discourse is that which emerged through the industrialisation, urbanisation and rapid acceleration in the division of labour marked by the rampant capitalism of the mid-19th century and beyond. Such unprecedented change impacted significantly on the social, cultural and political structures and understandings of its time and, solidified through two World Wars, gave an impression of order and the ability of humankind to control, or at least manage, its destiny – a view supported by the growth of science. Transgression, as a necessary potential, tilts at and threatens to enfeeble and unsettle such stability; it propels our certainties and conventions into the vortex of excess, eroticism, violence, madness and carnival. This cult of unreason was championed by Georges Bataille and the Surrealists, but also in the work of Antonin Artaud, Arthur Rimbaud, Guy Debord and Mikhail Bakhtin – this lineage is neither definitive nor exclusive.

Questions about the core, the fundamental basis of knowledge, have always been raised, but in liminal zones within culture, such as the avant-garde, radical political movements and counter-cultural traditions in creative practice. However, we might argue that such questions have moved from the liminal zones into the centre. An insecurity has entered into our consciousness, enshrined in the notions that 'all that which is solid melts into air' and 'the centre cannot hold', yet the insecurity itself becomes a convention and the academy adjusts by mainstreaming the postmodern as both an ontological form and an epistemological style. When Jean-François Lyotard announced the death of grand narratives, he did not anticipate the launch of a genre.[2]

The really telling point about radical uncertainty is that it is untenable. It is only through having a strong sense of the 'known' or the 'shared' that we can begin to understand or account for that which is outside, at the margins, indeed that which defines the consensus. Albert Camus's 'outsider', the cognitive rebel, speaks only of loneliness.[3] The inspiration of the grand libertine, the Marquis de Sade, the possibility of breaking free from moral constraint has become an intensely privatised project. If we recognise no bond, we recognise fracture only with difficulty – how then do we become 'free of' or 'different to'?

Transgression is a social process. Transgression is that which transcends boundaries or exceeds limits. However, we need to affirm that human experience is the experience of limits, perhaps, as Bataille tells us, because of the absolute finitude of death.[4] Constraint is a constant experience in our action; it needs to be to render us social. Paradoxically, the limits to our experience and the taboos that police them are never simply imposed from the outside; rather, limits to behaviour are always personal responses to moral imperatives that stem from the inside. This means that any limit on conduct carries with it an intense relationship with the desire to transgress that limit. Transgressive behaviour therefore does not deny limits or boundaries; rather, it exceeds them and completes them. Every rule, limit, boundary or edge carries with it its own fracture, penetration or impulse to disobey. The transgression is not a component of the rule. Excess, then, is neither an aberration nor a luxury; it is, rather, a dynamic force in cultural reproduction – it prevents stagnation by breaking the rule and it ensures stability by reaffirming the rule. Transgression is not the same as disorder; it reminds us of the necessity of order – think of the catastrophic attack on the Twin Towers and the subsequent 'war on terror'.

A young boy aims a pistol at the photographer, *c* 1915
With each rule comes an inherent desire to break the rules, or disobey.

A psychiatric patient is forced to stand
Madness is a challenge to ordered society, a threat to the impression that we can control our own destinies.

The point of investigating transgression is to demonstrate its presence in, and impact upon, contemporary life. A primary, albeit unintentional feature of modernity is the desire to transcend limits – limits that are physical, racial, aesthetic, sexual, legal, national and moral. Nietzsche tells us that the passage of modernity has enabled the oppression and compartmentalisation of the will. People have become fashioned in a restricted, but nevertheless arbitrary way. Ironically, modernity has thus generated an ungoverned desire to extend, exceed or go beyond the margins of acceptable or normal performance. Clearly, transgression becomes an important postmodern topic. John Jervis agrees; he locates the transgressive process wholly within the realm of the moral. He reveals the rich and oppressive tendency in Western society to exclude and marginalise that which it finds disagreeable and by implication to unify, consolidate and homogenise that which sustains as its core of comfortable familiarity.[5]

Georges Bataille, 1 January 1935
Bataille was a French intellectual whose writing explored a provocative variety of themes, from murder and sacrifice to transgression in marriage and in incest.

Transgression rests on the idea of sovereignty in action. There is a persistent theme in both French and German philosophy that espouses the ultimate plasticity of humankind. Through modernity, such thinking was entwined with the politics of capitalism, industrialisation and the rapidly accelerating division of labour in society. One element of such thought celebrates the limitless potential of the self, but another forward-looking element massages the reciprocity between humankind and machines. Simply stated, if humankind harnesses technology then sovereignty becomes supreme, which in turn is a materialist reduction of human pliability and suggests our finest manifestation is as a cyborg (the world of Terminators and Robocops). However, the Great War taught us to treat this supremacy with both ambivalence and suspicion, a negative dialectic resonant in J Robert Oppenheimer's words when decades later he had created the atomic bomb: 'I am become death, the destroyer of worlds.'[6] The continued mobilisation of technology opens up a potentially ungovernable politics and hubris; humankind built titanic ships, but not titanic people or states.

The major philosophical turn towards transgression came about through the subversion of Hegel that occurred in the 1930s in Paris. Hegel's philosophical system leads to sovereignty and the triumph of the spirit through the completion of Reason's project; this would be the 'end of history', humankind beyond development. However, following Alexandre Kojève,[7] a cluster of French intellectuals, including Bataille, refashioned the dialectic into a new form of struggle for recognition – the previously unspoken element of desire was awakened in modern thinking, a powerful and unlimited driver of human action. The manifesto for transgression had been written.

Bataille was an extraordinary figure and although he would claim no monopoly over the term, his work, perhaps beyond all others, is most closely associated with the concept of transgression. He spent 20 years of his adult life as librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale, but no part of his being or doing fits the conventional stereotype of the librarian as introvert. He was subject to violent interludes, which subsequent treatment subdued, but as Allan Stoekl tells us, no force ever staunched his intellectual violence.[8] Bataille was obsessed by and wrote erratically on such topics as 'death', 'excess', 'transgression', 'eroticism', 'evil', 'sacrifice', 'Fascism', 'prostitution', 'de Sade', 'desire' and other more conventional topics, but always in an unconventional manner. There was an intense energy, wildness and vandalism about Bataille that make the bizarre concoction of his medieval scholarship, Marxist studies, association with Surrealism, involvement in secret societies, rumours of human sacrifice, pornographic writing, and drunkenness and fornication all coherent parts of his total persona. Clearly larger than life, decadent and depraved, admired by a close group of scholars in his time and yet appearing as only a minor figure in the European intellectual landscape. Since his death he has been resurrected as the new intellectual avatar, the unspoken father of heterology and the 'post-', the 'prophet of transgression'.[9]

Despite the growing contemporary preoccupation with Bataille's work, his ideas remain labyrinthine, obscure, multi-fuelled, fierce, neglectful of tradition and simultaneously poetic and repulsive. He does not seek agreement. He often appears to be working through the motivations of the Sadean 'sovereign man'. His topics are dictated through his own libidinal force and his desire will be heard. He has been described as 'the impossible one, fascinated by everything he could discover about what was really unacceptable'.[10] All this does not, however, imply randomness or nihilism; his work is coherent, but the narrative is internal. Bataille was intensely engaged in the Hegelian struggle for recognition. His rage is against the economics of capitalism and the economics that this mode of production inserts in the relationships between people. He is godless yet his fear stems from the loss of God and the subsequent threat to individual sovereignty. Having exhausted the limits of Marxism, he wants to counter the negation of Hegel with a revaluation of values recommended by Nietzsche – he seeks to replace dialectics with genealogies. And he wants to focus on the unconscious. In the guise of pornographer he 'goes to the limit', ironises the pornographic tendencies of capitalist social structures, and plays with the metaphors that reveal patterns of exclusion, expulsion and dehumanisation that remain rife in the 21st century.

Michel Foucault provides a brilliant prolegomenon to Bataille's concept of transgression. He begins with modern sexuality, the new age delimited by De Sade and Sigmund Freud and freed from the grasp of Christianity, yet the old vocabulary of sexuality provided depth and texture beyond the act's immediacy. In the absence of God, with morality no longer obeisant to spiritual form, we achieve profanation without object. The Godless vocabulary of modern sexuality achieves limits and prescribes ends in the place previously held by the infinite. 'Sexuality achieves nothing beyond itself, no prolongation, except the frenzy which disrupts it.'[11] Freud further prescribes our limits through sexuality by employing it as the conduit for the unconscious. Sexuality today has no continuity with nature. As God is dead, then there is no limit to infinity, there is nothing exterior to being and consequently we are forced to a constant recognition of the interiority of being, to what Bataille calls sovereignty – the supremacy, the rule, the responsibility, and the mono-causality of the self. This vertiginous experience Foucault describes as the limitless reign of limit and the emptiness of excess.

So there are wonderful possibilities bestowed on humankind through the death of God, but there are also insurmountable difficulties. The only way the limitless world is provided with any structure or coherence is through the excesses that transgress that world and thus construct it – the completion that follows and accompanies transgression. Transgression has become the modern, post-God initiative, a searching for limits to exceed, an eroticism that goes beyond the limits of sexuality. The new deity becomes the overcoming of God, limit becomes the transgression of limit. The nothingness of infinity is held in check through the singular experience of transgression.

There exists, then, an absolute contingency between a limit and a transgression; they are unthinkable, meaningless and futile in isolation. The meaning derives from the moment of intersection between these two elements and from all that follows in the wake of this intersection. There is an inevitable violence in the collision and a celebration in the instantaneous moment at which both limit and transgression fuse in meaning. Limit finds meaning through the utter fragility of its having been exposed, and transgression finds meaning through the revelation of its imminent exhaustion. This is an orgasmic juxtaposition. But equally clearly the power and energy of both elements derives from the perpetual threat of constraint or destruction presented by the other.

Let me conclude this exposition with a passage from Foucault, which is worthy of quotation for its beauty and clarity. He begins by reminding us that transgression does not stand in a binary opposition to limits in the way that we understand the relationship between blackness and whiteness, the restricted and the permitted, or the inside and outside. Rather, he tells us:

> their relationship takes the form of a spiral which no simple infraction can exhaust. Perhaps it is like a flash of lightening in the night which, from the beginning of time, gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies, which lights up the night from the inside, from top to bottom, and yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestation, its harrowing and poised singularity; the flash loses itself in this space it marks with its sovereignty … .[12]

And he ends by saying that the flash has done its work, it has named and identified a moment otherwise obscure.

The relationship between transgression and limit is thus both blindingly simple, like the lightning flash, but also overwhelmingly complex, like the spiral that relates the two. The event of their intersection cannot therefore stand within a code; it is essentially outside, it is amoral. The relationship must therefore remain free of notions of scandal or the subversive, anything negative – and in abstraction this is so. As Bataille puts it, 'evil is not transgression, it is transgression condemned'.[13]

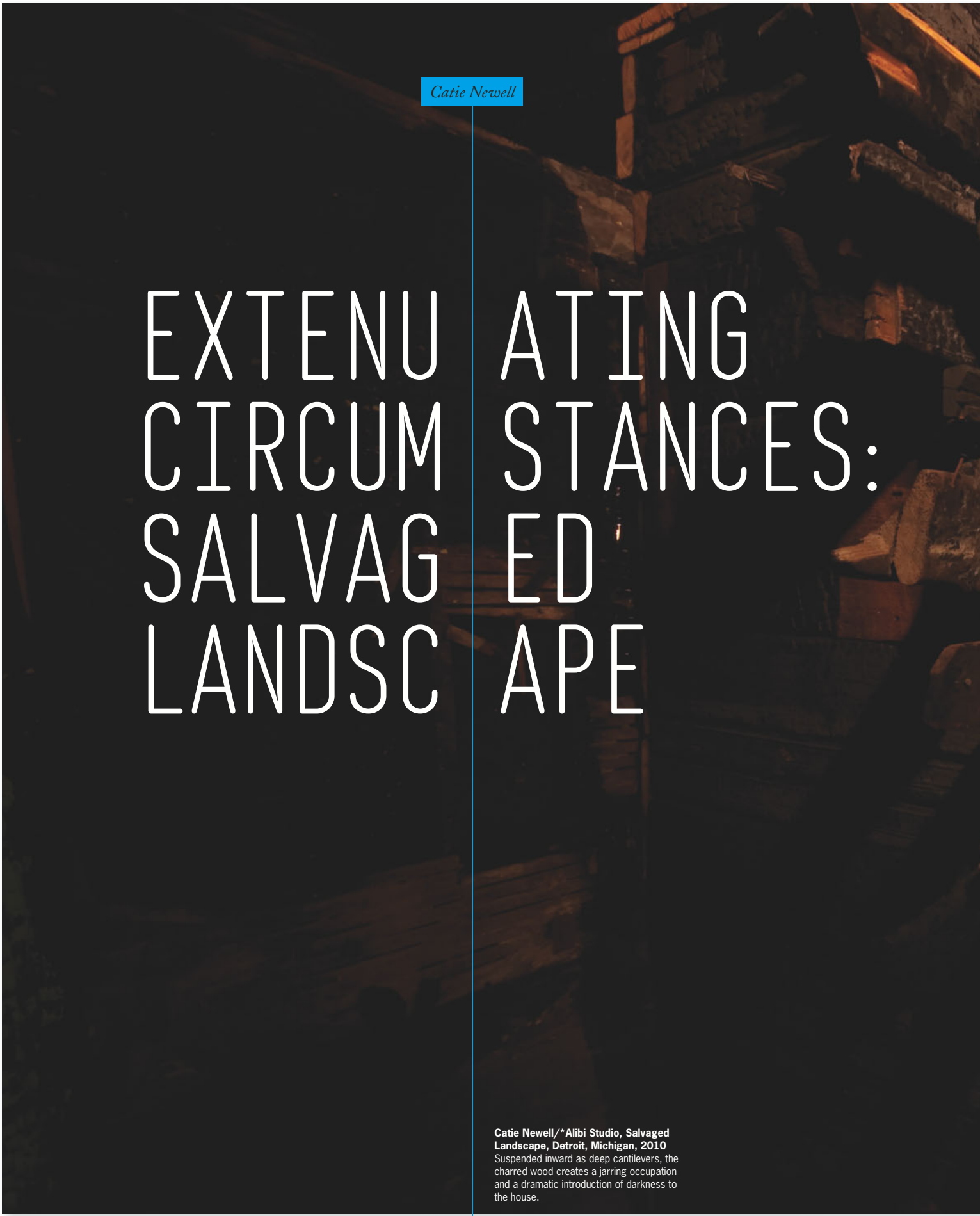
Notes

1. See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Methuen (London), 1986; John Jervis, *Transgressing the Modern: Explorations in the Western Experience of Otherness*, Blackwell (Oxford), 1999; Chris Jenks, *Transgression*, Routledge (London), 2003; Chris Jenks, 'Cultures of Excess', inaugural lecture, University of London Goldsmiths College, London, 1996; Chris Jenks (ed), *Transgression*, 4 vols, Routledge (London), 2006.
2. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Manchester Press (Manchester), 1984.
3. French left-wing intellectual, philosopher and novelist Albert Camus (1913–60). His work always emphasises the significance of individual will and identity. *The Stranger* or *The Outsider (L'Étranger)* (1942) is his major work. He is often identified with the existentialist movement, but preferred to be regarded as an 'absurdist'.
4. Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927–1939*, trans Allan Stoekl, Manchester University Press (Manchester), 1985.
5. John Jervis, *Transgressing The Modern: Explorations in the Western Experience of Otherness*, Blackwell (Oxford), 1999.
6. The American physicist J Robert Oppenheimer quoting Bhagavad-Gita from ancient Hindu scripture in an interview for *Time* magazine, 8 November 1948, and in 'The Decision to Drop the Bomb', a TV documentary for NBC, 1965.
7. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed Allan David Bloom, trans JH Nichols, Basic Books (New York), 1969.
8. Allan Stoekl, 'Introduction' to Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, op cit.
9. Benjamin Noys, *Georges Bataille: A Critical Introduction*, Pluto Press (London), 2000.
10. Michel Leiris, quoted in Jürgen Habermas, 'The French Path to Postmodernity: Bataille between Eroticism and General Economics', *New German Critique* 33(79–102), 1984, p 79.
11. Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Cornell University Press (New York), 1977, p 33.
12. Ibid, p 35.
13. Georges Bataille, *Eroticism*, City Lights (London), 1986, p 127.

Rio Carnival party
The carnival signifies a moment when human experience is temporarily released from its constraints.

Catie Newell

EXTENU ATING CIRCUM STANCES: SALVAG ED LANDSC APE

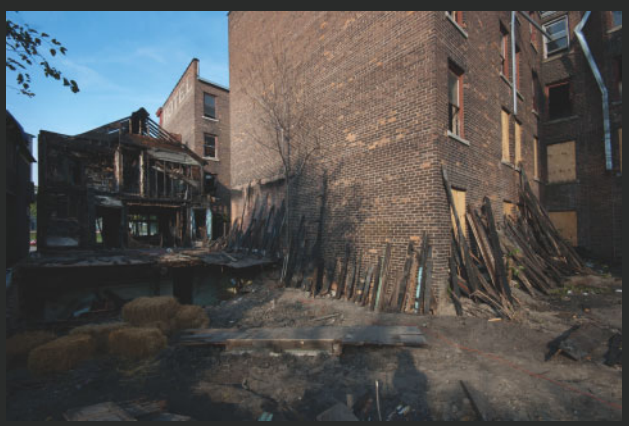


Catie Newell/*Alibi Studio, Salvaged Landscape, Detroit, Michigan, 2010
Suspended inward as deep cantilevers, the charred wood creates a jarring occupation and a dramatic introduction of darkness to the house.

top: Intentionally brought to a moment of stability on Devil's Night, which is notorious in Detroit for arson, Salvaged Landscape created a new room in the life of the house that implicates the visceral weight of arson throughout the city.

bottom: As the house was torn down by hand, the heavily charred wood was collected and sorted in preparation for its reconfiguration back into the remaining volumes. All of the material of Salvaged Landscape is native to the house.

Built outside legislative guidelines and established construction procedures in the derelict and feral environment of Detroit, Salvaged Landscapes is a true product of transgression. As **Catie Newell**, founding principal of *Alibi Studio, explains, its making and unmaking was as dependent on the intentions of the designers as the local propensity for arson.



There were no construction drawings. A permit was never pulled. The conventional criteria were passed over. The safety harnesses never arrived. There was no power on site. The demolition was never completed. Work commenced before the design was understood. Money was never exchanged. Damaged material was used. Old nails remained exposed. Occupancy limits were broken. Minimal dimensions were stretched. Visibility was low. The sublime darkness was intentional. And most unique in this list of fabrication transgressions: a simple wilful act of arson, inflicted by a stranger.

The fire left a form recognisable as a house, beautiful as a texture, and emotionally wrenching in the loss of a domestic and historical space. The intent was never for lasting occupation or full reconstruction. Instead, Salvaged Landscape relied heavily on the charred remains as a palette and formwork for transmutation. The crime covered the majority of the structure with a beautiful dark shiny black depth, light and fragile, with bulbous and impure geometries. With the visceral impact of the situation counter to these fortuitous material transformations, the circumstances of the house necessitated a physical alteration. Thus, the task became an effort of 'curating the demolition'.

Simultaneously making and unmaking, the initial work was invested in tearing down the house by hand, salvaging the scarred material, and the attentive alteration to each

below: The site and material palette of Salvaged Landscape are the remnants of a historical house in Detroit that was a target of arson. The work was constructed within the process of the demolition.

right: Cut on end to expose the sectional variation between charred and raw portions of the wooden members, the exterior face of Salvaged Landscape exposes the damage reliant on flame to exist while creating a deep and occupiable wall thickness.

Simultaneously making and unmaking, the initial work was invested in tearing down the house by hand, salvaging the scarred material, and the attentive alteration to each volume once carefully articulated within the house.

volume once carefully articulated within the house. Reminiscent of a clean section cut, the house was stabilised as formwork. The collected and sorted wood was sliced on one end to expose the raw conditions among the depth of the char. With this cut exposed to the exterior, the remaining char of the wood was suspended inward, providing a peculiar configuration to the space and amassing a consuming intricacy of texture that was violent yet delicate, difficult yet breathtaking to occupy. Though each piece was native, the material reconfiguration introduced a new room to the house with an atmosphere that was haunting and swallowed the entire first floor. The rest of the house and the site were necessary components of its appearance and existence.

Appropriately, the completion and opening of the work fell on Devil's Night, which is notorious in Detroit for mischievous and self-serving arson. Salvaged Landscape was only possible because of the current situation in the city of Detroit: a setting of limited civic infrastructure, regular arson, a strained fire department and faded red tape. These realities are foreign to other settings, or at least less extreme. It is likely that in any other city there would have been urgency to move forward. The evidence of the fire would have been cleared away immediately, the historical commission would not have been so absent, the squatters that lived in the house would not have returned to protect the project, and any such occupations would not have been permitted. The demolition

Appropriately, the completion and opening of the work fell on Devil's Night, which is notorious in Detroit for mischievous and self-serving arson.

Permitting movement into the space, Salvaged Landscape constructs a passageway among and through the charred wood that is composed of the reposition of former volumes and materials of the house.

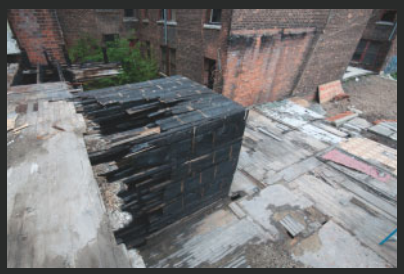
top left: To prompt commentary and reflection on the current circumstances consuming the ailing and burnt housing stock of Detroit, Salvaged Landscape was put up for sale and marked with a sign that reads 'House for Sale'.

top right: Framed by the setting and pace of demolition, Salvaged Landscape consumed the room that was at the epicentre of the arson, creating a dense yet occupiable space that was both haunting and beautiful.

bottom: After temporarily moving across the state for an exhibition, Salvaged Landscape returned to Detroit and relocated two plots over from its original address. Aligned with the zoned setbacks, in this position the work contributes to the original residential massing of the street.

bottom: After Salvaged Landscape's relocation a few doors down, the original house was again hit by arson. Salvaged Landscape was untouched.

top: Amidst a purposeful teardown, the project responds to the new textures, spaces and light effects that result from the fire and demolition. As the demolition continued, Salvaged Landscape was released from its formwork, exposing a dense configuration constructed of half a house.



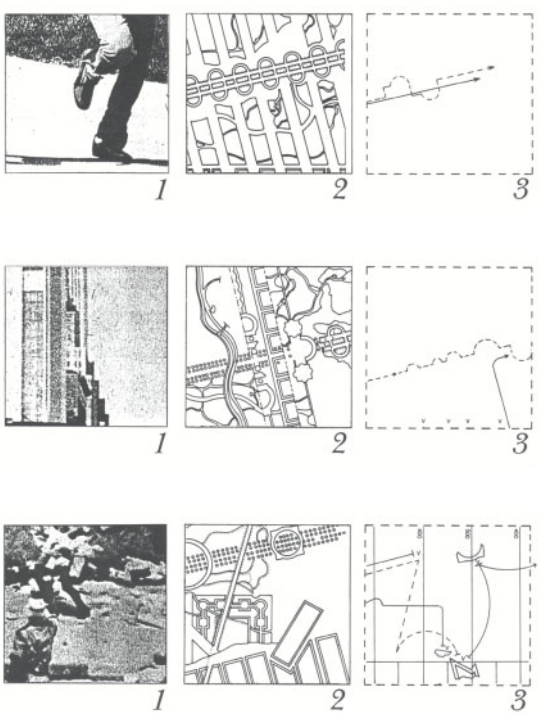
resumed and Salvaged Landscape was hauled away to a neighbouring site in an effort to distribute the massing in an otherwise vanishing cityscape. A second arson to the original house continued and calcified the story. Salvaged Landscape, so greatly determined by the circumstances of its context, was in ways always there, and further, it could be nowhere else.

This kind of work constitutes a form of practice. The work of *Alibi Studio acknowledges that there is no better way to reveal a city than to simply act on it. As cities are strained, once familiar settings become anomalies or strangers to their original intentions. Material conglomerations acquire obscure and unfamiliar attributes, occupations and associations as the raw material of the city falls in and out of expected definitions. This sets the stage for questionable legal, cultural and environmental interpretations. Working in such conditions with the weight of reality, direct material manipulation and the actualities of spatial production collapses architectural interpretation with the city itself. As such, the act of making (be it unmaking, remaking, falsely making, making twice) becomes a means by which to test, reveal, critique and alter the realities of our urban settings. AD

Jonathan Mosley

ARCHITECTURE AND TRANSGRESSION

AN INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD TSCHUMI

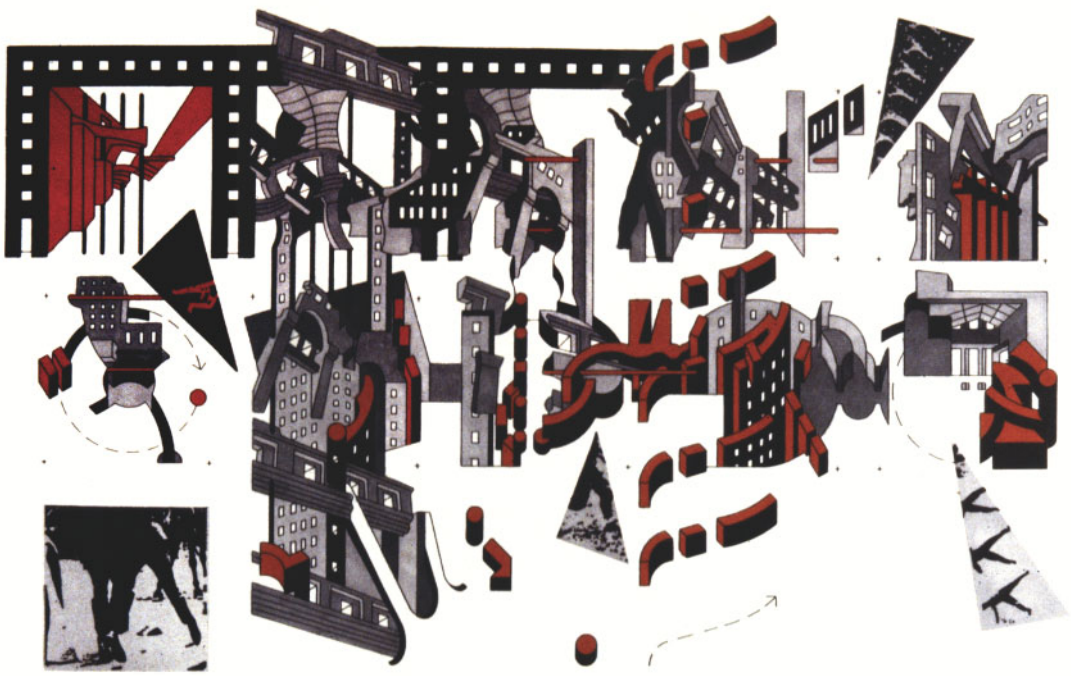


Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts (Part 1 – The Park)*, 1976–81
A series of collages, the *Manhattan Transcripts* subvert the rules of architectural representation in both delineating a constructed environment and suggesting within it a narrative; a confrontation of space and event.

Bernard Tschumi first wrote about transgression in an essay entitled 'Architecture and Transgression' in 1976. Published in *Oppositions*, an architectural journal largely concerned with architectural theory, the essay was an attempt to provoke architects and theorists to explore more than just the rules of architecture, and instead to confront where those rules are transgressed. The essay explores the relationship of concept (a dematerialised product of the mind) to experience (a sensual understanding produced through the body) within architecture. Tschumi argues that the coalescence of these elements within built architectural projects implies a paradox, due to the 'impossibility of simultaneously questioning the nature of space and, at the same time, making or experiencing a real space'.[1] He also proposes, however, that these paradoxical elements nonetheless do coexist within architectural projects; the paradoxical oppositions are denied, therefore architecture is inherently transgressive.

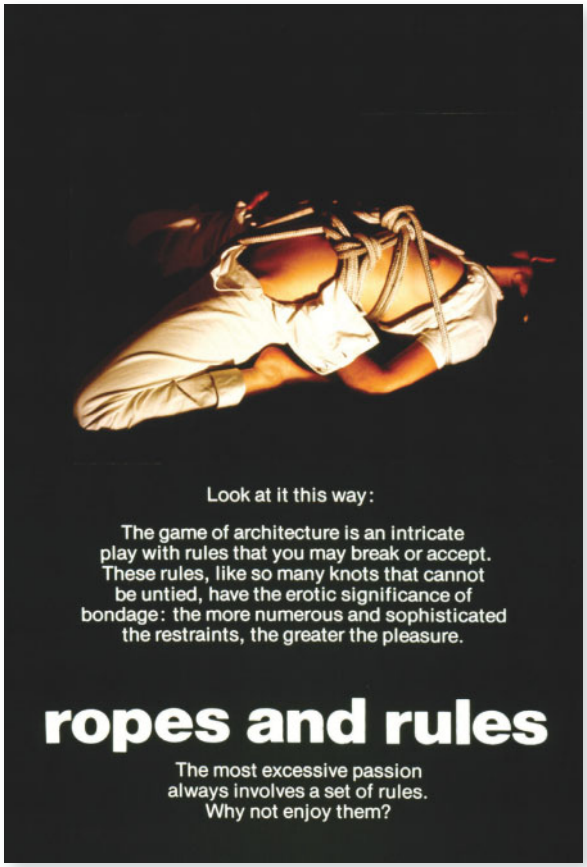
Nearly 40 years on, for this issue of Δ, we had the opportunity to interview Tschumi, to ask him both how his original thinking about architecture and transgression may have evolved and how his thinking may relate to an architectural world that has in itself significantly developed within the period. The following sections are structured around his thinking on the role of the architect; the process of architectural production; the impact of inhabitation and appropriation; and the temporal nature of what constitutes transgressive architecture. Each section draws on both his original 1976 essay and the interview undertaken via email correspondence in March 2013.

Almost four decades ago, the influential architect and educator Bernard Tschumi wrote the seminal manifesto 'Architecture and Transgression'. Here, Guest-Editors **Jonathan Mosley and Rachel Sara** revisit with Tschumi his original thesis, investigating how his thinking has evolved around transgression and its aptness for the world today.



Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts (Part 4 – The Block)*, 1976–81
Some compositions within the series seem to express an architecture imbued with the complex and shifting relations between characters and settings; the forms and spaces presented become the event.

Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisement for Architecture (Ropes and Rules)*, 1976–7
When considering the advertisement in relation to transgression, it seems to contain many conceptual oppositions and generate many questions. There is enjoyment within the mobility of its interpretation.



Most architects today see themselves solely as form-givers in an existing society, rarely as critics, and hardly ever as revolutionaries.

The Prevalence of Image and the Architect as Conservative

'Transgression … very simply means overcoming unacceptable prevalences.'[2] This, the closing line of Tschumi's 'Architecture and Transgression' essay, forms a starting point. Today, Tschumi speaks of the considerable changes in the world since the 1970s, particularly with reference to the domination of the image in relation to the philosophical triad of concept, percept and affect (idea, image and emotional experience). 'We now live in a world of images. On your iPhone or iPad or laptop you see mostly images. My position is to question this prevalence of the visual.'

Interpreted as a critical stance, Tschumi's role as an architect here may be set within the former of his categories of architect as critic, revolutionary or conservative.[3] He talks of an 'iconism' within architecture, stating that 'many people have recently begun to think about architecture as mostly about constructing visual images, as pure perception or icon. When doing so, architecture loses its transgressive quality. Images are almost never transgressive. The problem with images is they're just images, largely interchangeable with one another. It doesn't matter whether your building looks like a daffodil or a butterfly – it's just an image.'

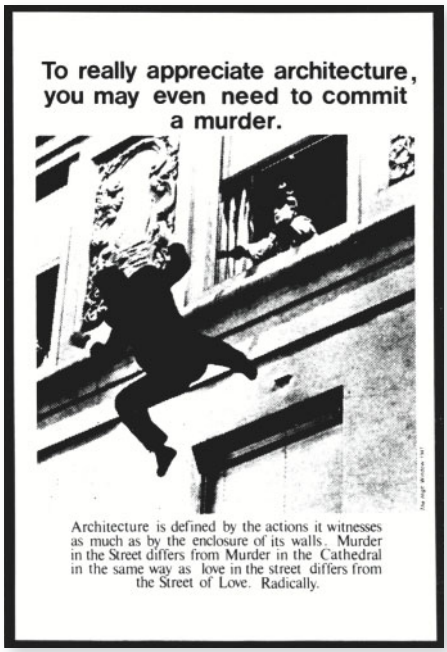
In contemporary architectural practice and education, the predominance of the image is paramount, particularly when the considered 'audience' of buildings and projects is increasingly remote, reached through the digital visualisation or photograph; we explore more works of architecture through scanning pixels than we do through the multi-sensory experience of the architecture as built and occupied. This lack of physical experience negates the paradox that Tschumi sets out as intrinsic to the transgressive potentiality of architecture. Furthermore, the emphasis of architecture as the production of 'image' suggests that the architect is limited to the roles of conservative or critic, since the role of revolutionary is concomitant with direct action allied to radical intent. 'Most architects today see themselves solely as form-givers in an existing society, rarely as critics, and hardly ever as revolutionaries.'

Ropes, Rules and Action

'While the crowded street of the turn of the century was criticised by CIAM's [the Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne] theories of urban fragmentation, today the ruling status of the social and conceptual mechanisms eroding urban life is already the next to be transgressed.'[4] Tschumi's statement responds to a temporal context of direct action in the years post-1968. Seeking to examine how his thinking may be applied or have responded to recent instances of direct action, we question him about the Occupy movement. Conceived in its American guise in his current home city of New York, Occupy could be understood as a new model of organisation, or even a new architecture, that questions the ruling status of land ownership and use in relation to economic and legal systems. Today he reflects on this 'exemplary action', citing his *Advertisement for Architecture* titled *Ropes and Rules* (1976–7) that celebrates architecture as the enjoyment of negotiating (and sometimes violating) ever more complex constraints. 'Architecture always deals with constraints,

Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisement for Architecture (Transgression)*, 1976–7
One of a series of postcard-sized image/text works that act as manifestos, accompanying Tschumi's early theoretical essays.

Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisement for Architecture (Murder)*, 1976–7
Instead of a product, the advertisement puts forward architectural production, constituted from physical space, meaning and the immediacy of sensory experience.



whether they be gravity or regulations. Much of the architect's skill is to take advantage of or bypass these constraints.'

In applying this thinking to the Occupy Wall Street 'event' that began on 17 September 2011, Tschumi exposes two conflicting factions of 'architects' whose roles might be understood in his terms as conservatives and revolutionaries: those representing the establishment who have negotiated zoning codes to develop land and deliver a space that is perceived to be public (such as a public square or plaza) as a part of a wider private development; and those acting as activists taking advantage of this anomaly of perceived 'public' land to claim temporary occupation of that territory. 'In the case of Occupy, the movement brilliantly took advantage of certain contradictions in New York City zoning codes, and the ambiguities of the status of the public, but also the privately owned square they occupied. Was the square a public or a private space? Occupy cleverly redefined territorial presence and made a major statement about the situational use and abuse of assumed categories.'

In considering these factions of 'architects' (understanding the sudden occupation and change of use of city space as an act of performed architecture), we witness a sociopolitical, and even economic, battle against competing architectures, demonstrating a contrast between the slow procedure of legislation, planning processes, regeneration and gentrification, compared to the rapid, legislation- and permission-free attack and counter-attack exemplified in the Occupy movement. If, as Tschumi originally stated, 'each society expects architecture to reflect its ideals and domesticate its deepest fears',[5] the battle is between the architect as conservative, whose role is to domesticate society's deepest fears, versus the architect as revolutionary, whose role we might conceive of as exemplifying society's ideals.

Villa Savoye, the Tower of David and the Pleasure of Excess

An experience of the then derelict, decayed Villa Savoye in Poissy, France, influenced Tschumi's original thinking in exploring transgression within architecture, first raising the possibility that architecture is produced as much by what happens to it after 'completion', for example through inhabitation and decay, as it is produced by the architect as author. Within 'Architecture and Transgression', he describes his visit in 1965 to Le Corbusier's seminal building, defining that experience as 'a moment of architecture'. He contends that 'The *moment of architecture* is that moment when architecture is life and death at the same time, when the experience of space becomes its own concept. In the paradox of architecture, the contradiction between architectural concept and sensual experience of space resolves itself at one point of tangency: the rotten point, the very point that taboos and culture have always rejected. This metaphorical rot is where architecture lies. Rot bridges sensory pleasure and reason.'[6]

This convergence of pleasure and reason, Tschumi allies to eroticism. In the essay he describes architecture as 'the ultimate erotic object', arguing that: 'Just as eroticism means a double pleasure that involves both mental constructs and sensuality, the resolution of the architectural paradox calls for architectural concepts and, at the same instant, the immediate experience of space.'[7] How can architectural practice strive towards this

Enrique Gómez, Centro Financiero Confinanzas (Tower of David), Caracas, Venezuela, 1994–
The Tower of David is exceptional in its transgression of spatial hierarchies, with respect to both height and central positioning within the cityscape. The image could also be understood as expressing shifting power relations and scales between the formal and informal city.

eroticism, towards the pleasure of excess? 'Architecture is simultaneously very abstract, but also very visual, and it can affect your emotions powerfully. This is why it is such an extraordinary field of endeavour. The pleasure of excess is as much in the mind as in the senses. So is architecture.'

If the derelict Villa Savoye, with ground-floor service rooms smeared with excrement, broke certain architectural taboos for Tschumi in 1965, then we contend that the Centro Financiero Confinanzas, known as the Torre David (Tower of David), an incomplete office building in Caracas, designed by the architect Enrique Gómez and now squatted by over 2,000 people, broke certain taboos of the 1990s and 2000s. As a material manifestation of the 1994 Venezuelan economic crash, which stopped its construction midway, and the ingenuity of its occupants in 'completing' the building to become habitable as an informal settlement, the architecture is at a point of convergence between the sensory and the conceptual. This is an erotic architecture: there is pleasure in its excess. The building exemplifies Tschumi's original theory that 'Architecture seems to survive in its erotic capacity only wherever it negates itself, where it transcends its paradoxical nature by negating the form that society expects of it.'[8]

The Tower of David evokes a fundamental transgression, however Tschumi's statement anticipates the fluxive condition of society's expectations for architectural form. The Tower has not only accumulated increasing numbers of inhabitants as families, and established small businesses and services on the floor plates and within its frame; it has also attracted critical discourse and recognition, being subsumed into the architectural establishment as subject of various research projects and with a dedicated book and Venice Biennale exhibition display produced by Urban-Think Tank, the curator Justin McGuirk and photographer Iwan Baan.[9] The Tower is becoming a test case for vertical informal living. In both the sensory experience of its everyday, and concurrently in its extraordinary reasoning, society is shifting its expectations of architectural form. There is a question whether any piece of architecture can continue to survive as erotic, to incite a pleasure of excess as much in the mind as in the senses if we become familiar with it.

Time, Transgression and Architecture

Transgression is temporally conditioned (a transgressive act in a previous time may not be transgressive now). Is transgression as a concept confined to the time when Tschumi was first writing about it? What relevance might the concept of transgression have to architecture now? 'Transgression is a fundamental concept, like the boundary between life and death. So it has always been there and always will be. What changes is its type or nature. For example, let's take the concept of cross-programming or trans-programming, ie combining programmes that are usually kept separate. For a long time, a building was meant to be either a church, a town hall, a shop, or a school, each with its own typology. To suggest that one could combine and intersect different programmes was once very unusual and quite transgressive. Today trans-programming and cross-programming are our new norm. Now, with airports and museums becoming

Designed by Enrique Gómez and by its inhabitants, the exposed floor slabs of the tower's upper storeys and the opposing glass and informal mixed-material facades communicate the block's incompleteness and create the setting for an extraordinary narrative.

Architecture must be willing to break free of its role in domesticating society's deepest fears, to on occasion sever its bondage in order to change, challenge as well as reflect society's ideals.

shopping malls, conference centres and tourist attractions, cross-programming has become acceptable. But there will always be new modes of transgression, small or large scale, social or philosophical.'

Tschumi's thinking, developed within his explorations of trans-programming and cross-disciplinary processes and approaches within academia and practice, recognises an increasing hybridisation of both architectural programme and autonomy of discipline. His comments demonstrate the 'fundamental concept' of transgression as instigating or being linked to change in what architecture can or may be. Is transgression inherently necessary for progression in architecture? 'Is it progression or simple evolution? I'll give you an example. In the 1970s and 1980s, many architects and scholars considered it problematic to combine film and architecture, art and literature, photography and dance. They saw architecture as architecture, theatre as theatre, literature as literature alone and rejected crossovers and multimedia. What was once considered a transgression is now quite acceptable practice. Similarly, some of the work in this issue directly transgresses the dictionary of received ideas about what architecture is. Nevertheless, it could have a major influence in the future.'

From the period of his seminal essay in 1976 to the present day, Tschumi has been a major contributor and editor of that 'dictionary of received ideas about what architecture is', setting out among other concepts a fundamental understanding of transgression applied to architecture. In these times of accelerated societal change concurrent with architectural conservatism, the part that transgression plays within this accumulation of critical, even occasionally revolutionary possibilities for architecture becomes ever more prescient. Architecture must be willing to break free of its role in domesticating society's deepest fears, to on occasion sever its bondage in order to change, challenge as well as reflect society's ideals. AD

Notes

1 Bernard Tschumi, 'Architecture and Transgression' [1976], in Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, MIT Press (Cambridge, MA), 1996, p 67.
2. Ibid, p 78.
3. Ibid, p. 9
4. Ibid, p 78.
5. Ibid, p 72.
6. Ibid, pp 75–6.
7. Ibid, p 71.
8. Ibid, p 78.
9. For further information see Alfredo Brillembourg and Hubert Klumpner, Urban-Think Tank and Chair of Architecture and Urban Design, ETH Zürich (eds), *Torre David: Informal Vertical Communities*, Lars Müller (Zurich), 2012, and http://torredavid.com/.

TRANSGRESSION AND PROGRESS IN CHINA

Edward Denison and Guangyu Ren

Wang Shu, Zhongshan Road, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, 2009
Two new structures by Wang Shu in the Zhongshan Road redevelopment in the historic district of Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province.

Wang Shu, Vertical Courtyard, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, 2006
An experimental project comprising six towers and accommodating 800 residents that attempts to reorder vertically the traditional Chinese courtyard house so that every unit has a double-height courtyard, giving residents of every apartment the impression of having a second floor.

WANG SHU AND THE LITERATI MINDSET

The 2012 Pritzker Prize winner, Wang Shu, often builds in stone with a sensitivity to site and context – characteristics that are not often associated with the marginal or cutting edge. Architectural authors and researchers **Edward Denison and Guangyu Ren** explain how in China, where 'mainstream mediocrity' has become the norm, Wang Shu has set himself apart as an advocate for meaningful innovation and originality.

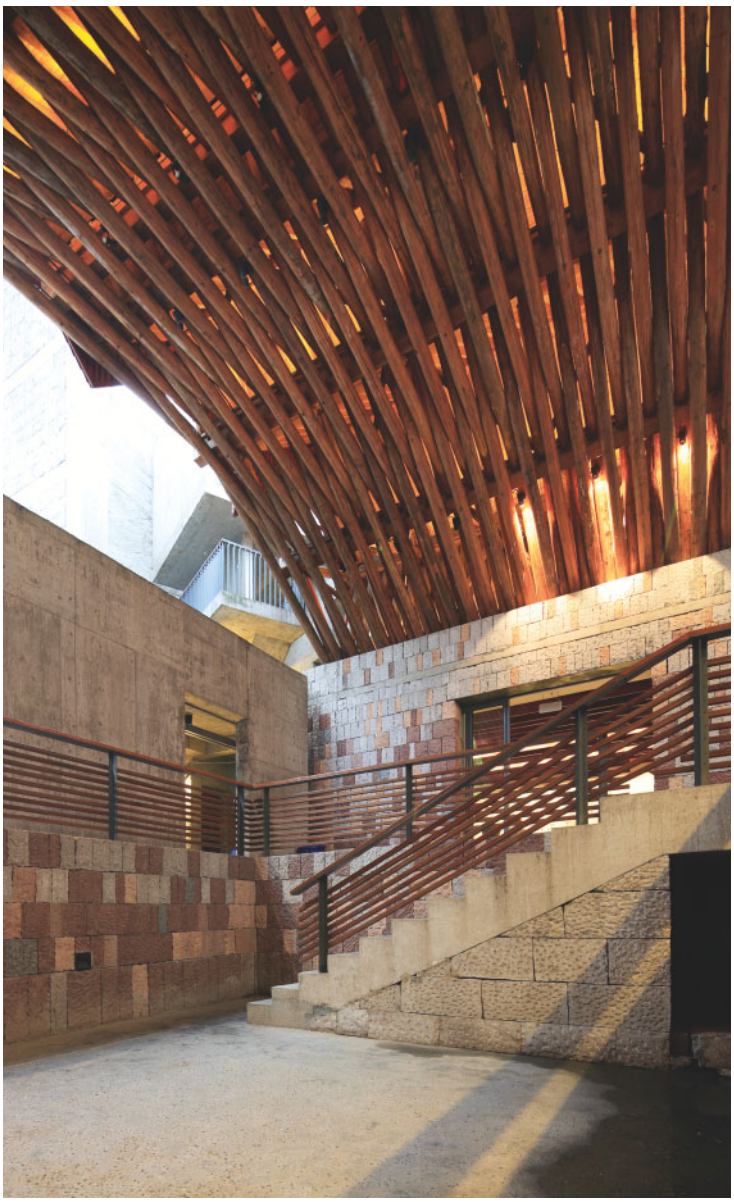
Wang Shu, Ningbo History Museum, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, 2008
top: Detail of the bamboo formwork, an innovation by Wang Shu and his colleagues that imbues concrete with local meaning in this region of China.

Wang Shu, School of Architecture, Xiangshan Campus (second phase), China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, 2007–11
bottom: The buildings of the School of Architecture are set amidst a lake and open courtyards and reveal Wang Shu's experimental use of a variety of materials: the combination of reinforced concrete fashioned from his trademark bamboo formwork clad in *wa pian qiang* (clay-tile wall) constructed from reclaimed brick, stone and tiles.

The notion of progress in architecture has for centuries depended on decay. The relationship between progress and regress is one of the architectural norms of our age – the hallmark of the mainstream. It is inherent in the linear concept of time and forms one of the pillars of Western modernity. The old justifies the new, just as the rationale for the new depends on the old. In our unending quest for progress, we are perpetually bombarded with images of architectural newness, the vitality of which derives less from invention or innovation than its separation from, and juxtaposition with, what it has replaced. This phenomenon, the roots of which extend deep into Western antiquity, is starkest where change is most widespread and rapid: areas that are today beyond the conventional Western world and long considered peripheral – geographically, intellectually and even racially.

China is one such site simultaneously beyond the West and an exemplar of rapid change. However, despite China's unprecedented transformation, there remains relatively little critical thinking about what constitutes architectural progress in a country that, while sited outside the West, also possesses a continuous building culture spanning several millennia and framed by cyclical rather than linear notions of time. More recently, China's model of architectural progressiveness has adopted much from the West, though the results cannot be the same. The country's size and the relative speed with which change has occurred have produced outcomes that are far more extreme and more directly in opposition to the old. Across China, as millions migrate from rural areas to urban centres, the old urban fabric has been completely torn up and re-clothed in what has become the standard couture of newness, a convention straitjacketed by ubiquity. The very notion of architectural progress in China has become one of mainstream mediocrity rather than a unique professional opportunity inspired by innovation, vitality and the cultural intuition that lends meaning to space.

A reaction against this conventional notion of progress is underway, and among those leading the charge is the architect and 2012 Pritzker Prize winner Wang Shu. Despite the accolade, he remains critical of his profession. Artistically and intellectually he has a closer affinity to the uniquely Chinese literati tradition (the scholarly class that, through their intellect and status, administered China for centuries until 1911) than to his profession. This tradition was expressed artistically through poetry, painting and calligraphy and defined by morality, virtue and restraint – values that Wang Shu believes contemporary China has lost. In their position beyond both the elite and the masses, perpetually weakened by revolution and counter-revolution, the literati were agitators – activists for meaningful change. For Wang Shu, this tradition is a model for contemporary transgressiveness and substantiates his nonconformity. The result is an approach to architectural practice that eschews architectural orthodoxy and proposes a novel vision of progress characterised by cultural intuition, originality and innovation, and a timelessness derived from cyclical temporality rather than deferential to Western constructs of temporal linearity.



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Wang Shu, Zhongshan Road, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, 2009
This small archaeological museum on Zhongshan Road uses a local method of wooden bridge construction to create a roof that leaps across the semi-open space beneath.

In a world increasingly liberated from Western modes of thought and practice, Wang Shu's transgressive approach has a wider and more enduring appeal that offers hope to a profession blinded by prevailing yet ultimately outmoded notions of progress.

Wang Shu, School of Architecture, Xiangshan Campus, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, 2004–13
Detail of a building in the architectural faculty at the China Academy of Art, designed by Wang Shu, showing his characteristic irregular motifs used here as apertures in the concrete wall.

Here, the relationship between the old and the new is symbiotic. Decay is intrinsic to revitalisation rather than merely initiatory. Wang Shu's projects subsume the old in order to create something new, whether through material and structural experimentation in small pavilions or the attempt to vertically arrange the traditional courtyard house in a high-rise tower. The Ningbo History Museum exemplifies this approach. The proposed site, as is common in China, was cleared not only of all buildings, but of life itself. Determined to revitalise the apocalyptic scene, Wang Shu's architectural solution drew inspiration conceptually and physically from the materials and artefacts that once occupied the landscape and gave it meaning. The combination of reinforced concrete fashioned from his trademark bamboo formwork clad in brick, stone and tiles reclaimed from the site were conceived in his working laboratory that comprises the entire Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art in Zhejiang Province. Comprising 23 buildings designed by Wang Shu over the last decade, the campus is where he has conducted his architectural experiments, culminating in the recently completed Wa Shan (Tile Mountain) Guesthouse, an assortment of structures and trails combined under a single undulating 100-metre (328-feet) long roof that, in the way it encapsulates multiple experiences in a single building, is a form of modern architecture inspired by literati art and tradition.

The Xiangshan Campus reveals a slow and thoughtful evolution that has elevated this maverick artist from local architectural agitator to global ambassador for a new vision of architectural progressiveness. In a world increasingly liberated from Western modes of thought and practice, Wang Shu's transgressive approach has a wider and more enduring appeal that offers hope to a profession blinded by prevailing yet ultimately outmoded notions of progress. AD

Wang Shu, Wa Shan (Tile Mountain) Guesthouse, Xiangshan Campus (third phase), China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, 2013
top: South elevation showing the wide variety of different materials, including concrete, steel, timber, bamboo and tile, stone and brick in the *wa pian qiang* (clay-tile wall).

centre: A section of the huge 100-metre (328-feet) long roof of grey tiles which forms a landscape with gardens, courtyards and a pathway that climbs up and over its peaks and valleys. The roof covers an assortment of structures and trails that are designed to encapsulate multiple experiences in a single building: a form of modern architecture inspired by Chinese literati art and tradition.

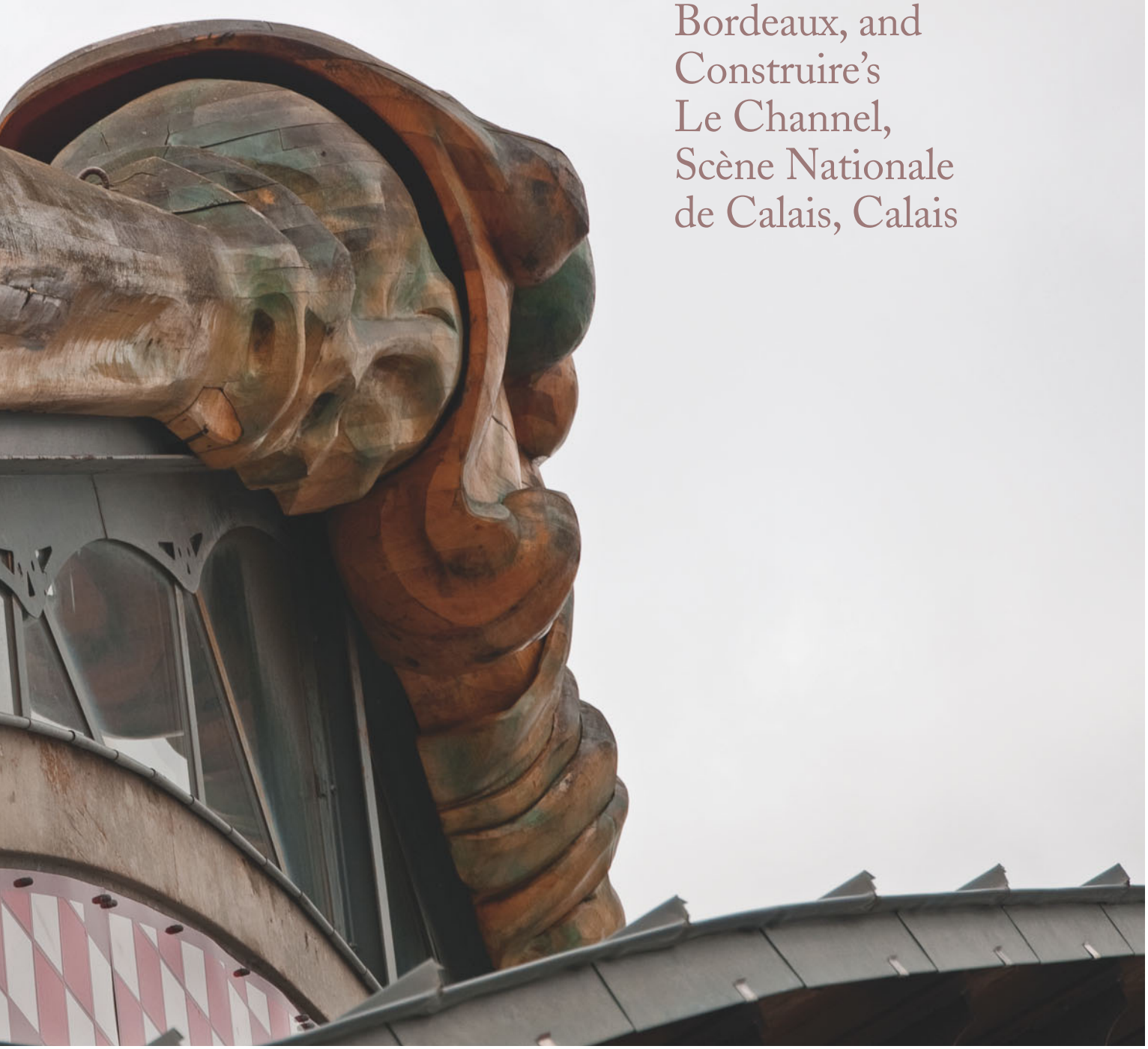
bottom: One of the residential units in the Wa Shan Guesthouse showing the complex roof structure and walls of rammed earth.

Robin Wilson

Construire with La Machine, Le Channel, Scène Nationale de Calais, Calais, France, 2007
Detail of carved tulipwood ornament by La Machine on the reception facade.

NOT DOING/OVERDOING: ‘OMISSION’ AND ‘EXCESS’

Lacaton & Vassal’s Place Léon Aucoc, Bordeaux, and Construire’s Le Channel, Scène Nationale de Calais, Calais



Is there any allegiance between the formal and the transgressive? Here architectural author and educator **Robin Wilson** explores two French projects by Lacaton & Vassal and Construire: the former being as pared back as the latter is exuberant. He investigates how despite the great variance in their aesthetic impact, they share 'transgressive positions and a questioning approach to architectural production'.

To transgress within the discipline of architecture is to reveal and destabilise the ideologies that determine its means of production, including the role of the architect as 'author'. Here, a project by architects Lacaton & Vassal is discussed alongside a collaboration between Patrick Bouchain/Construire and the performance production company La Machine. This combination presents a juxtaposition between a situation in which the production of new architectural form is strategically omitted, with one in which form proliferates in an exuberant economy of 'ornament'. In both cases transgression could be said to occur as a result of a critical response to the circumstances of the physical site and the social, economic and institutional circumstances of the commissioning brief.

As transgressive 'positions' or 'politics' of spatial production communicated through the aesthetic possibilities of architecture, the two projects question or rearticulate the symbolic relationship between the economic conditions of production and the formation of social identity within specific sites. Notably, both projects have a particular relationship to urban space that goes beyond the confines of the authorship of individual buildings, to articulate more open-ended notions of collective identity and co-authorship within enclaves of urban space – a square and a walled compound respectively. The impact of these strategies of transgression is also registered here in relation to the representation or the represent-ability of architecture within the platforms of its dissemination, the architectural media.


30

Plaza Léon Aucoc, Burdeos
Léon Aucoc Square, Bordeaux

1996


31

Lacaton & Vassal Architectes, Place Léon Aucoc, Bordeaux, France, 1996
Pages 30 and 31 of Lacaton & Vassal's project document in *2G*, 2001, with photography and text by the architects.

A Square

It is more than 15 years since Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal worked on their project for the Place Léon Aucoc in Bordeaux, the conception of which now stands as something of a foundational narrative in the early work of their practice, alongside the influential private housing projects, Latapie House in Floirac (1993) and a villa in Coutras (2000). Lacaton & Vassal were included in a citywide programme of design interventions commissioned by the Bordeaux city council to embellish the city's squares and public places. Their response to the commission was published as a project report in an edition of the journal *2G* dedicated to the work of Lacaton & Vassal.[1] Elegantly written by the architects themselves, the text of the article briefly describes a process of observation, evaluation and local consultation which concluded in the decision that the Léon Aucoc square was 'already beautiful' and that nothing new was necessary except an improved programme of maintenance.

In an introduction to a new *2G* monograph on Lacaton & Vassal, architect Iñaki Abalos returns to the project, discussing it in relation to sustainability in practice. This he develops with reference to a quote from Herman Melville's short story 'Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-street' (1853): 'I prefer not to.'[2] Abalos emphasises the power of the project's act of negation, to not do, as 'questioning the need for action of any kind'. In preferring 'to not do', Lacaton & Vassal pragmatically deployed a gesture of revolt against the expected role of the architect to produce objects complicit with the terms and ideology of the brief or commission. But the project also offers a powerful and equally transgressive force of affirmation that takes effect in two sites: the square itself and the journal page (by which I intend not just the pages of *2G*, but the global architectural media and its conventions of presentation and discursive method).

Lacaton & Vassal's textual description of the project in *2G* is also a poetic eulogy to the square. This descriptive eulogy is the justification for why nothing new should be introduced into the square. Rather than 'embellish' the square with new design, they propose instead an improved programme of 'maintenance'. In an interview the architects explain how they would even prefer to replace decrepit benches in the square from the council's remaining stock of the same model.[3] The notion of maintenance they put forward does not evade any one type of possible new design object; it evades all new design. Perhaps more precisely it evades the time of the new object, its moment of intervention; that is, the effecting, at a precise historical juncture, of a tangible change in the material qualities of the square.

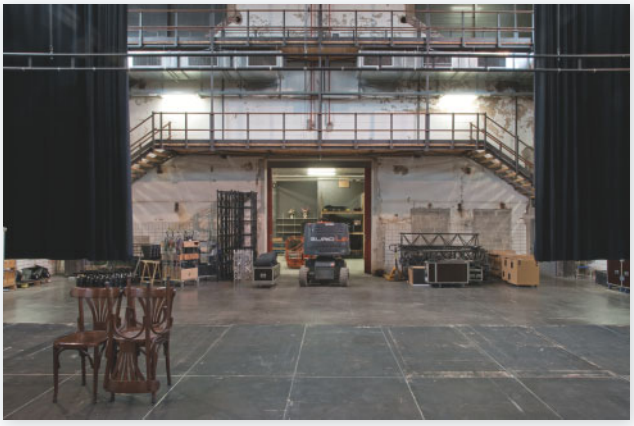
It is 'maintenance' rather than 'doing nothing' that forms the pertinent critical term of transgression within Lacaton & Vassal's project. The principle of maintenance links the project tangibly to its economic conditions, articulating economic ties between the architects and the commissioning body in such a way as to prioritise the flow of resources directly from the city government to its citizens. Lacaton & Vassal avoid producing a merely symbolic presence through design, an intervention to demonstrate government investment in this, a working-class district. Their solution is to disperse investment rather than concentrate it into the manufacturing of a new object; to distribute the available budget across the fabric of the square (to its curb stones, the branches of its trees, the gravel of its central garden) and across time (to a rolling programme of

Original documentation of the Léon Aucoc Square by Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, a space that the architects judged 'already beautiful', and to be subject only to 'maintenance'.

maintenance), so that intervention occurs, but that it is, in effect, invisible. This is not a condition of absence as such, but a strategic response to site that operates at an elemental level across the material substance of the square as a whole in affirmation of the 'existing conditions of life'.

The article about the Place Léon Aucoc project thus presents an anathema to the norms of architectural documentation with the architectural press: the presentation of a project that has no object other than the original site itself. Thus the economic structure of commissioning and professional specialisation within journal production is suspended on pages 30 and 31 of *2G*. With no new object to record, the professional photographer and critic are also absent. We are presented instead with material from the architects' own original site visits. Within a platform of media dissemination dominated by what critics Ilka and Andreas Ruby term an 'object-centred view', the project report presents a troubling blind spot, the absence of design as commodity spectacle.[4]

Powerfully, this negation of the object of design (that which would also be an object of desire and of consumption within the media) affects a renewed condition of visibility for the square itself. A modest example of 19th-century workers' terraced housing assumes the 'object centre' of the architectural media on these pages. Or, rather, the terraces form the perimeter to a site in which object centre (the object of the gaze) has been scattered across the totality of the image. We might understand this to affect something akin to what cultural theorist Fredric Jameson has termed 'perceptual renewal'[5] in relation to certain postmodern literature, whereby the dominant mode of the perception of reality and the ideological mediations involved in it are temporarily exposed, brought under a critical light. The project document of the Place Léon Aucoc presents imagery of urban space, if not in an unmediated form (all photography produces a mediated image), but released from the extreme reduction of the professional architectural photograph, of newly completed spaces in states of 'sterile perfection', as Tom Picton once characterised it.[6] 'Reality' returns in the photography of the Place Léon Aucoc, as that which the world of mediatised design systematically excludes and determines intolerable: the casual and contingent order of the everyday.



Construire with La Machine, Le Channel, Scène Nationale de Calais, Calais, France, 2007
top: View along the western parade of Le Channel compound, towards La Grande Salle, Studio Cirque and the reception.

bottom: Interior of La Grande Salle performance space, with original masonry and tiling of the slaughterhouse, 'traces' of the conditions of past labour.

Consistent with Construire's other cultural centre projects in decommissioned industrial buildings at Roubaix, Nantes and, most recently, La Rochelle, the Calais project involved a strategic reuse of the historic architecture toward a patchwork of adaptation, hybridisation, destruction and newbuild.

A Compound

The theatre and performing arts complex of Le Channel, Scène Nationale de Calais, situated in the walled compound of the old abattoirs of South Calais, was completed by Construire (Patrick Bouchain, Loïc Julienne and Chloë Bodart) in 2007. Consistent with Construire's other cultural centre projects in decommissioned industrial buildings at Roubaix, Nantes and, most recently, La Rochelle, the Calais project involved a strategic reuse of the historic architecture towards a patchwork of adaptation, hybridisation, destruction and newbuild. Notably, the sole building to be destroyed on the abattoir site was its concrete furnace, where the unusable remains of animal carcasses were disposed. Studio Cirque, an example of Construire's nomadic circus tent structures, was situated on the footprint of the erased building, one of four major performance spaces created within the complex.

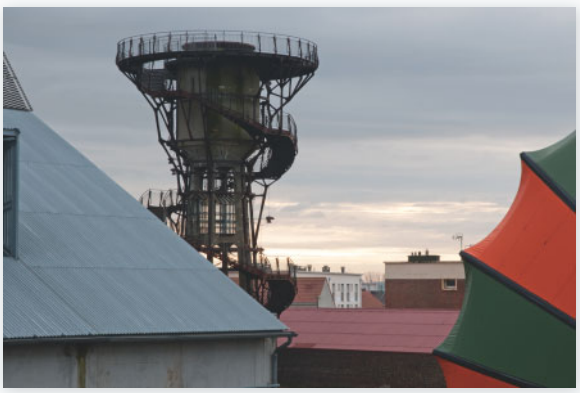
top: Interior of La Grande Halle performance space, with new structure grafted onto the untreated framework of the original slaughterhouse.

bottom: View of the water tower/belvedere with metalwork armature by La Machine.

The Calais project also involved an additional programme of ornamentation. As part of the condition of the brief to Construire, the director of Le Channel, François Peduzzi, had asked the architects to enter into collaboration with La Machine and its director François Delarozière, with whom Peduzzi had been collaborating during earlier phases of Le Channel's occupation of the abattoir. (La Machine are known internationally for their animate, animal machine centrepieces to urban performance.) As Peduzzi recounts, Bouchain willingly agreed to the collaboration. He understands Bouchain's generosity here to reflect a broader concern within his practice for situations of co-authorship. Importantly for Peduzzi, this also extends to the period after project delivery. He explains how Le Channel constitutes a condition of '*non-fini*' (unfinished, open-ended) architecture, and that the community enjoys 'infinite permission', or 'freedom at the point of use', that is, to adapt the project without recourse to Bouchain's authorial sanction.

La Machine added to Construire's architecture an ornamental *art decorative* staging, as the chief carpenter Emmanuel Bourveau explains, a fusion of the vegetal and the animal. Rendered in carved tulipwood and metal (the same materials used in their theatrical machines), these elements are present in both interior and exterior, appearing in the form of physical growths or customised armatures to the buildings, and as various forms of furniture within the public spaces and offices. The embellishments principally occur on the facade, balcony and interior of the main reception building, the bar, a performance space called Le Passager, and the belvedere (an adapted water tower). The presence of this bespoke ornamentation is sufficient in certain areas of the complex to dominate its aesthetic to, in effect, assume its identity.

The programme of decorative embellishment (literally 'overdoing' architecture) might be said to deliberately refute, or overwrite with a new 'text', the aesthetic conventions and expectations of contemporary architectural design. It gestures towards a popular aesthetic, establishing a kinship with earlier strategies in French design of the postmodern period, notably artist and landscape designer Bernard Lassus's incorporation of 'kitsch' or whimsical elements as an explicit gesture of solidarity with popular cultures of decoration. In the transition from the production of animate theatrical machines to architectural ornament, La Machine have affected a destabilisation of aesthetic categories. This could be interpreted as a realignment of their own aesthetic of urban, theatrical performance (of the kind that is commissioned to represent the cultural ambitions of major global cities) with something akin to popular elements of street



decoration, the gaudier aspects of the commercial French high street, exemplified, indeed, by the bars and nightclubs of Calais's own rue Royale. This would represent, therefore, the desire for a continuity between the public realm of the street and the thoroughfares or 'parades' of circulation within the compound of Le Channel that also articulates a shift into a conception of public space as the space of performance.

This gesture towards a 'popular' or 'inclusive' aesthetic within the work of La Machine might be productively compared to Construire's own conception of public or collective identity with their acts of building conversion. Bouchain asserts that it is vital to maintain the immediate traces of a history of use within a converted architecture, specifically, to maintain a physical memory of the 'previous conditions of labour'. Bouchain seeks to ensure that the current mode of production within a site, its expenditure and action, physically coexists and accumulates alongside the traces of past use. Take, for example, the performance spaces of the Grande Salle and Grande Halle (the two halves of the original slaughterhouse in the centre of the compound) in which Construire's work was simply to add greater height to the building and equip the space for theatrical performance. The painted and tiled surfaces of the masonry base of the original slaughterhouse are left unchanged. Those elements of the metal framework of the building that survive from the original structure remain untreated, with the grafting point of the new roofing structure appearing plainly as a transition to new, matt grey paint.

The affirmation and preservation of 'trace', past and present, supports the conception of architecture as unfinished ('*non-fini*') and open to further adaptation. It articulates, without hierarchy, the present as part of an ongoing historical process. We might consider, therefore, that the 'popular' ornamentation of La Machine operates precisely in support of, and is supported by, this notion of trace. It develops from the understanding of architecture as a space of accumulation, and although produced in collaborative dialogue with the architect, it equally represents a freedom within this space to go beyond the 'sanction' of the architect as author.

What then is the 'text' of this ornamentation and how does it contribute to or embellish the meaning of collective identity and trace within this site? Historically, the project of Le Channel echoes a process of urban and social change that has happened many times before: the expulsion of what Denis Hollier has termed 'the unredeemable ugliness of the slaughterhouse' to more remote locations, in favour of the 'beauty' of cultural consumption.[7] With reference to the writings of Georges Bataille, Hollier depicts this process of acculturation and the denial of the visceral as one from which society never truly recovers at a symbolic level. The suppression of the bloodshed and decomposition of the slaughterhouse from mass consciousness becomes manifest as 'a pathological need for cleanliness', compensated for by the 'purifying' cultural rituals of the museum or other spaces of culture.

View beneath the awning, with metal balustrade by La Machine.

left: Detail of the carved tulipwood ornament.

bottom: The reception and bar with facade additions in tulipwood and metal by La Machine.

The affirmation and preservation of 'trace', past and present, supports the conception of architecture as unfinished ('*non-fini*') and open to further adaptation. It articulates, without hierarchy, the present as part of an ongoing historical process.

Focusing, in conclusion, on the tulipwood facade elements of Le Channel's reception building, the production of form and ornament expresses here (or, perhaps in a more unconscious way, 'figures') a matter or substance of abjection. This abjectness is enforced by the carvings' exposure to the erosive conditions of the Calais winter, as they peel, discolour and accumulate lichen. The aesthetic of the trace within architecture, the marks of past use, can all too easily be assimilated into a high-art design aesthetic, and its historical authenticity neutralised. But La Machine's facade elements stubbornly resist such assimilation; they represent a form of labour and expression that the professional architectural media struggles to validate. Moreover, this specific aspect of La Machine's work at Le Channel potentially carries a deeper symbolism, resonating with the darker undercurrents of Hollier's dual history of slaughter and culture. In the transition from the space of urban theatrical performance to the surface of architecture, La Machine have moved from the production of complete, mobile animal bodies to render instead fragmented bits of animal matter stretched over architecture, like structural gristle, bone, skin and ligament. This amounts not to an overt symbolism of a specific animal body (absent bovine form), but a more diffuse presence of the unidentifiable remains of a deconstructed body, one rendered down by an unforgiving process of industrial butchery. This, then, is symbolic of the process of the abattoir itself, figuring no less than the unusable animal remains destined for the destroyed furnace. That sole building within the abattoir complex to be destroyed in the conversion process returns here as 'trace', 'stain'; ornament as architectural dirt. AD

Notes

1. Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, *Lacaton & Vassal*, *2G*, No 21, Editorial Gustavo Gili (Barcelona) 2002, pp 30–1.
2. Iñaki Abalos, *Lacaton & Vassal: Recent Work*, 2G, No 60, Editorial Gustavo Gili (Barcelona), 2011, p 14.
3. Leonardo Di Costanzo, *Lacaton & Vassal*, Les Film d'Ici/Paris Première (Paris), 1999.
4. Ilka and Andreas Ruby, *Lacaton & Vassal*, *2G*, No 21, Editorial Gustavo Gili (Barcelona), 2001, p 5.
5. See, for example, Fredric Jameson, 'Progress Versus Utopia; or, Can We Imagine the Future', in Brian Wallis (ed), *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, The New Museum of Contemporary Art/Godine Publishers (New York), 1984, p 245.
6. Tom Picton, 'The Craven Image, or The Apotheosis of the Architectural Photograph', *The Architects' Journal* 25 (7), 1979, p 187.
7. Denis Hollier, 'Bloody Sundays', *Representations* 28, University of California, Fall 1989, p 80.

Rachel Sara

Lina Bo Bardi, Teatro Oficina, São Paulo, Brazil, 1991
Organised around the central street, the performers, audience, lighting technicians and 'back of house' staff all inhabit the same space: a concrete and timber street flanked by a blue-painted scaffolding structure that is deliberately incomplete and able to be reconfigured.

CITADELS OF FREEDOM

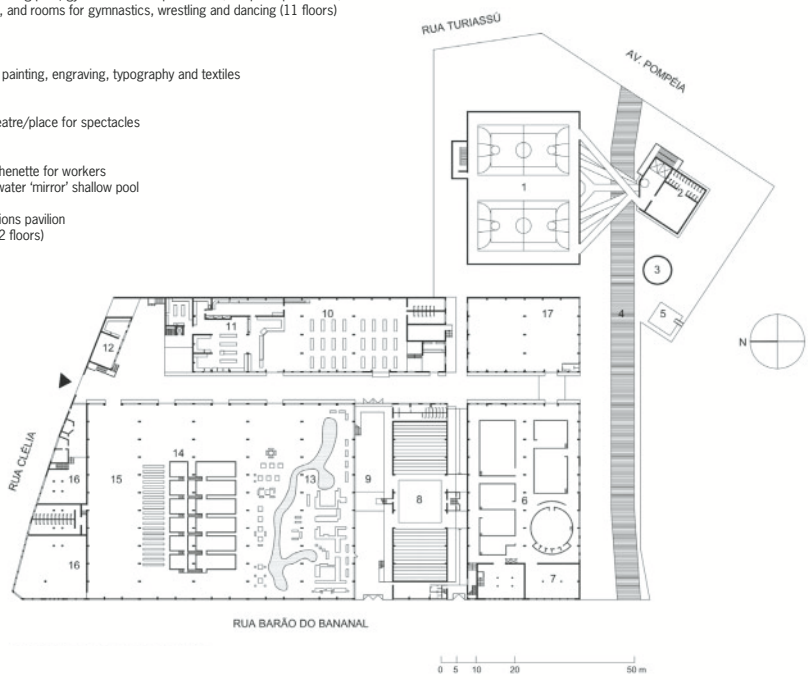
LINA BO BARDI'S SESC POMPÉIA FACTORY LEISURE CENTRE AND TEATRO OFICINA, SÃO PAULO

Transgression is by implication transdisciplinary, slipping beyond accepted boundaries. **Rachel Sara** describes how Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi designed her buildings in a state of 'incompleteness', so as to be ready for a collaborative occupancy in 'recognition that the users' experiences construct the architecture as much as the architect herself'.

Architecture 'either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the "practice of freedom", the means by which [women and men] deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world'.[1] In the work of great architects, it is often the ability to assert control over those who experience the design that is most admired; their designs are complete, fixed masterpieces, and users of the building are expected to conform to fit. The SESC Pompéia Factory Leisure Centre (1986) and Teatro Oficina (1991), both in São Paulo, Brazil, provide an exception, where the strength of the architecture comes, in contrast, from a loosening of control, and an anti-patriarchal recognition that the users' experiences construct the architecture as much as the architect herself.

The projects were designed by the Italian-born Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi (1914–92), best known as the designer of the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art (MASP). Both projects were completed after she had experienced nearly 10 years of ostracism by the military dictatorship: Bo Bardi was to some extent involved in the resistance movement through her involvement as a set designer for the Teatro Oficina in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which hosted critical productions in

Key
1 Sports complex with swimming pool, gymnasium and apartments (5 duplex apartments)
2 Laundry, changing rooms, and rooms for gymnastics, wrestling and dancing (11 floors)
3 Water tower
4 Solarium deck
5 Water feature
6 Workshops for ceramics, painting, engraving, typography and textiles
7 Photography lab
8 Theatre, seating 1,200
9 Vestibule and covered theatre/place for spectacles
10 Self-service restaurant
11 Industrial kitchen
12 Changing room and kitchenette for workers
13 Multi-use space, with a water 'mirror' shallow pool
14 Library and media lab
15 Large temporary exhibitions pavilion
16 General administration (2 floors)
17 Maintenance office



Lina Bo Bardi, SESC Pompéia Factory Leisure Centre, São Paulo, Brazil, 1986
The project re-inhabits an existing factory building to the West of the site and adds two new vertical blocks connected by footbridges and a third cylindrical water tower (which resembles an industrial chimney and is simultaneously a reference to the site's previous use and a tribute to Luis Barragán.

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top: All the key spaces within the conversion remain interconnected, giving the impression of a 'loose-fit', almost squatter programme that acknowledges the building's past use while also implying future flexibility.

bottom: The art and craft spaces are defined by half-height, exposed blockwork walls that imply an impermanence to the current configuration while allowing views beyond to remind users of both the previous use of the building and the other cultural activities going on in parallel throughout the centre.

opposition to the government. Perhaps in response to her difficult relationship with the controlling power, both the SESC Pompéia and the Teatro Oficina demonstrate an architectural intent not to dominate, but instead to create an empowering architecture that draws from what was there before while inviting visitors to participate in the creation of the present.

The SESC Pompéia inhabits a former factory building that was offered as a site for demolition to the architect by the client, the Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC), a non-profit institution which acts throughout Brazil to promote health and culture among workers and their families. Rather than starting with a blank canvas, or politely revering the original building, Bo Bardi instead maintained the structure of the building in order to subvert its meaning. The factory buildings (the heavily prescriptive world of work) are reappropriated as a more loosely programmed place of leisure. The facilities house art and craft workshops, a theatre, a bar/restaurant, a library, exhibition space and public, multi-use space. Two new vertical blocks house sports activities, including a swimming pool, gymnasium, rooms for dancing and wrestling, and sports courts. The varied programme for the project emerged from the informal activities that were already happening in the then disused factory since the SESC had taken ownership.

Nicknamed 'the citadel of freedom', the centre unites athletic, artistic, spiritual and political life in the spirit of the ancient Greek agora. Public life is brought into the centre: there are public armchairs to sit by the fire, or the water, places to play chess or hold debates, and a sun terrace that stretches the length of the site that functions variously as an urban beach, space for markets, carnival and informal exhibition. This hybridity of programme allows the centre to be a citadel, or protected space, of political and cultural production and reproduction (indeed the SESC has a policy of keeping records of its activities in order to create a 'memory' of Brazilian culture).

Endearingly given the moniker 'the citadel of freedom', the SESC Pompéia functions as an informal civic centre that, in the same way as the ancient agora, brings together athletic, artistic, spiritual and political life, with public sofas in which to gather and socialise, alongside sports halls, a theatre, arts space and library.

A sun terrace that runs the length of the site links the various elements of the centre and is left unprogrammed, variously functioning as an urban beach, market place, and carnival and exhibition space.

This notion is also explored in the much smaller building of the Teatro Oficina. Here, Bo Bardi developed some of the architectural ideas drawing on her previous involvement with the theatre as a set designer during the dictatorship era: found elements, such as scaffolding, trees and water, are brought into the building from the city outside, reinforcing the connection to everyday city life. Conceived of as a street that runs from the road, through the heart of the building and onto a (as yet unrealised) public square beyond, the project resists the notion of theatre as a fixed entity, separate from everyday life, just as it resists ideas of front- and back of house. There are no wings or curtains. There is no real 'stage'. The audience, lighting technicians and actors all inhabit the same space: all become a part of the performance.

Underlying both projects is the creation of a living architecture, seen as a continuously evolving conversation between the past, the present and the future. The transgression lies in both the disruption (rather than abandonment) of the controlling hand of the architect, and in the subversion of existing separations and hierarchies between spaces, activities and roles. In doing so the projects explore a conception of architecture as the infrastructure for the transformative performance of everyday life.

Note

1. I have borrowed and adapted this quote by replacing the word 'education' for 'architecture' from a text by Richard Shaull, citing Paolo Freire. See Richard Shaull, 'Foreword', in Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin Education (Middlesex), 1972, p 14.

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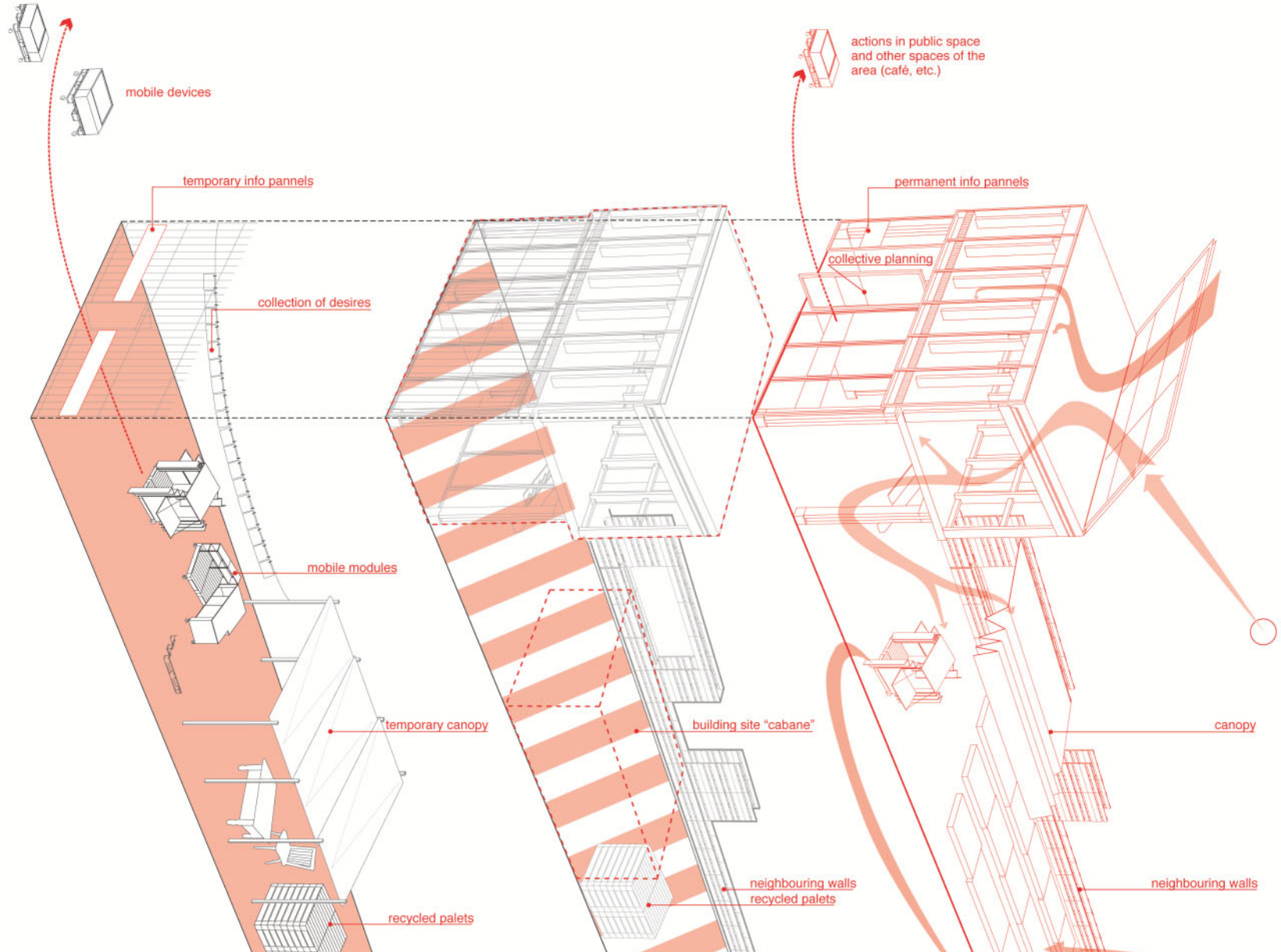
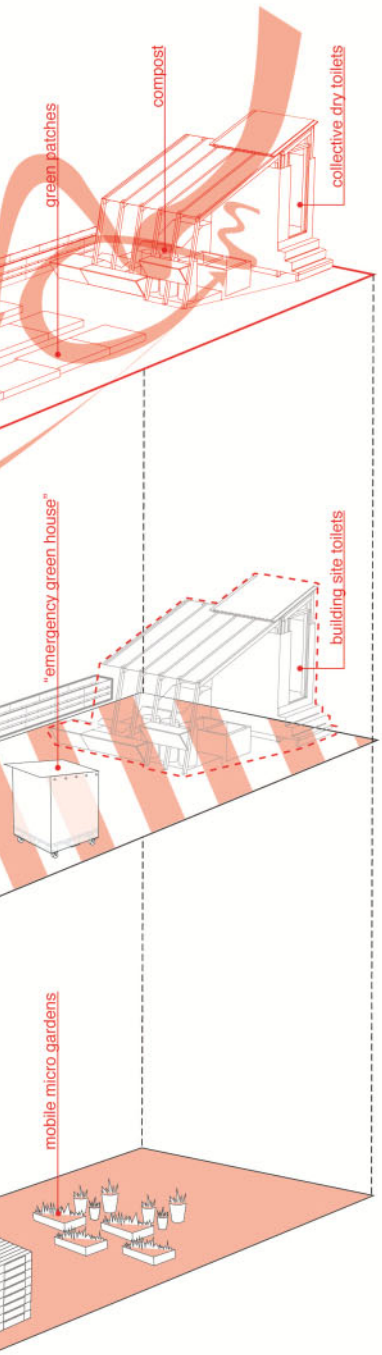
Lina Bo Bardi, Teatro Oficina, São Paulo, Brazil, 1991
The theatre is organised around a central street that reaches out onto the pavement at the front (and was intended to continue out onto a public square to the rear), resisting the notion of theatre as separate to everyday public life.

INITIAL USES

'OPEN BUILDING SITE'

CURRENT USES





atelier d'architecture autogérée, Passage 56, Paris, 2006–
The different transformation phases within Passage 56 between 2006 and 2009, from the abandoned plot to the ecological interstice: (1) informal occupation; (2) participative construction; (3) ecological practices and short circuits.

2009

Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou

2007
2008

In the last decade, Internet access and social media have reshaped the possibilities for experimental practice in terms of reach and immediacy. **Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou** of atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) describe a project that they initiated for a collective platform in Paris that acts as a catalyst for community engagement in the urban realm and particularly the reappropriation of vacant plots of land in the city.

2006

TACTICS FOR A TRANSGRESSIVE PRACTICE

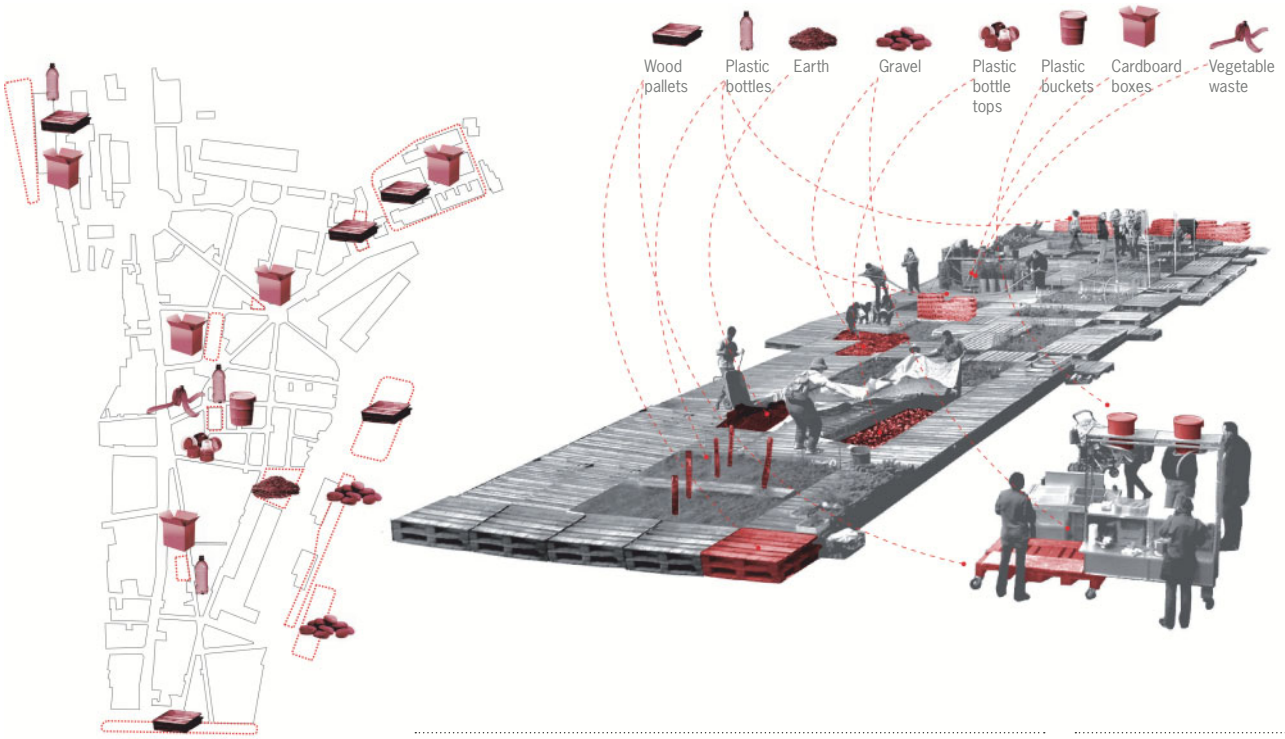
atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) is a collective platform including architects, artists, urban planners, landscape designers, sociologists, students and residents living in Paris. It promotes the reappropriation and reinvention of a collective space in the city through everyday life activities (gardening, cooking, chatting, DIY making, reading, debating and so on), understood as creative urban practices. The aim is to create a network of self-managed places by encouraging residents to gain access to their neighbourhoods, and to appropriate and transform temporarily available and underused spaces.

The starting point was the realisation in 2001 of a temporary garden made out of reclaimed materials on a derelict site in La Chapelle in the north of Paris. This garden, called ECObox, has been supplemented with other mobile facilities (kitchen, library, media lab, DIY workshop) and has progressively extended into a platform for urban creativity that has catalysed activities in the whole neighbourhood. The platform has since moved several times within the area, using the same principles, but taking different forms in different locations and involving new users.[1]

This approach continued in the Passage 56 project, which started in 2006 on a 200-square-metre (2,150-square-foot) empty plot located on rue Saint-Blaise, in a high-density residential area in the 20th arrondissement in Paris. The plot, which was formerly a passageway, was considered non-constructible and therefore abandoned for many years. aaa designed and initiated various uses (such as gardening, compost making, repairing, skill exchange, organic vegetable distribution in the neighbourhood) for the space and developed ecological practices with the participation of residents. Passage 56 is a prototype of 'open-source' architecture that experiments with forms of collectively produced space and pioneers unusual partnerships between institutions, professionals, local organisations and residents that challenge the current stereotypical models of urban management. The project is socially and ecologically sustainable, being currently self-managed by residents of the area.

Tactics

The practice defines its work as 'urban tactics', referring to our engaged activity in the urban realm that encourages inhabitants to reappropriate vacant land in the city and transform it into self-managed space. Of particular interest to us was Michel de Certeau's definition of 'tactics' in relation to the practices of city users.[2] De Certeau speaks about 'witty' forms of resistance to capitalist consumption through everyday life practices like dwelling, cooking, walking, reading and so on that are all tactical in their nature as they are improvised and take advantage of all opportunities afforded them. aaa has added 'architecture' to these everyday life practices (which in our case are gardening, building, recycling and so on) and conceived a number of spatial devices to enable



atelier d'architecture autogérée, ECObox, Paris 2001–
top: The ECObox garden was conceived as a temporary device to be realised with zero budget and to be built by users. The pallet slab grew as a domino, integrating individual and collective plots that were gradually built by gardeners.

bottom: The temporary garden and the mobile modules were made out of reclaimed materials collected in La Chapelle neighbourhood.

temporary appropriations of underused space in the city: pallet constructions, mobile modules, demountable buildings. 'The space of the tactic is the space of the other,' says De Certeau,[3] stating that it is the absence of power and own space that is the tactic's strength.[4]

Tactics work with time and are opportunistic in their method; they do not 'plan', but use their own deviousness and the element of surprise to get things done. aaa's tactical urbanism is different from and perhaps in conflict with traditional urban planning. We do not 'plan' but 'act', sometimes without permission and against the rules that we estimate inappropriate or unfair, with all this subversion involving inventiveness, time and passion. Tactics survive through their mobility, said De Certeau, and from this point of view all of our spatial devices involve forms of temporariness and mobility: temporary occupations, mobile architectures, dismantling constructions.

Tactics have been ways for us to transgress, even if only temporarily and locally, laws and regulations, roles, professional boundaries and so on. First, we have broken the rules of how space is accessed in the city by citizens and trespassed the land-use regulations of sites that were available only for interim periods. We have identified a particular type of space that we have termed 'urban interstices': urban wastelands, vacant plots, abandoned buildings, neglected public spaces – all spaces that have so far eluded or delayed, perhaps only for a short time, land development programmes.

We have negotiated the temporary use of these interstices, proposing activities that were not inscribed in urban regulations: gardening, recycling, cooking. Space is a high-value resource in big cities where land is expensive and scarce. Temporary use implies also that the project has a short life, and will disappear after a while. In order to prevent this, in the case of ECObox we have equipped it with mobile spatial devices in order to allow it to move on to new locations when a site is no longer available. Most of the users have followed the project during its successive reinstallations (usually in the same area), some capitalising on their experience and becoming stakeholders. New users living nearby have also joined the project with each new relocation. In this way, the power structure has been continually questioned and revised: new assemblies of users have been formed, and new governance rules negotiated with each new location.

ECObox2 and ECObox3 are the continuation of ECObox 1, but are at the same time new projects. The ECObox project is now moving for the fourth time in its 12-year existence. aaa has thus constructed a durability with the temporary, based on repetitions that have allowed for a certain continuity (and therefore reinforcement) and reinstitution: each time it was the space that was reinstituted and the subjects that re-subjectivised themselves in gardens, debates, exchanges and political projects that were formulated collectively.

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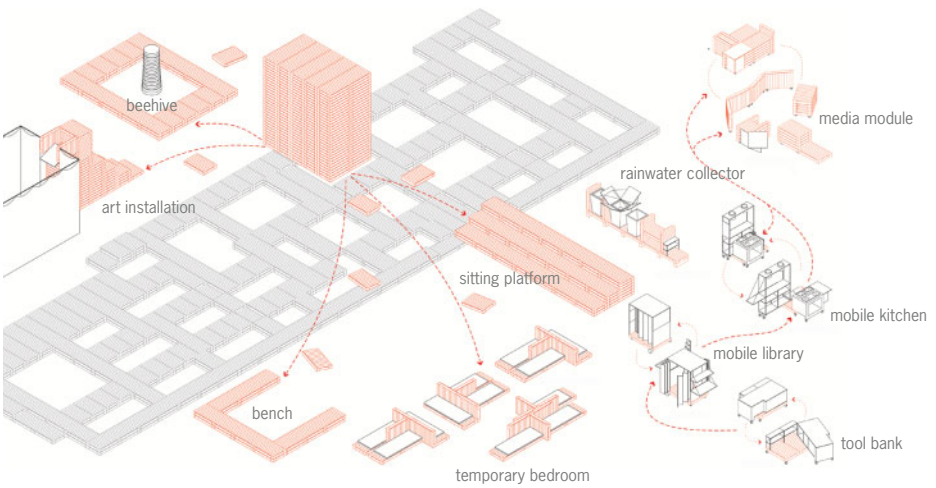
Participation

aaa has broken the rules of the 'commissioned project', proposing unsolicited interventions. We have transgressed the professional regulations in order to allow users to have access to the design process. For example, we have tactically registered as a non-profit organisation in order to allow our practice to include non-architects, and to be able to receive public funding rather than make a profit and be dependent on private commissions. Other forms of participation have also been allowed in which the status of 'participant' was fully recognised as a form of membership within the practice. The users gradually became members of aaa, which made the practice grow to hundreds of members at certain moments, and to shrink down to its usual size of five to six members when the project was taken over by the user organisation that continued to manage it further in its own name.



top: The mobile spatial devices including a pile of pallets and a series of mobile modules (urban kitchen, mobile library, media lab, tool bank) allowed for different spatial configurations and for successive reinstallations in new locations.

bottom: Many activities (flea markets, open-air cinema, debates) were proposed and organised by the users themselves who, little by little, became stakeholders of the project.

EXTERNAL PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS

formal / institutional

informal / non-institutional

INTERNAL PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS

formal / institutional

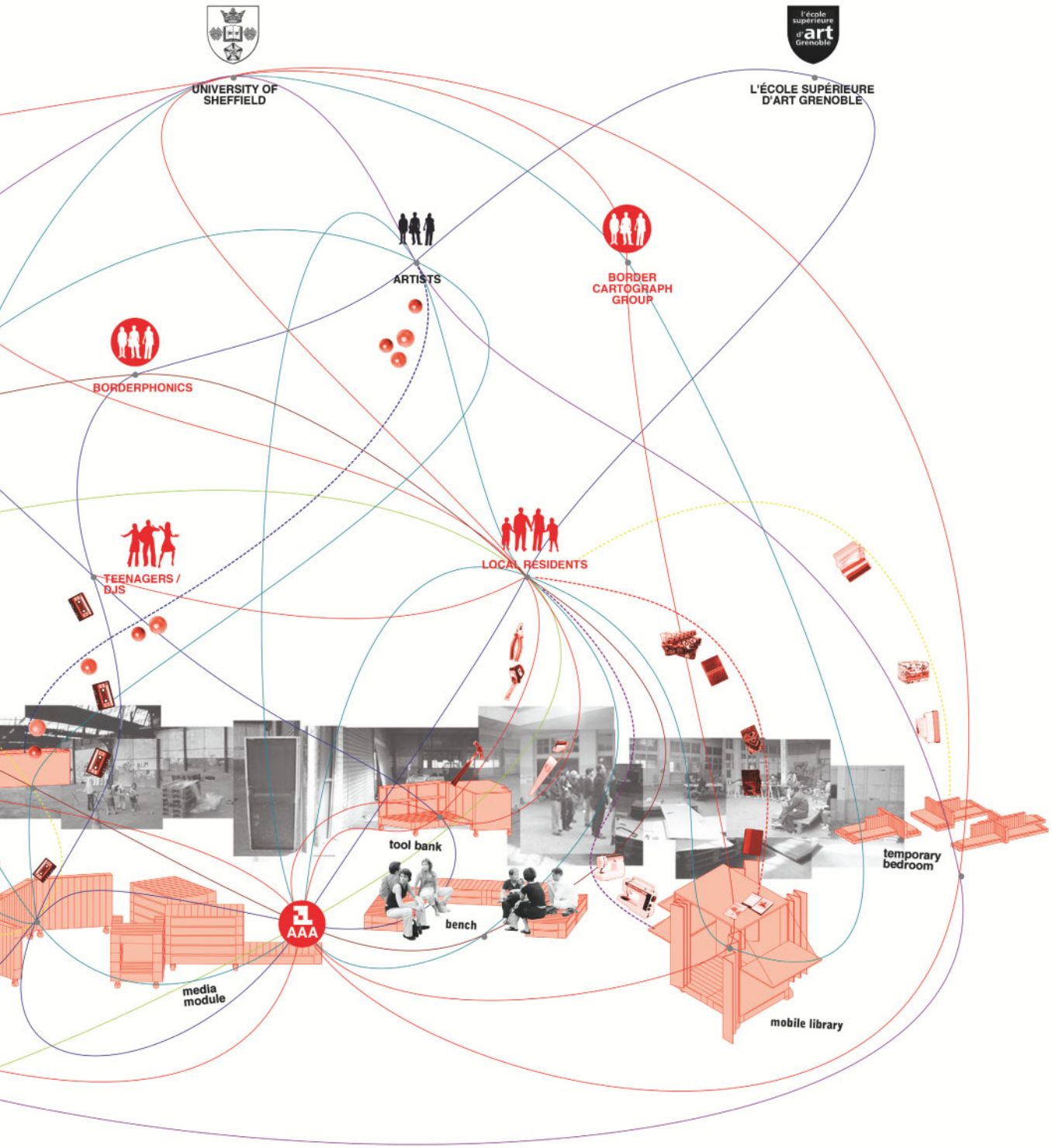
informal / non-institutional

objects/use relation loops

people/use relation loops

people and groups nod of crossing activities

objects/ uses



The Actor Network map of ECObox shows how tactical devices (mobile modules, temporary constructions, objects and so on) carry agencies themselves and play an important role in enhancing connectedness and generating networks.

In the case of Passage 56, aaa signed a building contract as a non-governmental organisation and not as a professional practice. According to the French Urbanisme Code, a building whose surface is under 170 square metres (1,830 square feet) is not required to be designed by an architect.[5] Our Passage 56 building fell below this size restriction, and this was exploited as our tactic to avoid professional control and offer a precedent to other non-professional organisations that might be willing to start similar projects. We also bypassed procurement and health and safety regulations by declaring the construction site 'open to the public', rather than keeping it closed. The construction was realised during a training programme for youngsters in the area. Self-building was part of the social activity we organised on site, and was therefore open to all members of the organisation. We have subscribed for an insurance that covers the aaa members as well as our guests. As such, any member of the public is virtually a 'guest', and therefore covered by the project insurance and able to participate in activities on site during construction. The construction site was as such not only a stage within the procurement process, but the actual cultural and social activity of the project.

In both ECObox and Passage 56, aaa started with use rather than design. Informed by use, by testing 'live' programmes and construction suggestions, our designs have evolved during the projects, allowing the continual participation of users in the design process. We have designed not only spatial devices, but also organisational frameworks that guarantee users a participatory role throughout the duration of the project. Participating in this way, and learning all the details little by little, has resulted in users gradually taking over the projects and starting to self-manage them, evolving from participants to project stakeholders.

atelier d'architecture autogérée, Passage 56, Paris, 2006–
The abandoned plot situated at 56 rue Saint-Blaise was transformed into an ecological urban interstice self-managed by users.

Autogéstion

We have transgressed our roles: from merely designers and educators we have become gardeners, social workers and facilitators, at the same time as users have become designers, managers, entrepreneurs and activists. This was a transgression not only of individual roles, but of whole projects, which gradually changed from their focus on gardening to culture, design and politics. We shared with the users the knowledge necessary for the appropriation of space, and the conception and management of architecture, a principle that resulted in what we call an *architecture autogérée* (self-managed architecture).

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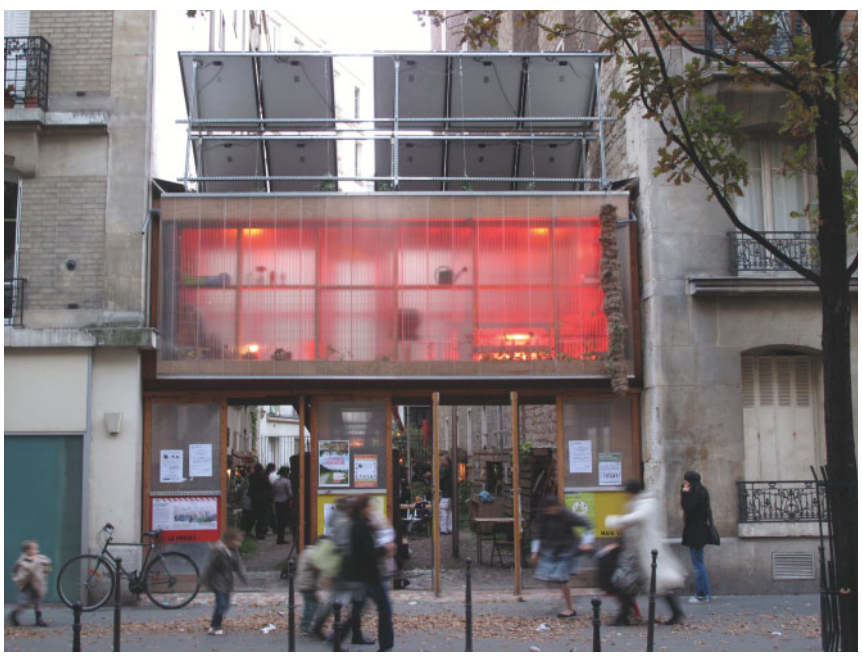
Our *architecture autogérée* is not only another example of participatory architecture, but a critical take on it. Participation made a spectacular return in architecture and urban planning during the last decade, being underpinned by numerous initiatives and practices that were promoted by professional bodies and supported by public programmes and changes in policy. Nevertheless, most existing frameworks of both governmental and local participative programmes are organised in the same way, without taking into account the particularity of each situation. Participation becomes an organised (and potentially manipulated) part of any regeneration project, in which the users are meant to be given a voice, but the process itself erases the outcomes. We denounce the uncritical, idealised and centred-on-consensus use of participation, pointing up to the numerous pseudo-participative regeneration programmes that prefigure the gentrification of neighbourhoods. aaa's participative approach aims to enable the reclaiming and self-management of space by users, a process full of conflicts and contradictions that engage the responsibility of all actors.



Passage 56 is located in a former passageway at the core of a high-rise and medium-rise residential area in the 20th arrondissement of Paris.

Autogéstion is a word that has a particular significance in French political history, referring directly to the ideological struggles and anti-statist social movements of the 19th century, and to the idea of 'workers' control'. Following Lefebvre,[6] we were fully aware of this meaning, but in our case the figure of the 'worker' has been replaced by that of the 'inhabitant' or the 'user'. As Marxist philosopher Antonio Negri pointed out, within the contemporary condition the city has replaced the 'factory' as a place of predilection for social production.[7] atelier d'architecture *autogérée* promotes a kind of architecture in which the 'inhabitant', or the 'city user', plays a central role in the social production. For us, *architecture autogérée* is an architecture that enables its users to appropriate space and take control of its organisation and management. This is perhaps the main challenge and the most radical transgression within our practice. We have carried out this challenge in our name as a flag, as a way of pointing to what we do. We have been attacked and misinterpreted for it.[8] But we wanted this legacy of radical politics and social experiments to be translated into contemporary architectural practice, and we wanted to be the actors of these translations. ⌂

The former passageway at 56 rue Saint-Blaise was gradually appropriated and transformed into an ecological interstice. Located in a socially fractured district of Paris, the project demonstrates the success of a truly 'bottom-up', resident-led development based on the collective management of the 200-square-metre (2,150-square-foot) passageway used for ecological everyday life activities.

Passage 56 was designed as an ecological interstice hosting a small wooden building (with a green roof and powered by solar panels), compost toilets, a rainwater collector, cultivation plots, seed catchers and a wild birds' corridor. Ecological cycles are closed on site in such way that the space produces most of what it needs to consume: electricity, water, compost and food.

Notes

1. For more details see Doina Petrescu, 'Losing Control, Keeping Desire', in Peter Blundell-Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till (eds), *Architecture and Participation*, Routledge (London), 2005, pp 43–64.
2. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans S Rendall, University of California Press (Berkeley, CA), 1984, p 37.
3. Ibid, p 37.
4. Ibid, pp 36–7.
5. See The Urbanisme Code article R.* 431-2 (www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000025831941&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074075) and the Law of Architecture n° 77-2 of 3 January 1977 (www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/infos-pratiques/droit-culture/architecture/pdf/loi77-2.pdf).
6. Neil Brenner and Stuart Eden (eds), *Henri Lefebvre: State, Space, World – Selected Essays*, Minnesota University Press (Minneapolis, MN), 2009.
7. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (Cambridge, MA), 2009, p 250.
8. For example, under the right-wing government since 2002 we have been refused public funding in some instances because of our name, which has been judged as subversive and anarchist.

Alex Römer and Naïm Aït-Sidhoum

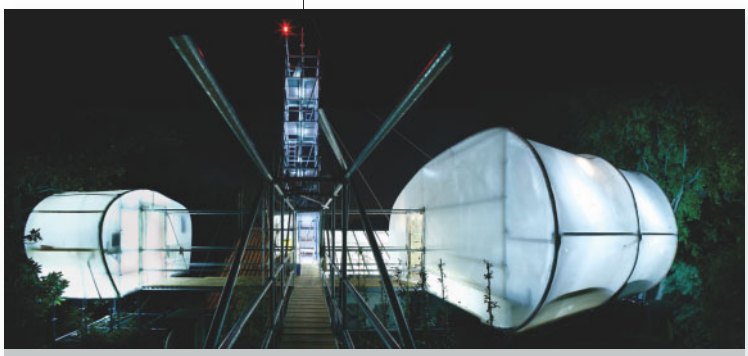
LOW-TECH TRANSGRESSION

THE INTERVENTIONAL WORK OF EXYZT

EXYZT, temporary tunnel within project Chaud Devant, Saint-Jean-en-Royans, 2010
The tunnel as an inhabitable space. The social housing company closed the space soon after because of supposed security problems.

Alex Romer and Naïm Aït-Sidhoum define EXYZT's practice as one characterised by 'transgressive forms' and 'construction devices'. They explain how this has come about through the studio's penchant for the loose conditions of leftover spaces – derelict urban sites or marginal spaces by the sides of roads and railway lines – which require the building of temporary structures in tight timetables on limited budgets.

EXYZT, Metavilla, French Pavilion for the Venice Architecture Biennale, Venice, 2006
Shown under construction, the scheme was conceived both as a collective building and living experience within the context of the exhibition and as an embassy for French design.



The rooftop sauna, open-air bath and garden, accessed through the fanlight of the existing pavilion, hover over the Giardini (public gardens), which are in use even when the Biennale is closed at night.

The EXYZT collective has been proposing experimental constructions since 2003. Starting with 'RAB Architecture' – the appropriation of a 'leftover' urban space through the creation of a structure made of scaffolding – a series of temporary objects have been set up in locations around the world.

It is often marginal spaces that interest EXYZT (industrial wasteland, infrastructural residue – essentially everything that is left aside by urban development), because in these gaps in the urban continuum the project is free from the usual regulatory constraints. And when the contexts concerned are less marginal (the French Pavilion at the 2006 Venice Biennale, for example), they themselves are punctured, opened to unexpected spaces and uses, as if to return to the loose conditions of leftover spaces. The economical nature of EXYZT's projects (relatively limited budget, temporary buildings, reduced construction time) also plays a large part in the creation of conditions that favour experimentation. When this context and method are brought together, they result in the creation of an ecosystem that allows architectural acts with a character of 'otherness'. It is in this sense that transgressive forms and construction devices can be identified at the heart of EXYZT's projects.

The 'punctured' aspect mentioned above is a recurring theme that appears in numerous proposals: the collective takes advantage of events to open up places, creating a passage through existing architecture. This was the case, for example, at the Venice Biennale where EXYZT proposed the conversion of an exhibition space into a living space through the insertion of a scaffold construction comprising bedrooms, kitchen and communal areas. As if driven by the vital energy running through the place, the structure broke free from the building's roof by piercing it. Its form continued into a crown for the pavilion, offering a new space (a platform) in which a sauna and garden were erected. The same gesture was found in a horizontal and more modest format at Saint-Jean-en-Royans (a rural commune in the north of the Drôme department in southeastern France). When a block of social housing was emptied in preparation for its destruction, EXYZT proposed to pierce the structure on the ground floor, at the location of a former cellar. The void thus liberated was then lined in wood. As much a passage as it was an additional space, it was relatively comfortable, and rapidly came to be used for various purposes by local residents. This very modest (but also very precise) gesture became the object of a lively debate with local councillors and residents for whom such a residual space could, by its very nature, be nothing but a source of trouble (a squat). This shows the extent to which the mere act of opening up or piercing architecture can be a problematic operation.

Internal view of the main hall showing stair access to the rooftop garden and sauna – a private area for the Metavilla inhabitants except during times of guided tours for the Biennale visitors.

EXYZT, Dalston Mill, London, 2009
The entrance corridor through a decayed shed was constructed as a wooden tunnel to protect the public while entering the Dalston Mill.

The public entrance to the site, cut through an old billboard wall near Dalston Junction.

The 'passage' as design device became somewhat more complex in two successive interventions in London (Dalston Mill in 2009 and The reUNION in 2012). Both of these projects consisted of opening up a leftover urban space to the public – a strategy that also required the subsequent management of the space (it should be mentioned at this point that EXYZT's members generally occupy and manage the places they construct). This opening of access in turn necessitated the enclosure of the space as an initial act of appropriation and control of the place. But at Dalston Mill the enclosure was also a modulation of the opening, through the creation of a secret passage. For The reUNION, the device was employed even more assertively: the boundary of the site took the form of a drawbridge. Each of the wooden wall panels could be lowered to the ground and become a section of flooring. This form allowed the degree of openness or enclosure to be modulated according to the functions for which the space was being used. It again took up the preoccupation with opening and appropriation of marginal spaces in a radical gesture.

These are just some of the characteristics that define the openings and enclosures proposed by EXYZT. In these temporary interventions, constructed simply and cheaply, essential concerns that lie between architectural form and political action can be perceived. ▵

EXYZT, The reUNION, 100 Union Street, London, 2012
The existing construction hoarding of the site was transformed and through each panel pivoting at the base became entirely openable to the public space. The degree of privacy of the facilities to the street could be varied.

The construction process is relatively low-tech, using inexpensive materials and designed in order to be accessible for volunteers to be actively involved in making.

OCCUPIED SPACE


Louis Rice

Occupied Madrid, Puerta del Sol, Madrid, 2011
A kinetic roofscape for a kinetic society. Tarpaulin, cable ties, duct tape and nylon anchor ropes constitute the assemblage.

With the rapid privatisation of urban space worldwide, architecture has become an increasingly political issue. The Occupy Movement, which set up encampments in over half the cities in the world during 2011 to protest against social and economic inequality, understood the power of physical occupation. Architect and lecturer **Louis Rice** describes how the potency of such expression lies not in its form – temporary tents and makeshift structures – but in its potential to challenge the current power base and reconceptualise the city.

The Occupy encampment in Puerta del Sol in the heart of Spain's capital city was awarded a European Prize for Urban Public Space in 2012. This prestigious prize was conferred despite the encampment being constructed out of cheap, disposable tents, waste products and discarded materials such as plastic sheets and tarpaulin. It was neither the quality of materials nor the elegance of the 'design' that gained Occupy Madrid the award. According to the organising committee, the prize was awarded for the encampment's 'capacity for fostering social cohesion'.[1]

Almost overnight, in May 2011 a temporary city was constructed in Madrid's main public square – a city within a city. This informal township had the equivalent of many of the facilities and services of the surrounding 'formal' city. There was a temporary medical area, toilets were erected and wash areas for bathing. Collective kitchens were set up, and food thrown away by supermarkets was saved and recycled for communal meals. There was even an ad hoc 'school' with volunteers giving free lessons and demonstrations. The tents and fabric structures provided 'social housing' and communal living. The structures, architecture(s) and facilities were born from a 'sweat equity' that further cemented communal relationships. The encampment was governed via direct democracy – nothing more complicated than people putting their hands in the air to vote on camp governance. It performed a similar role to the formal city, yet did so without many of the qualities one associates with a city. Furthermore, it facilitated greater 'sociality'. However, this site was not unique; Occupy camps have been set up in almost half the countries in the world, and the majority have followed the same patterns of occupation, urban practices, governance and social cohesion.

Architecture is the production of a habitat or environment that reflects and serves a specific society.[2] Occupy encampments are (a form of) architecture, albeit an idiosyncratic, unconventional one. They illustrate how architecture is made by a society – as a reflection of that society. This goes further than implying that buildings or

An encampment materialises amid thousands of demonstrators.

public spaces are *for* society, but extends the notion that architecture is *by* society and can represent, support and nurture alternative (sometimes radical) societies and cultural practices. The Occupy encampments reflect a part of society that rarely expresses itself through the act of architecture: the architecture(s) of Occupy are transient, ephemeral or fragile, which partly represents the society that erected them. While these architectures are transitory (most have already disappeared), this is not a criticism: it underlines that architecture need not be permanent nor limited to the long term; it is also (arguably) an expression of these temporal, kinetic sub-culture(s). The encampments form one alternative mode of architecture that reconceptualises what architecture could be or what a city might be for.

Social media within Occupy, New York, 2011
A temporary digital communications network.

Political Architecture(s)

Occupation of urban space raises the question of who has the right to the city. This is illustrated quite clearly by the 2011 Occupy London protests that were intended to be situated in the heart of the city's financial area. In a germane example of precisely the issues Occupy were protesting against, this once 'public' space had been sold to speculative developers. Private security agents, in collaboration with the publicly funded police service, forced the protestors off the (now privatised) land. However, the space directly outside the financial area, the grounds of St Paul's Cathedral, allowed the encampment. This empirical example is not (just) an issue of the privatisation of cities, but a broader concern with the roles and values of urban space in relation to its citizens.

The public realm is described as the territory where the co-assembly of humans produces 'civilisation': the city makes civilisations and in turn it civilises.[3] The privatisation of public space has proliferated in the last few decades and now constitutes much of the ostensibly 'public' spaces of the generic city.[4] Privately owned shopping malls have replaced the high street; business parks and office parks are under surveillance by private security forces; gated housing 'communities' operate a contemporary apartheid that serves to segregate socioeconomic strata; and the apotheosis of privatised space – the airport – privately controls access to airspace. The privatisation of space is an act of occupation in itself, and reminds us that architecture can be an occupying force and, like the police and security agencies, is a means of exerting and maintaining power. The privatisation of large sections of the city is blamed for much of the ills and alienation attributed to contemporary society. While these claims are open to debate, few would disagree with the principle that a city should remain open, accessible and democratic to its users.[5]

Occupy figure-ground, Madrid, 2011
Organisation and zoning diagram of the Puerta del Sol encampment.

Protest *qua* occupation challenges the incremental removal of certain citizens from (parts of) the city that has led to the spatialisation of socioeconomic inequalities. This questioning of power is tied inextricably to the spatialised practices that are immanent to occupation.

Inaesthetic Architecture

Architecture is political; whether that is a temporary encampment or the privatisation of public space. Occupy encampments interweave the fabric of buildings and the fabric of society. Encampments illustrate how an architecture of 'occupation' is made from the material world of tents, fabric structures and the social world of protestors, mass collaborations and peaceful gatherings unified to act politically. The resultant urbanism is 'inaesthetic': the visual is immaterial, the processual qualities and relational assemblages are essential.[6] Spatial occupation has the capacity to generate emergent urban milieu that critique the processes of capitalism and political systems.

The Occupy movement is a direct descendent of the Arab Spring; in practice the two are indiscernible and could be considered the same 'event'. Much of the inspiration (and practices, methods and ideologies) for the Occupy movement came from the events across North Africa. They share the same tactics (spatial occupation *qua* political protest) and similar aims (radical sociopolitical change). The first Occupy camp was only a few months after the dawning of the Arab Spring in 2010. The practice of 'occupying' space as a mode of political dissent was fuelled by social media and digital communications – for both Occupy and the Arab Spring. This reiterates how an architecture of occupation is constructed from impermanent physical materials and sporadic, intense social (and virtual) interaction. Actors, entities, semiotics and communications assemble into a kind of viral architecture.

Occupy encampment, London, 2011
'Interior design' for political architecture.

A temporary 'right to the city' laboratory; physically located between the barricades of the UK's central financial area and the steps to its main cathedral.

Revolutionary Occupation

The revolutionary potential of occupation was first signalled when, on 14 January 2011, news was broadcast across the world that the Tunisian president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali had fled his country.[7] This was the moment when, after weeks of protestors occupying the country's main streets and public spaces, the President of Tunisia absquatulated. Protestors had set up temporary and ad hoc encampments in the centres of many of the major urban spaces as the base for a wave of protests, direct action and civil resistance. At the epicentre of this movement was the main public space at the heart of the capital city, Tunis, where temporary tents, encampments, tarpaulins and fabric tents were installed and formed the temporary architecture(s) of the revolution. It was from these ad hoc structures that many of the key rallies were organised, along with more prosaic activities of feeding the protestors, providing sanitation facilities and space for cooking and eating.

This transient city within a city was built directly in front of the main government buildings and presidential palace. It was here that the occupation took hold and did not relent until the revolution was successful; indeed, the protestors remain to this day (to help 'guide' the transitional interim government). With placards, pellets, petrol bombs and posters, the protests raged for many days, yet it was the occupation of space that became the symbolising act for this movement. Buoyed by the success of the experiment and promulgated by digital communications, similar occupatory events (all leading to revolutions) were performed in Tahrir Square in Egypt, Martyrs' Square in Libya, and 'Change' Square in Yemen. The subsequent coups and events of the Arab Spring transformed occupation into a mode of protest in itself.

An ad hoc 'recycling centre' in progress.

The emergence of inaesthetic architecture locates the designer as merely a catalyst in a set of multiple practices, debates and ideas that have as their point of departure the production of new urban, cultural and/or architectural space.

Occupy encampment, Bristol, UK, 2011
A transient 'living room' for fostering social relations.

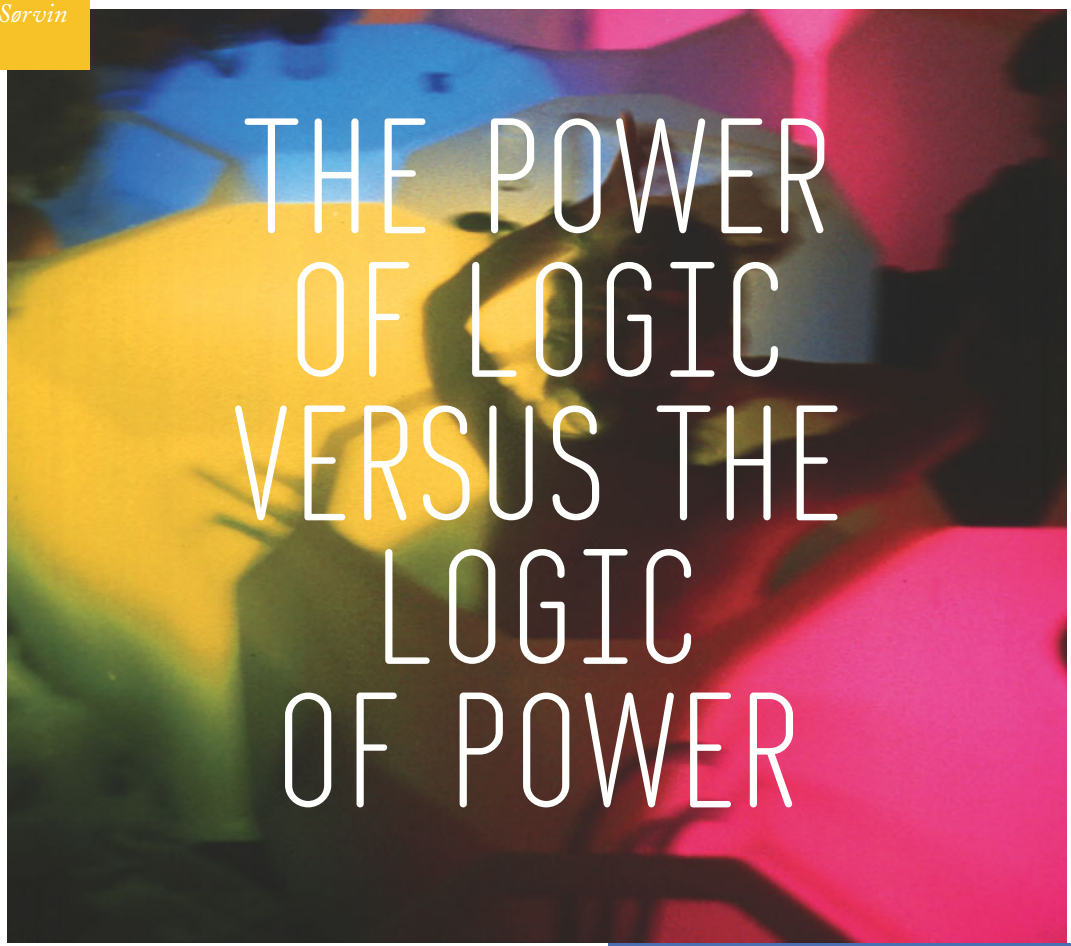
Relational Space(s)

The process of occupation of space is manifest in three principal modes. Firstly, there is the gathering of people in a space in the form of a protest or direct action. This is perceived to be a political act; one that is part social and part spatial. The second occupation is architecture. It might sound obvious to declare that architecture is occupation of space, but this point is habitually made 'invisible by not looking and unthinkable by not thinking'.[8] The buildings and spaces of the city themselves occupy space and mediate societies, and are thus revealed as political agents. Architects and urban designers, as producers of urban space, are inculcated in this politicised assemblage and are responsible for the production of a specific set of social, economic, political and disciplinary relationships expressed and enacted spatially. The third mode is evident in the emergence of an 'inaesthetic architecture'. This can be found, although in embryonic and inchoate conditions, in the temporary encampments of occupatory protest movements. The emergence of inaesthetic architecture locates the designer as merely a catalyst in a set of multiple practices, debates and ideas that have as their point of departure the production of new urban, cultural and/or architectural space. These empirical examples emerge from multiple transgressions *in actu* of architecture(s) as hybrid social/political/spatial practices.

Notes

1. European Prize for Urban Public Space: www.publicspace.org.
2. Louis Rice, *Architecture+Transgression*, The Architecture Centre (Bristol), 2012.
3. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, Random House (Toronto), 1977.
4. Rem Koolhaas, *The Generic City*, in Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 010 (Rotterdam), 1995.
5. David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, University of Georgia Press (Athens, GA), 2009.
6. Alain Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, Stanford University Press (Stanford, CA), 2005.
7. Matt Wells, Mark Tran and Paul Owen, 'Tunisia Crisis: As It Happened', The Guardian News Blog, 14 January 2011: http://www.guardian.co.uk/global/blog/2011/jan/14/tunisia-wikileaks.
8. Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*, Polity Press (Cambridge), 2004, p 34.

Ion Sørvin



THE POWER OF LOGIC VERSUS THE LOGIC OF POWER

Ion Sørvin, the founder of experimental Danish practice N55, describes two projects devised to challenge and critique the current economic, social and political conventions: one for open-source manuals to create everyday items, such as modular bed systems, a hygiene system and a micro-home, that highlight how commercial products define and circumscribe everyday social interactions; and another for a collective masterplan that challenges the power base of private land ownership.

N55 work with art as a part of everyday life. They develop open-source manuals that provide the basic instructions for a variety of systems and frameworks by which individuals and groups can create their own things. Manuals include instructions for a modular bed system (to allow different configurations of groups to sleep together); a hygiene system (to allow bathing and a toilet in multiple configurations, using a low-tech system that can easily be installed into existing buildings and small spaces without conventional plumbing); a snail shell system (a micro-home that can be rolled from place to place); a shop (which allows the exchange of things without the use of money); a suspended platform (a modular lightweight, low-cost system that enables a structure to be built in a forest, or between buildings); and a floating platform (to allow the building of lightweight constructions or even to create land). Recent projects include Walking House (a house that walks on six legs powered by the sun), Spaceplates Greenhouse (a new building system for the creation of low-cost durable buildings) and XYZ Spaceframe Vehicles (a new way of building bicycles for the transport of people and goods).

The manuals inherently form a critique of the ways in which existing products and systems limit the ways in which people can interact with and inhabit their environments.

N55, Hygiene System, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1997
This system includes a dry toilet and bathing pods that can be connected to allow groups of people to bathe together. The system can be used where there is no mains plumbing.

CHALLENGING LANDOWNERSHIP AND THE CURRENT POWER BASE

We find ourselves in a situation where large concentrations of power determine the layout of our urban environments in most places in the world. A vast majority of architects, urban planners, designers and artists are more than willing to work for these concentrations of power despite the fact that these concentrations of power do not necessarily respect the rights of persons.[1]

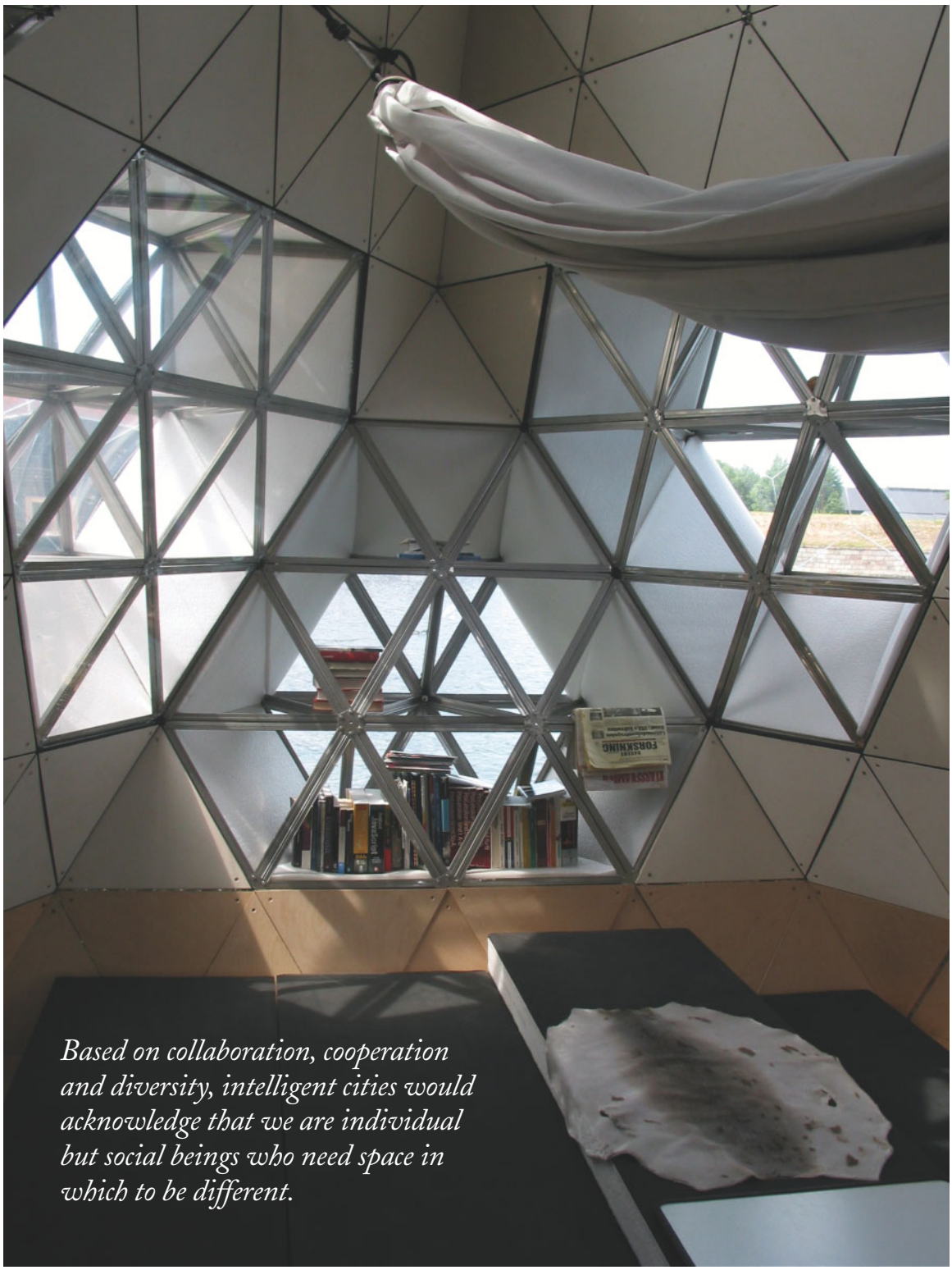
The Proposal

N55 suggest that we find a different approach to architecture, urban planning, design and art, and take into consideration what is right and wrong. We argue that intelligent urban design would require the design of systems that adjust themselves to the persons who live in them and their needs. Unlike a top-down masterplan, such systems would gradually dissolve themselves as the inhabitants take over and transform the buildings, their common space and their city according to their needs and desires. Based on collaboration, cooperation and diversity, intelligent cities would acknowledge that we are individual but social beings who need space in which to be different.

We argue that it is possible to let the growth of the city be framed by simple rules that allow people to freely develop their own environments and systems. This will lead to inclusive relations across ideologies, religions, income levels and nationalities. N55 propose a critical approach to city design by daring to give inhabitants real and meaningful influence on the form and function of their city, as well as by using friendly technologies that allow our urban environment to exist in symbiosis with our planet rather than as a parasite.

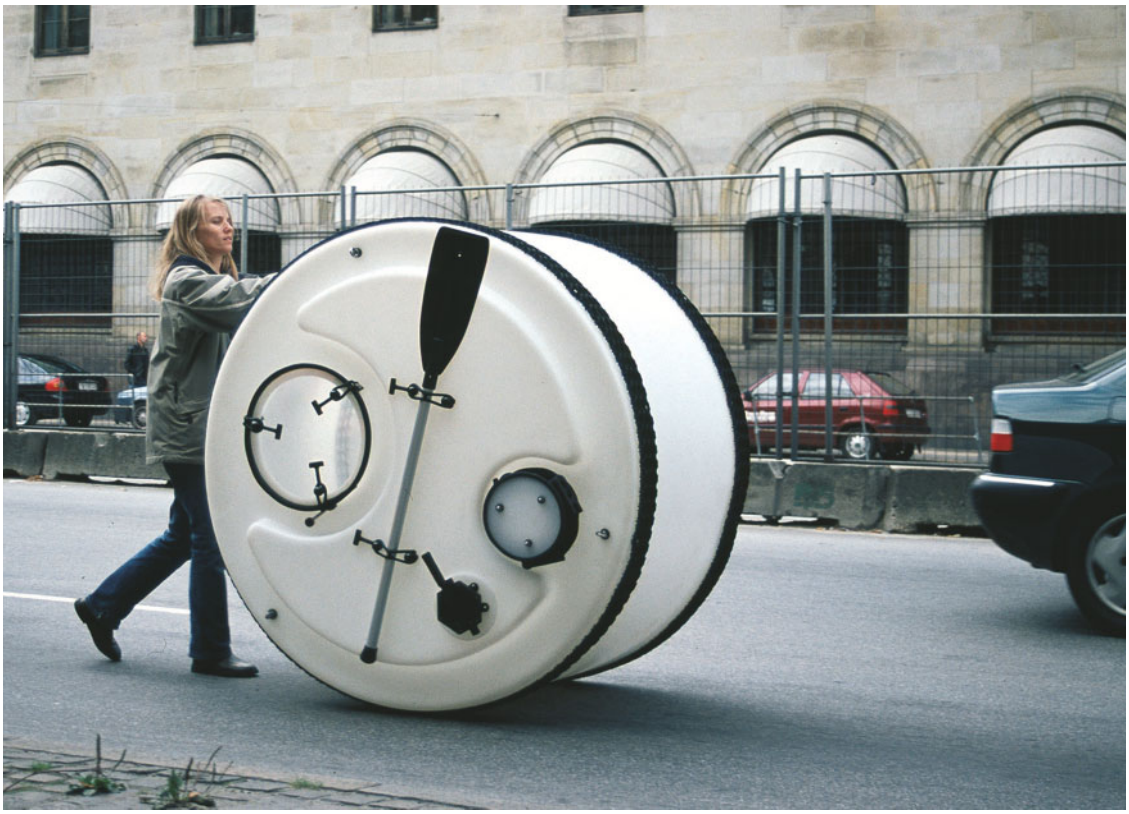
N55, Bed Modules, Copenhagen, 1999
top: The Bed Modules make it possible to assemble a bed for any number of people. When not in use they can easily be stacked and stored.

N55, Spaceframe, Copenhagen, 2000
bottom: The Spaceframe is a low-cost, moveable, lightweight construction that can easily be transformed.

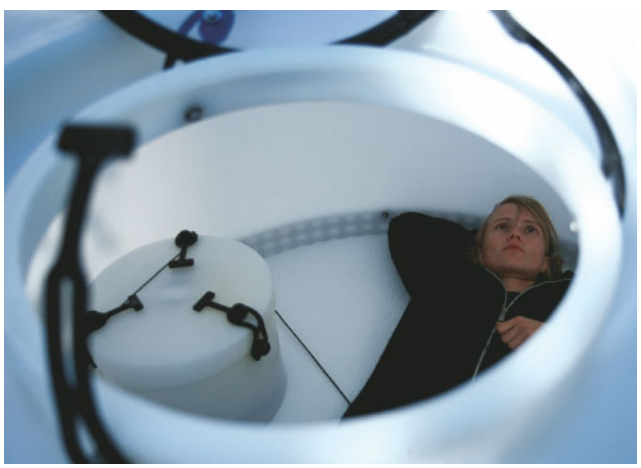


Based on collaboration, cooperation and diversity, intelligent cities would acknowledge that we are individual but social beings who need space in which to be different.

The building system for the Spaceframe uses a space lattice structure that ensures the greatest strength for the least amount of material.



It is a habitual conception that ownership of land is acceptable. Most societies are characterised by the convention of ownership. But if we claim the ownership of land, we also say that we have more right to parts of the surface of the earth than other persons have.



N55, Snail Shell System, Copenhagen, 2001
The Snail Shell is a low-cost system that enables individuals to move around, change their location and live in various environments.

The system is constructed from a cylindrical polyethylene tank that was chosen for its non-toxic material, low weight and ability to roll.

A potential revolutionary change to our urban environments, architecture, design and art lies in the distribution of power. One of the prevailing means used by concentrations of power to control our urban environments is based on the idea of ownership of land.

Ownership of Land

It is a habitual conception that ownership of land is acceptable. Most societies are characterised by the convention of ownership. But if we claim the ownership of land, we also say that we have more right to parts of the surface of the earth than other persons have.

We know that persons should be treated as persons and therefore as having rights. If we deny this assertion it goes wrong: here is a person, but this person should not be treated as a person; or, here is a person, who should be treated as a person, but not as having rights. Therefore we can only talk about persons in a way that makes sense if we know that persons have rights.

If we say here is a person who has rights, but this person has no right to stay on the surface of the earth, it does not make sense. If one does not accept that persons have the right to stay on the surface of the earth, it makes no sense to talk about rights at all. If we try to defend ownership of land using language in a rational way it goes wrong. The only way of defending this ownership is by the use of power and force.

No persons have more right to land than other persons, but concentrations of power use force to maintain the illusion of ownership of land. ⧈

Note

1. See N55 Manual for Discussions, 'About Ownership of land': www.n55.dk/MANUALS/Manuals.html.

N55, Walking House, Denmark, 2010
Walking House is a modular dwelling system that enables people to live a peaceful nomadic life, moving slowly through the landscape or cityscape with minimal impact on the environment. It collects energy from its surroundings using solar cells and small windmills.

N55, Suspended Platform, The Netherlands, 2001
The Suspended Platform is a modular, lightweight and low-cost system that enables people to live, for example, in a forest, in mountains or between buildings. It uses existing structures to carry its load.

Kim Dovey

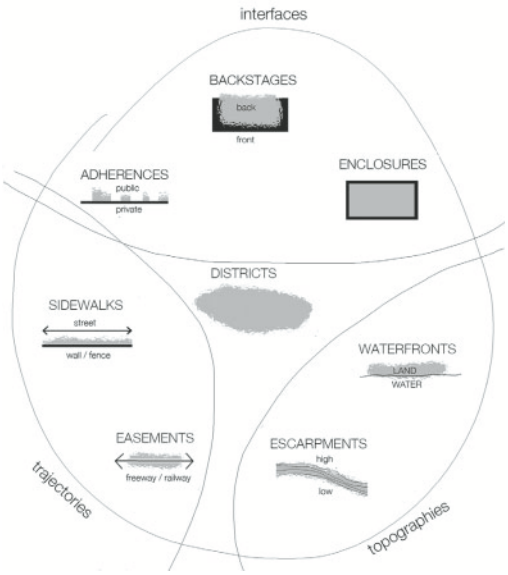
Transgression is often driven by the power to exercise choice and consciously cross the line. As **Kim Dovey**, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at the University of Melbourne, explains, informal settlements, which have grown up globally out of immediate need for shelter and community, and are legally precarious, transgress established codes of 'land tenure, urban planning, design and construction'. Their condition requires transgression, even if they are subversion through necessity rather than by design. So what is architecture's future role in informal settlements? And what can be learnt from this more ad hoc and incremental model of urban design?

INFORMALISING ARCHITECTURE

THE CHALLENGE OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

About a billion people now live in 'informal' settlements or 'slums', a figure from the UN that is difficult to affirm.[1] This is, however, clearly the major morphology through which cities have absorbed the massive urbanisation of the past half-century. This is where the action has been in urban development, but what about architecture? We define such settlements as 'informal' because they transgress the formal codes of the state in terms of land tenure, urban planning, design and construction – they are transgressive by definition. Informal settlers transgress formal rules because they have few choices. The label 'informal' is also used to avoid terms like 'slum' and 'squatter', with which it is partially synonymous. Alongside climate change, the problem of informal settlements is the most significant urban challenge facing the planet; there is a sense in which we are becoming a 'planet of slums', as Mike Davis puts it.[2]

So what are the roles of architects in addressing the challenges of urban informality? Is this a form of transgressive architecture, or mere 'buildings' that need to be replaced with 'architecture'? Informal construction transgresses some definitions of architecture, and our engagement with it requires modes of practice that transgress normalised boundaries of architectural practice and ideology. These transgressions are multiple: towards research-based participatory practice in multidisciplinary teams; towards the design of dynamic adaptive assemblages as well as the shaping of formal outcomes; towards a truly 'critical' architecture and a radical informalisation of architecture as socio-environmental art.



Replacement housing, Dharavi, Mumbai, India, 1990s
above: Informal settlements are often replaced with apartments that are separated from street networks, where newly designed semi-public space loses efficiency, productivity and sociality.

Dharavi, Mumbai, India, 2011
top: The sociality and productivity of informal settlements is highly dependent on the capacity of public space to absorb domestic and economic functions.

Informal settlement typology
above bottom: Informal settlements are mostly interstitial or marginal to the topography, morphology and transport infrastructure of the city.

The wholesale demolition and dispossession of the urban poor without replacement housing is now widely seen as a state crime. Yet the longer-term challenge is to develop strategies to avoid wholesale demolition entirely, with or without replacement. This is a strategy of acknowledging the prevailing informality and proceeding incrementally. Instant formalisation strategies of demolition and replacement are both undesirable and unworkable for a range of reasons – economic, social, environmental and aesthetic. Here, the arguments for incrementalism will be explored, followed by discussion on informalising architecture.

The Case for Incrementalism

Informal settlements occupy land that is interstitial and of marginal use – the *terrain vague* of the city.[3] Primary sites include urban waterfronts and escarpments, but also the interstitial easements lining transport infrastructure of freeways and railways. They can infiltrate ex-industrial and ex-institutional enclosures and flourish in the backstage spaces behind formal street walls. Large slums such as Dharavi in Mumbai, Rocinha in Rio, and Kibera in Nairobi are important exceptions to this interstitiality where informality saturates a larger district.

While urban informality is often invisible from the formal city and may seem marginal, it is enmeshed in a politics of urban place identity and global place branding – hence the desire for erasure. Such settlements, however, are not marginal to these cities in economic terms; they are located where they are because they have access to jobs and public transport. Slum-dwellers service the formal city where they are often a third of the workforce. Any strategy that suggests they be moved to cheap land on the urban fringes will fail because it exacerbates poverty and strips the city of its workforce. With few exceptions, informal settlements need to be upgraded in situ.

Informal settlements embody informal practices of sociality and economic production that are not easily retained in a transformation to formal housing. There is a particular dependence on the street and laneway network, particularly the capacity for domestic production to spill into public space with high levels of intensity and efficiency. Formalisation often standardises private space in tiny apartments that are separated from street networks, producing access spaces that are less flexible and productive.

Public housing can play an important role in the case of slums that cannot be rehabilitated to a liveable standard, or where the location cannot be rendered safe and sustainable, but any model where the poor simply become welfare clients is not viable. While land tenure in informal settlements is generally ambiguous, the houses are mostly built and owned by residents who may also become landlords. In the case of Dharavi, many residents own houses of up to four rooms, some of which are rented for either housing or industry. Plans for wholesale formalisation meet stiff resistance because it often entails a loss of jobs, converts homeowners into tenants, and leaves the former tenants homeless.[4]

Santa Marta favela, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2012
above top: The informal urban vernacular is supplemented here with the recent addition of a funicular and formalised housing to the right; note the gentrification spreading upwards and banners showing resistance to eviction at the top.

Dharavi, Mumbai, India, 2011
above bottom: An informal order emerges from a repetition of types and materials, variegated by an incremental adaptive process.

Khlong Saen Saeb, Bangkok, Thailand, 2008
Informal settlements line many *khlongs* (canals) in Bangkok where they are subject to the gaze of tourists seeking the authentic Thailand.

High levels of informality enable micro-flows of information, goods, materials and practices that produce income and make life sustainable under conditions of poverty. These practices are integrated with the micro-spatial adaptations that flourish under conditions of informal urbanism – particularly incremental construction processes. Informality is not to be confused with poverty; it is indeed a resource for managing poverty.

Informal settlements are relatively high density, walkable, transit oriented and car free. They are often constructed from recycled materials with low embodied energy and passive heating/cooling. The ways that high densities have developed adjacent to transit nodes and with walkable access to employment gives these cities a level of structural sustainability that urbanists in the formal city can only dream of. While any effective upgrading will increase consumption, to upgrade a billion slum-dwellers to our levels of consumption, or move them away from transport and employment, would be catastrophic. One lesson of urban informality lies in how to integrate an incremental upgrading process with designs for the low-carbon city.

There are also aesthetic reasons to retain the basic morphology of informal urbanism – a difficult issue to deal with briefly while avoiding the charge of an aestheticisation of poverty.[5] Favelas were the subject of aesthetic interest (for Le Corbusier and others) from the early 20th century, and much of the interest in 'architecture without architects' from the 1960s was based on potent images of a vernacular aesthetic. Stripped of any evidence of poverty, such images demonstrated how an informal order emerges from a repetition of types and materials variegated by an incremental adaptive process, as evident in Rio de Janeiro, Mumbai and Bangkok.

As the emergence of slum tourism shows, urban informality can be picturesque with elements of nostalgia and a quest for authenticity, for example the canal-side informal settlements in Bangkok. It also brings elements of the sublime, the shock of the real, a spectacle of hyper-intensive urbanness and an uneasy voyeurism.[6] Informal settlements often embody the mysterious intensity of the labyrinth – a place that is impenetrable and disorienting to outsiders, but permeable for residents. These are multi-functional spaces where every scrap of sunlight, material and space has a use. Walter Benjamin identified the slums of early 20th-century Naples with the urban quality of 'porosity', where the spatial and social segmentarity of the city dissolves; where the interpenetrations of buildings and actions 'become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations'.[7] The labyrinthine street networks of informal settlements can be considered as part of the heritage of the city, embodying a history of each neighbourhood that should be upgraded rather than erased. Indeed, some heritage zones of formal cities, including tourist attractions, have street morphologies that are remnants of informality and squatting.

Walter Benjamin identified the slums of early 20th-century Naples with the urban quality of 'porosity', where the spatial and social segmentarity of the city dissolves; where the interpenetrations of buildings and actions 'become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations'.

Prasanna Desai Architects with Mahila Milan, the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), Yerawada, Pune, India, 2012
In this project, morphological and diagnostic mapping has led to selective replacement of some dwellings and upgrading of others on original footprints with incremental gains to public space.

Having made this case for incrementalism, there is no shortage of good thinkers who attribute the global growth of slums to the excesses of neoliberal capitalism under conditions of a weak state, and suggest that slum eradication is impossible without macro-political and transnational transformation. There are important arguments against incrementalism in this regard. As summarised by Mike Davis, they are that self-help schemes so often fail or exacerbate the problem; that funds leak to corrupt operators; that owner-built housing is shoddy and incremental construction inefficient; that NGOs can co-opt the interests of slum-dwellers to their own; and that self-help programmes divert slum-dwellers from political struggle.[8]

This is a long list and all of these arguments have a degree of truth, but they do not add up to a convincing case against incremental upgrading. Informal construction is less efficient in some ways, but has flexibilities that balance diseconomies of scale. One estimate in India is that formal housing costs about three times the price of informal upgrading per square metre. Corruption is of less consequence in informal construction because flows of cash are a small proportion of those in a formal construction process. Construction standards are often initially shoddy, but in many settlements the majority of buildings can be effectively upgraded in situ rather than replaced. Informal settlement is always already a form of social and political insurgency; incremental upgrading occurs in alliance with macro-political change.

To harness the productivity of informality to the upgrading process is not to suggest that slums are to be preserved; rather it is to make a distinction between slums and informality. A slum is a symptom of poverty; informality is a transgressive practice through which residents manage the conditions of poverty. There are limits to the role of architecture in this context.

Upgraded housing alone cannot stop overcrowding any more than architecture can stop poverty. Many slum families rent out space for purposes they deem to have priority over the relief from crowding – their children's education is often primary.

There are important exceptions to the case for incremental change. Some settlements are constructed to such low standards and at such densities that they cannot be upgraded without wholesale demolition. Many are on land that needs key infrastructure to be rendered safe, accessible or liveable. Some have emerged in locations where it makes no sense to upgrade in situ because threats from flood or unstable land cannot be mitigated. Others are located so close to railway lines that either the railway or the housing must be relocated. Such decisions, however, are highly political as well as technical, and there is a key role for architects as creators of, and advocates for, innovative solutions that do not involve surrender to the narrow logic of displacement to the urban fringes. What is needed are forms of spatial thinking that link an understanding of incremental change and existing morphologies to a larger-scale strategy of transformational change.

To engage with the architecture of informality is to undertake the task of informalising architectural practice and a rethinking of professional ideology, architectural theory and education.

Tondo, Manila, Philippines, 2008
Some informal settlements cannot be upgraded without wholesale demolition.

Informalising Architectural Practice

The call for architects to engage with issues of incremental upgrading of informal settlements is not to suggest that architecture alone can solve social problems. Yet the range of issues here call for precisely the kinds of innovative spatial strategies that architects are best at. The challenge for architects is to enter into the complexities of incremental urbanism. Here is where the transgression really starts because the normal expectations of a formal architectural project and its associated fees (based on the cost of the building) are turned on their head. To engage with the architecture of informality is to undertake the task of informalising architectural practice and a rethinking of professional ideology, architectural theory and education.

The primacy of form is a central tenet of the field of architecture, and the production of symbolic capital is a primary market niche. Informalising architecture does not mean the erasure of formal concerns, but it does entail a move onwards from both the fixity *of* form and the fixation *on* form that dominates the profession. Engagement with informal architecture involves understanding the dynamics of form within an enlarged professional field with a responsibility for all architectures, including those where formal outcomes are uncertain and where makeshift forms play important roles.

Our understanding of the urban and architectural morphology of informality is relatively undeveloped and often misunderstood. To understand how they can be transformed, incrementally or wholesale, we need to understand how informal settlements work – how they are formed, emerge and grow, how they are inhabited and used. Since this will differ from place to place, engagement calls for forms of practice where research takes a much more integral role in the design process, incorporating morphological and diagnostic mapping and modelling. Informal settlements are generally quite literally off the map of the formal city; community-based mapping has become a key task in building the knowledge base for incremental change.[9] The work of Prasanna Desai Architects in Pune, India, involves community-based mapping as a diagnostic tool for incremental upgrading, where some dwellings are replaced and others renovated with only minor adaptation to building footprint.

The imperative for an informalised architecture can be seen as a reiteration of the social approaches of the 1960s and 1970s. The work of John Turner and others was influential in the design of 'site + services' schemes as a basis for self-help incremental housing.[10] This is an approach, however, that requires cheap land and has proven unsuited to higher densities and upgrading of existing settlements. The 'supports' system developed by John Habraken, involving three-dimensional serviced frameworks that require resident infill, is an approach that deserves to be taken further.[11] The informal colonisation of the unfinished Centro Financiero Confinanzas office tower, known as the Torre David (Tower of David), in Caracas (see pp 35–7) shows the potential of such an approach. There is a need for the innovation of a range of spatial types at different densities that enable high levels of internal adaptation, subletting and spatial trading whereby houses and enterprises expand and contract with changing circumstances.

Santa Marta favela, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2012
This makeover of the formal image of the favela by artists Haas&Hahn transforms the place identity and mediates the gaze from the formal city, but was unintegrated with the architecture or community process.

Existing informal settlements have a relatively consistent typology of room-by-room increments, based on limitations of access for long-span materials. There is also an urban design typology of laneway networks that are relatively permeable at the local level, but impermeable from the outside. This is a typology and morphology that works in many ways (which is why it proliferates and is sustained), but may be dysfunctional in other ways (light, ventilation, sanitation, open space). There is a need to invent new construction types that incorporate recycled materials, incremental process, adaptability and multi-functionality with greater efficiency, safety and built density.

One important conceptual shift is to move beyond binary thinking and to understand that 'informal' settlements are only relatively informal. What one really encounters is a double condition that is both formal and informal at the same time. This is not a hybrid, but a split condition that lends itself to the kind of schizo-analysis proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The most useful theoretical frameworks here are those of assemblage, emergence, complexity, adaptation and resilience.[12] The prospect is for architecture to move from object-oriented formalist thinking towards new understandings of complex integrations of formal/informal and order/disorder.

Informal settlements are not chaotic, but embody an emergent informal order or code of the kind that all cities need in order to work.[13] Under conditions of poverty, however, such informal codes are often insufficient and we see the result of a nasty version of the 'tragedy of the commons' where incremental encroachment starves the public realm of space, light and air, as can be seen in Dharavi, Mumbai. The challenge is to develop such existing codes into a more formal code where the escalation of encroachment is contained or reversed. Any newly formalised codes that emerge need to sustain the productivity, amenity and sociality that is already embodied in the place, and acknowledge the dilemma that formalisation inevitably eradicates some of the scope for informal adaptation.

Architecture is a socio-environmental art form rather than a fine art – its criticality is at once aesthetic, environmental and social. The renunciation of the fixation on form, however, needs to be tempered by a critical engagement with the role of built form and place identity in practices of power.

Effective engagement with informal upgrading is an inherently transgressive and critical form of architecture. We need to move on from what has long passed for 'critical architecture' in architectural theory – architects using their limited autonomy over form as a means to raise a symbolic finger to the establishment and announce their lack of complicity.[14] Architecture is a socio-environmental art form rather than a fine art – its criticality is at once aesthetic, environmental and social. The renunciation of the fixation on form, however, needs to be tempered by a critical engagement with the role of built form and place identity in practices of power. Informal settlements have negative symbolic capital, and a key task of the upgrading process is to incrementally erode distinctions of status that announce informal settlements as slums within the conceptual field of the metropolis. The well-known Gondolayu project in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, led by architect Romo Mangun from the 1980s, incorporated arts projects that transformed the urban image of the community and helped avert eviction. The recent favela painting project of artists Haas&Hahn, in Rio, seeks to do this in another way – the transformation is dramatic, but the imagery is formal rather than informal.

Romo Mangun, Gondolayu, Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia, 1980s–90s
This upgrading project involving the integration of new housing types and community-based public artworks transformed the negative image of the slum and eviction was averted.

Informalised architectural practice becomes inherently transgressive when it engages critically with issues of power – both practices of empowerment at the community scale and regimes of class-based disempowerment at larger scales. Informality is not an excuse for a dumbed-down architecture limited to provision of minimal standards while locking in urban class distinctions. The transgressive task is to scramble such class distinctions. An effectively upgraded informal settlement can become an attractive place to live and work, not through a formal camouflage, but by celebrating and developing the diversity and dynamism for which the seeds are already present in the existing morphology. These are the same attractions that characterise the best of mixed-use, socially and formally diverse inner-city neighbourhoods of Western cities – many of them former 'slums' that are now identified as creative clusters.

If and when substantial funding becomes available to address this massive problem of housing the global urban poor, will the architecture profession be prepared to deliver? Will we repeat the mistakes of the past by producing large public housing estates with a population socially and symbolically segregated into ghettos that reproduce poverty? Or will we be prepared to engage with the incremental redevelopment of existing informal settlements as formally, socially and functionally mixed districts of a more spatially just city?

There are reasons for optimism in that the two standout exhibitions at the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale were both high-level engagements with urban informality. The Torre David/Gran Horizonte installation/cafe curated by Justin McGuirk, Urban-Think Tank and Iwan Baan received the Golden Lion award for best project, and Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good by the US Institute for Urban Design showcased a brilliant range of incremental and temporary urbanism mostly initiated by architects. All of this work transgresses the core definition of the architecture profession and suggests a willingness to hold up incremental architecture and urban design as a valued model. The crucial issue in practice is one of integrating social, spatial, economic and aesthetic issues within an expanded design framework, and there are many good examples of this emerging.[15] However, an informalised and transgressive architectural practice will not come soon or easily. It needs to be research based and community based, requiring transgressions in architectural education and theory. It is a form of critical architectural practice whereby architects become identified by the style of their thinking more than by the style of their buildings. ⌀

Notes

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3. Kim Dovey and Ross King, 'Forms of Informality', *Built Environment* 37(1), 2011, pp 11–29.
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14. Kim Dovey, 'I Mean to be Critical But …', in J Rendell et al (eds), *Critical Architecture*, Routledge (London), 2007, pp 252–60.
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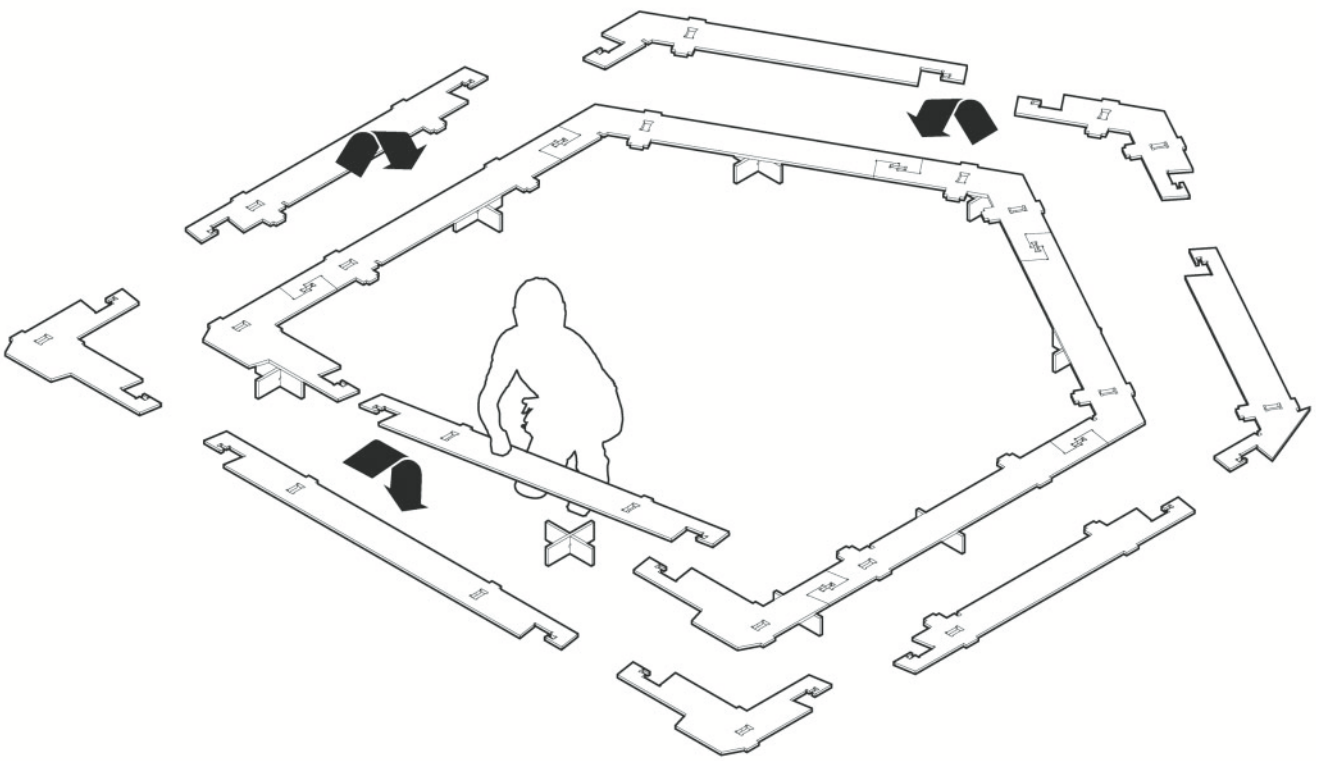
Dharavi, Mumbai, India, 2011
The 'tragedy of the commons' emerges where room-by-room encroachment escalates under imperatives of poverty and starves the public realm of space, light and air.

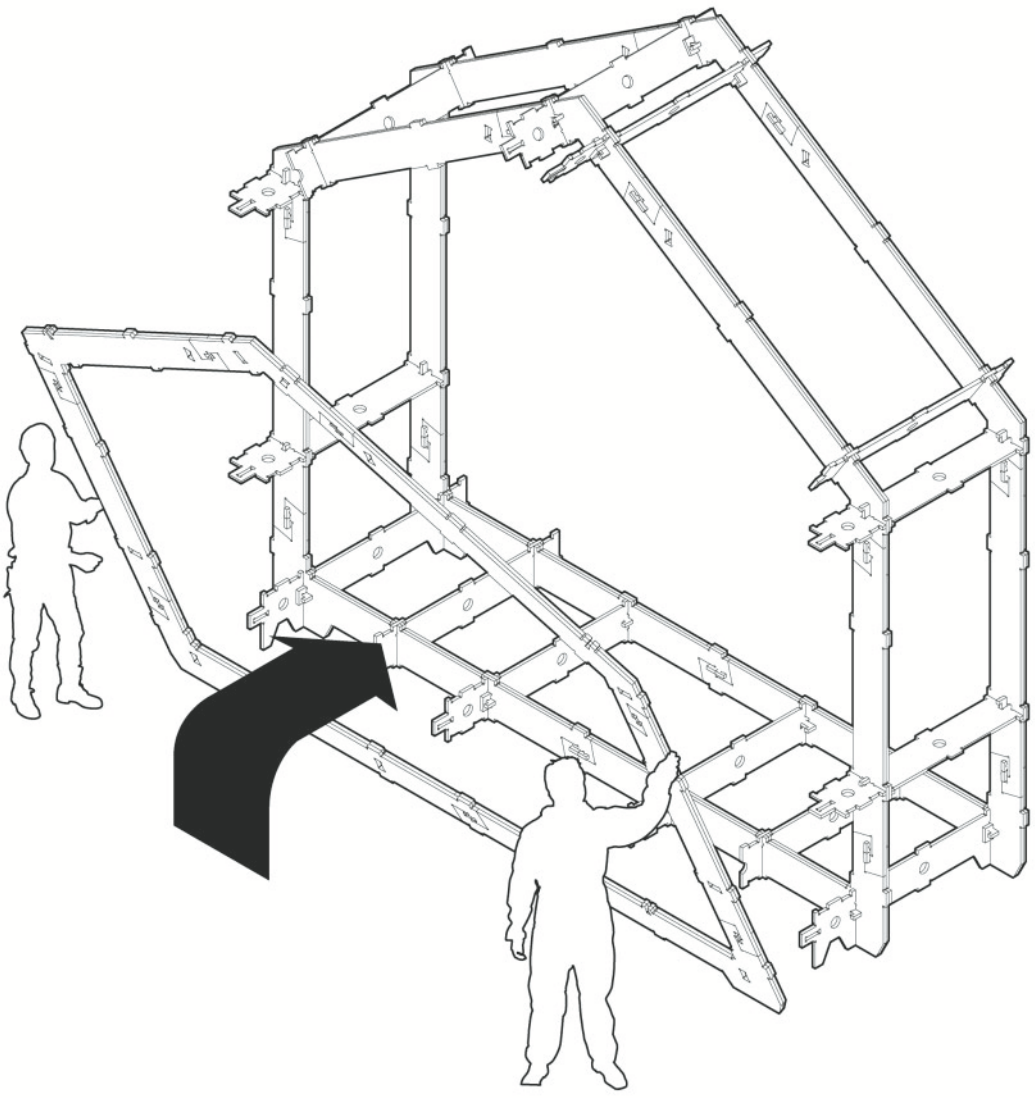
ARCHITECTURE (AND THE OTHER 99%)
OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURE AND THE DESIGN COMMONS

Alastair Parvin



00, WikiHouse, London, 2011–
WikiHouse is an open-source construction set. The aim is to make it possible for anyone to design, 'print' and assemble low-cost, high-performance houses that are suited to their needs.

Under the current commercial practice model, can architecture ever really be cutting-edge or egalitarian in its aims? If only 2 per cent of the world's buildings are designed by architects for 1 per cent of the richest clients, is it possible to design for a wide cross section of the population let alone be truly subversive? **Alastair Parvin** of architecture studio 00 (zero zero) and co-founder of the Wiki-House puts the case forward for a whole new model of open-source practice.



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Though perceived as 'high-tech', WikiHouse is in many ways the opposite: an explicit revival of traditional construction processes, such as the 'community barn raising'.

Like the fairy-tale Emperor in his new clothes, the most difficult questions for architecture today are ones so straightforward that only a child would ask them. Behind the smokescreen of unimpeachable coolness, deep critical theory and obfuscating 'archibabble' that the profession often conjures around itself, there exists an embarrassingly obvious problem: architects get paid, and their time is not cheap.

The Economics of Architecture

How 'not cheap' it should be is hotly debated. According to the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), a UK architecture graduate should expect to earn a starting salary of around £24,000.[1] After almost a decade of formal education that might not feel like much, but alongside the whole UK population, even that salary already puts the lowest-paid architects into the richest 20 per cent.[2] Globally, it puts them into the richest 2 per cent.[3] Even in countries with relatively lower wages, like China, professional architects consistently earn far above the median wage.[4] The question this raises is, again, a painfully simple one: who are architects actually working for? Who can afford to hire the services of an architect for the months, or even years, required to deliver a project?

The uncomfortable reality is that almost everything we know as 'architecture' today is, in truth, design for the 1 per cent: individuals, organisations, governments and corporations with the financial resources and capital to build, and to hire an architect. Of course, we all intuitively knew this. Even a cursory glance through the architecture section of a bookshop, through architectural magazines, through architectural history books or through the Phaidon 'World Atlas' of architecture (a book which, by its name, quite literally claims to represent architecture's worldview), reveals a timeline of expensive buildings: cathedrals, art galleries, villas, masterplans and skyscrapers.

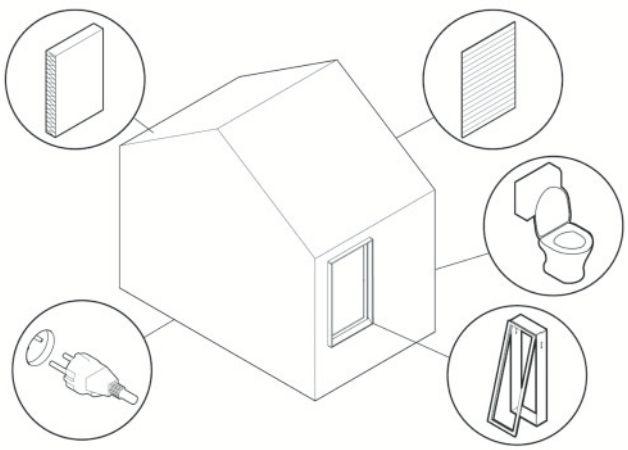
The reason we tend to forget this is because much of the architecture procured by the 1 per cent is procured for the use of the 99 per cent; whether motivated by purpose or profit. Most mass housing, from high-rise masterplans to suburban developments, is procured by a single client, who is almost never the user. Since the Industrial Revolution, architecture as a discipline has been culturally defined by the rise and fall of successive economic ideologies that changed who this client was: from the 19th-century philanthropic reformers, to the rise of communism, the welfare state, the market economy and, most recently, the inflated speculative property market. All of these now find themselves in a state of permanent crisis or retreat.

After the Crisis

Even before 2008 there was a growing sense that development was something done to, rather than done by, most users and citizens, and that regulation and consultation were increasingly meaningless in shaping buildings and cities in the interests of those without financial capital. When it came, the financial crisis stripped away the last thin platforms for architecture's democratic legitimacy, exposing in full how painfully exclusive architecture really was all along. Designers were returned to a situation in which they could only really work for the richest 1 per cent, something keenly felt by an emerging generation of designers wanting to make a broader contribution.

But architecture's unaffordability is not just an ethical problem; it is also an indictment of its business model. As German architect Daniel Dendra puts it, architecture's 'market share' is only 2 per cent; that is to say, 98 per cent of buildings globally have nothing to do with architects.[5] Yet at the same time architecture operates on an inefficient quasi-artisanal business model, with unpaid interns working late into the night producing two-dimensional detail

The WikiHouse was initiated by UK-based design studio 00, and is now beginning to be adapted, developed and prototyped by teams around the world.



A small team can assemble a small house chassis in around a day, onto which can be installed generic or open systems such as windows, cladding, insulation, skin and services.

drawings, while next door another unpaid intern works on an almost identical detail; one that has been designed many times before by countless others, and probably better. It was simply never shared.

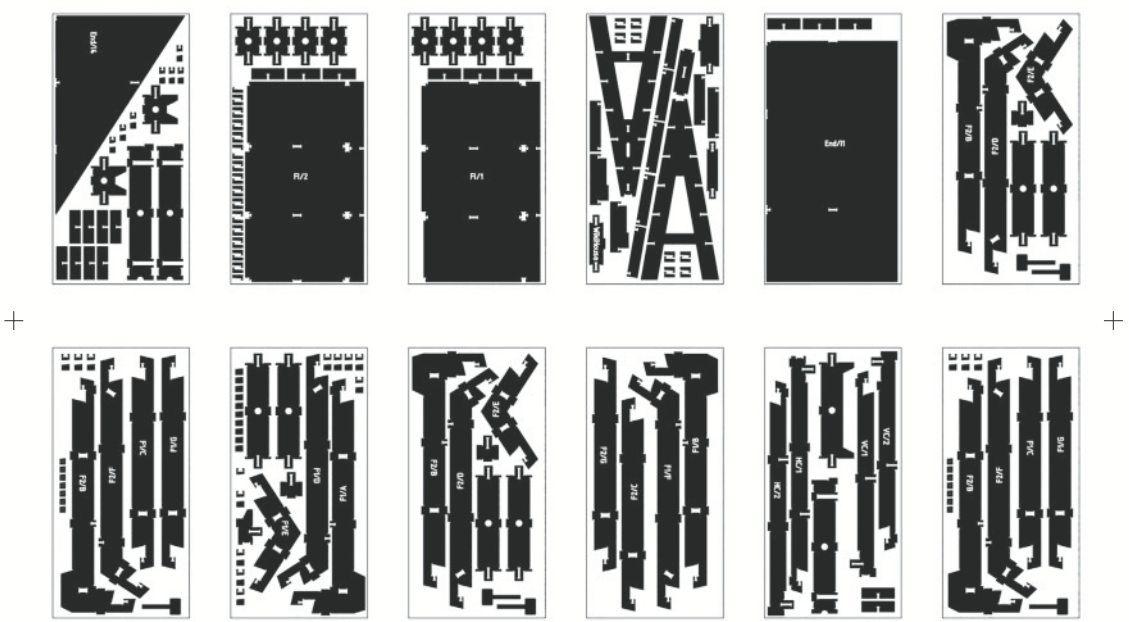
Some conservative voices within the profession have argued that the solution to this dilemma is to retreat even further into the 1 per cent market; to follow it to China; to shut our eyes and celebrate 'slow' architecture; to lobby for the re-inflation of the property bubble; to somehow better 'educate' people of architects' value; even to legally enforce the role of the architect. But without some attempt to change architecture's almost Victorian labour model, that would be not much less absurd than a lobbying group of sturgeon fishermen trying to argue that everyone should be legally obliged to buy caviar. Others have advocated ways in which we can legitimately increase the economic reach of architecture by decreasing the transaction costs of design – essentially adopting Fordist principles of mass production, designing one-size-fits-all products that can be sold to hundreds or thousands of clients, with varying degrees of success. The limitations are obvious. They need to apply homogenised, one-size-fits-all solutions to a world that, put simply, is not. Architecture is inescapably site-, user- and context-specific. This is the impossible knot which open-source architecture might be able to unpick, but in order to do so it requires architects to do something seemingly counter-intuitive: to share their product for free.

Open-Source Design

When the open-source software movement emerged in the early days of the Web, it seemed to break the rules of conventional market economics. Instead of hoarding their most precious commodity – their code – developers began giving it away for 'free'. At least that is what it looked like. It was an apparently gravity-defying phenomenon of software products being developed by a community of programmers working apparently for love. To cap it off, the software they were writing was vastly outperforming its proprietary equivalent.

In fact, open-source software is not 'free' – at least not in the cost sense. The open economy is one that trades sometimes on reputation, sometimes on voluntary donations, and mostly on a collaborative 'gift economy'. That is to say, often code is developed through normal paid-for work, but the designer chooses to share the result with everyone so that others can use it and improve it. It is not altruism as such: open communities have an intuitive grasp of a simple maxim, attributed to open-source pioneer Linus Torvalds: 'Be lazy like a fox.'[6] Do not reinvent the wheel with every project: take what already works and tweak it to your needs. Share the workload. That principle began to be applied not just to code, but to anything with a 'copy, paste' function: knowledge in Wikipedia, media under the Creative Commons license. What these projects are creating are 'commons': shared community resources that anyone can use. They reject isolated scarcity in favour of shared community abundance.

Culturally, this idea seems like anathema to architects. Go into any architecture school and try to persuade the tutors that copying is good and you will get short shrift. This despite the fact that many architects quite frequently wax lyrical about 'the vernacular' (which is effectively a synonym for 'copied' architecture), and that architecture schools actually thrive on copied ideas echoing fashionably through studios. We are in denial: architecture is a discipline effectively founded as one huge 'copy' function, from the Vitruvian pattern book onwards. So for architecture to publish its 'code' is actually less of a sacrifice than it is for software developers to do so. There are amazingly few intellectual property lawsuits in architecture, because architects know that is not really where the barriers or rewards are. Architecture is labour intensive because the



Open parametric design tools and distributed manufacturing have the potential to radically lower thresholds of time and cost, moving from 3-D models to cutting files in one click.

real obstacles are context specific. Drawings in themselves are not actually that useful. Ask any architect: in real life most buildings are designed in email inboxes.

Over the last two decades there have been multiple different conceptions of what 'open source' might mean for architecture. The thinnest of these have simply been shared plans, stripped of context; pattern-book layouts which share the easy bit, but ignore the difficult contingent stuff of actually making and paying for the thing. Other projects have engaged more substantively in different forms of open collaboration. Some, like Cameron Sinclair's hugely successful Open Architecture Network, are about crowd-sourcing design thinking for on-the-ground sustainable development projects in areas of need.[7] Daniel Dendra's Open SimSim explores a social network approach to replacing mass architectural competition with mass architectural collaboration.[8] The Open Structures project explores the development of 'open standards', to make it possible for any part of a household object to be taken and plugged into a completely different household object, and still be useful, breaking the cycle of consumption and waste.[9] And Usman Haque's OS Architecture experiments focused on the potential of sensor technology to create user-responsive environments.[10]

Other open projects have focused less on mass-collaboration and more on construction itself, such as the Walter Segal self-build system (developed long before the phrase 'open source' was even around),[11] and Dominic Stevens's Irish Vernacular, which simply published a complete set of drawings, costings and instructions for making a low-cost house.[12] Put together, these projects sketch a fascinating impression of what open-source architecture could look like. Yet all of them still hit up against the practical economic barriers in delivering physical structures: labour time, cost and skill.

WikiHouse and the Third Industrial Revolution

Over the last few years we have begun to witness the beginning of what *The Economist* has called the 'third industrial revolution';[13] the rapidly falling cost and massive distribution of digital fabrication tools like 3-D printers and CNC machines, themselves often open source. This has big implications for open-source hardware. It makes it possible for a piece of complex hardware to be edited and shared as a parcel of code, then downloaded, adapted, and 'printed' locally for minimal time, cost or skill. This in itself is not an industrial revolution. But if the factory of the 21st century is anywhere, it means that increasingly the design team might be anyone, opening the door not just to a litany of lawsuits, but also to the possibility of open products developed by and for the community.

In architecture, the temptation has been to see the advent of digital fabrication and parametric automation as an opportunity to indulge in ever more extravagant forms. However, the real disruption lies in the power of these tools not to raise the bar, but to radically lower the social thresholds, to change architecture's economic equation in the face of complexity. 00's WikiHouse[14] was conceived as an experiment to explore that disruption. Its aim is to make it possible for a global community of designers to share designs and design tools that make it possible to download, adapt and 'print' parts for a house from a standard sheet material like plywood, which can be assembled, in effect like a large IKEA kit, very quickly and without traditional construction skills, so that even amateurs can do it.

From Transgression to Collaboration

Undoubtedly, one case for developing these design commons is a social one. Globally, the fastest-growing cities are not big developer masterplans, but cities made by informal, low-skilled

OuiShare, WikiHouse, Paris, 2013
The (playful) assembly of a WikiHouse prototype at OuiShare.

professional builders and amateurs. Logically, then, if we are serious about addressing big challenges such as urbanisation and climate change, we will need to develop micro, low-cost, high-performance sustainable design solutions that can be copied, locally adapted and manufactured anywhere, by anyone – even those who are beyond the reach of conventional capital-led development, and the forms of debt and government welfare that fund it. There are plenty of reasons to build a global hardware commons, owned by everyone: a Wikipedia for 'stuff'.

But there is another case: simply that it is good business. Taken at face value, the distribution of architectural production would seem to be a threat to the existing profession – and some will inevitably try to argue that it is. But in reality the opposite is much more likely. The commons are not just a civic platform; they are also a market platform allowing designers and architects to collaborate (to be 'lazy like foxes') on a massive scale, and to actually expand their narrow market by 'micro-selling' their time even by the hour, selling their services not just to the few with a lot, but to the many with a bit – and still making a good living by doing it.

Arguably, open-source architecture, as an emerging field, is not a form of transgression at all. As the institutions of the market and the state retreat from the production of buildings and cities for the 99 per cent, and as the landscape shifts beneath us, it is no longer about momentarily undermining or running from architecture-as-usual. We should be less interested in the idea of transgressing the normative, and more interested in reinventing what is normal. Instead of abandoning the idea of architecture as a paid service to clients, perhaps the most radical thing we can do is to democratise it: to ask if perhaps it might now be possible, for the first time, for architecture to make its clients not just the 1 per cent but the 100 per cent. ⌀

Notes

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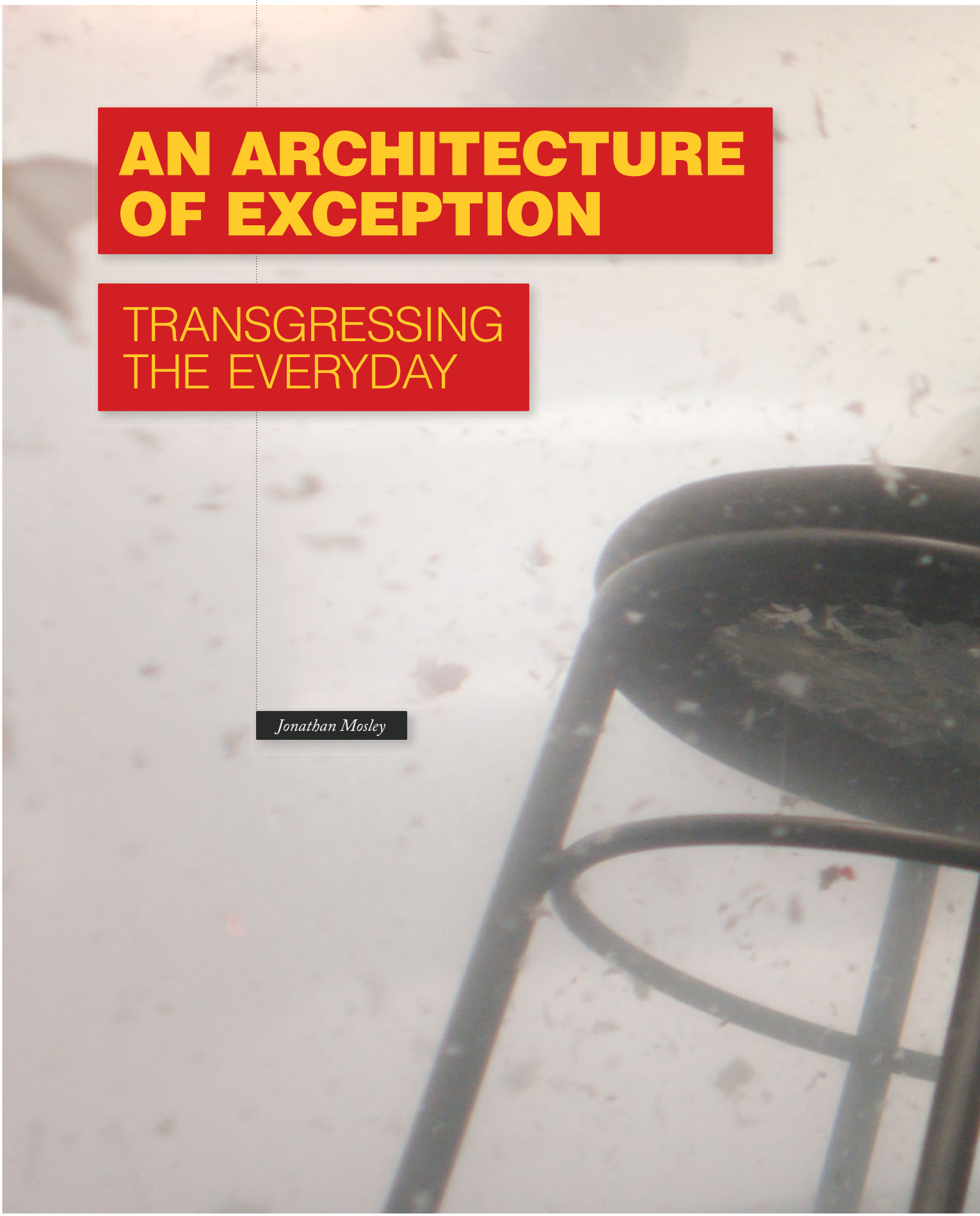
We should be less interested in the idea of transgressing the normative, and more interested in reinventing what is normal.

above: Parts are numbered, and can be assembled without conventional construction skills. Even the mallets are produced as part of the kit.

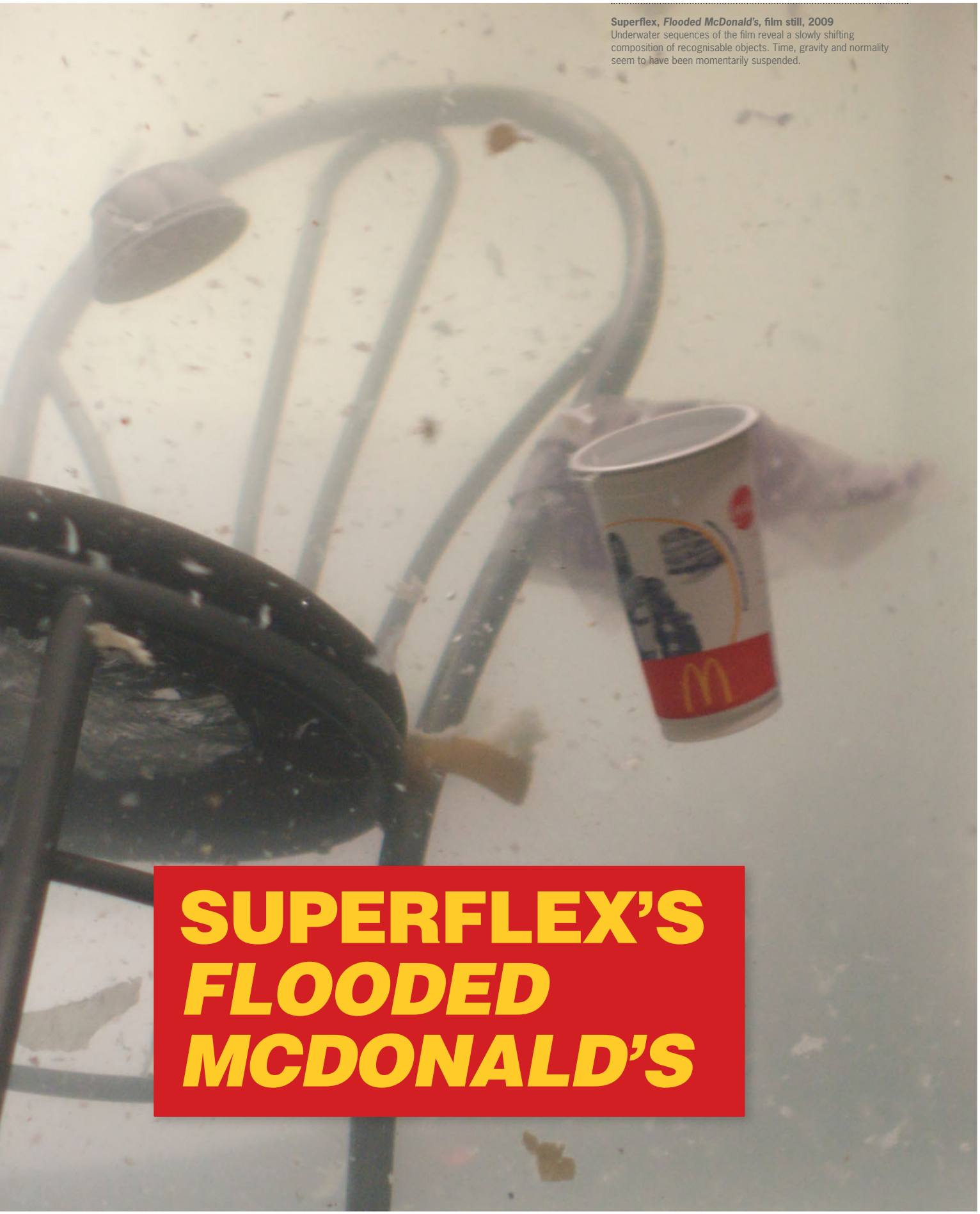
top: CNC cutting allows complex information to be shared, reused and adapted openly. Each joint can be conceived as a parcel of code.

AN ARCHITECTURE OF EXCEPTION

TRANSGRESSING THE EVERYDAY



Jonathan Mosley



Superflex, *Flooded McDonald's*, film still, 2009
Underwater sequences of the film reveal a slowly shifting composition of recognisable objects. Time, gravity and normality seem to have been momentarily suspended.

SUPERFLEX'S *FLOODED MCDONALD'S*

Superflex, *Flooded McDonald's*, film still, 2009
bottom: As the water level rises and currents circulate around the fitted furniture, there are instances of suspense such as the sudden anticipated release of a loaded tray with its newly found freedom of floatation.

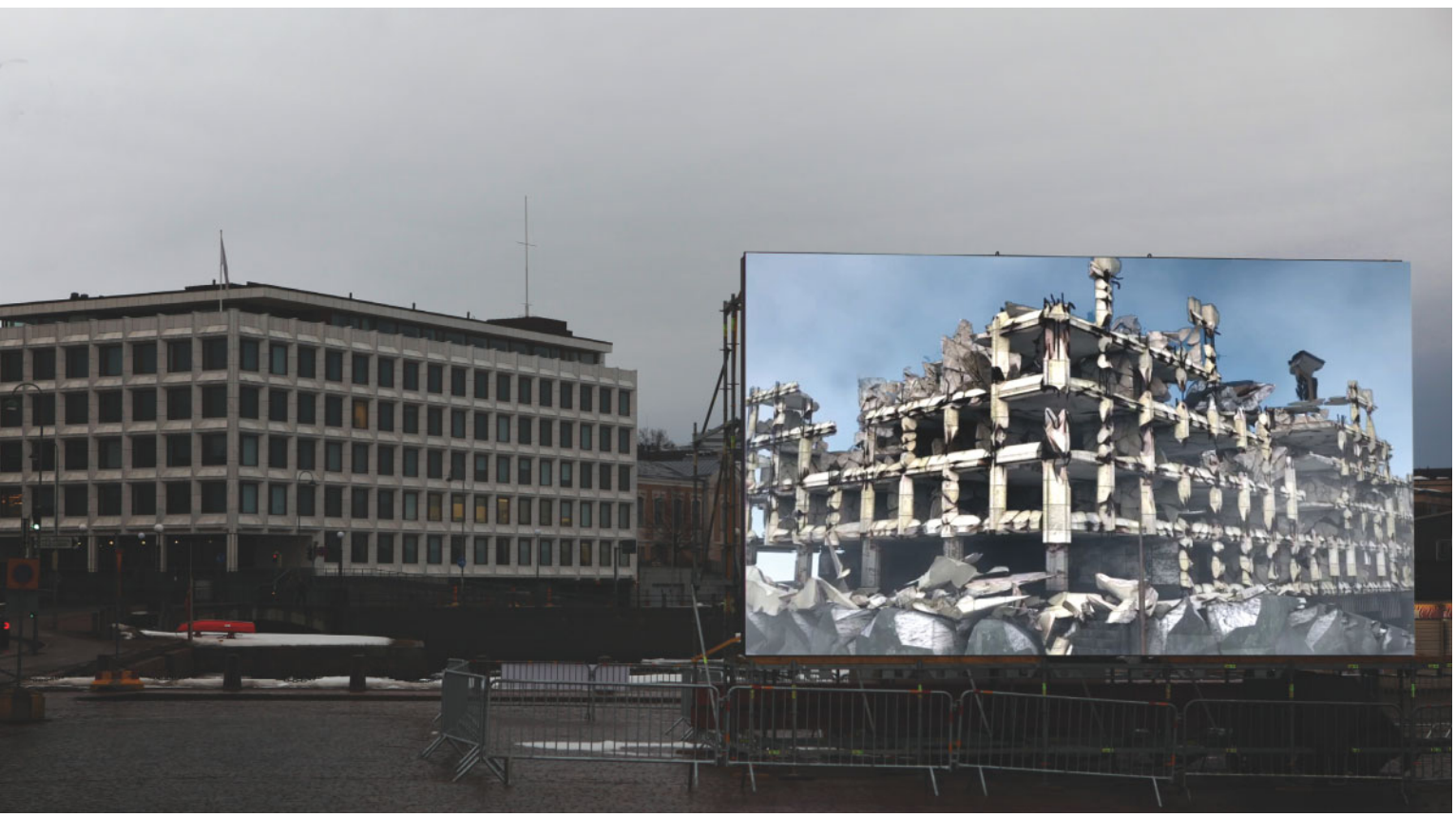
below: The environment of the McDonald's is at times during the film partially familiar and partially exceptional, with the balance shifting towards the latter with a slow insistence.

In Flooded McDonald's, a film by Danish artists' collective Superflex, the familiar sight of the fast-food restaurant is replaced by 'a slowly emerging apocalyptical composition'; as the interior floods, objects are displaced and the retail space fills with water. **Jonathan Mosley** describes how this destabilised and other disaster-invoked visions of architecture – structures and spaces breaking down – enable us to use our imagination to test the parameters of the everyday.

It is a familiar sight, the interior of a McDonald's fast-food outlet. The illuminated menu, the till, the burgers racked up in stainless-steel shelves, the drinks dispenser, a fibreglass Ronald – all are present. But you are the only one there. Slowly, but with an unstoppable insistence, the room floods. The food, plastic cups, trays and Ronald himself are uprooted from their regular position. They begin to float, Ronald turns and waves in an almost comic and momentous gesture as his plastic carapace shifts with its newfound buoyancy. The electrics fuse, the sound of the interior groans as the water exerts its pressure. The water level is rising. The branded objects, furniture and food become submerged, creating a near-silent weightless world of objects suspended in the clouding water as a slowly emerging apocalyptical composition.

You are the viewer of a film, *Flooded McDonald's*, by Danish artists collective Superflex. Jakob Fenger, Rasmus Nielsen and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, the founders of Superflex, consider the film as open to multiple interpretations and as a catalyst for discourse around our personal responsibility for acts of consumption in relation to climate change. Their practice develops what they refer to as 'tools' that question economic systems and structures, frequently opening up frameworks whereby others can utilise those tools to shift the balance between competing economic forces.[1] *Flooded McDonald's* is presented essentially to raise questions and incite dialogue. As Roland Barthes contends in 'The Death of the Author' (1967),[2] the essential meaning of a creative work is actively created within a recipient's interpretation of the work; so you, the viewer of the film, in your consideration of the work, give meaning to *Flooded McDonald's*.

The essential meaning of a creative work is actively created within a recipient's interpretation of the work



Superflex, *Modern Times Forever*, film still, 2011
bottom: A film lasting 10 days about the imagined slow ruination of the Stora Enso building in Helsinki as an architectural and ideological symbol over the next few thousands of years, projected in the public space outside.

Superflex, 'Free Shop', Family Mart, Tokyo, 2010
bottom: 'Free Shop' takes place unadvertised in an ordinary shop as an event during which anything purchased in the shop by any customer is free of charge.

Superflex, *Flooded McDonald's*, production still, 2009
right: The film was created using a convincing life-size replica of the interior of a McDonald's built within an empty swimming pool.

The destabilising of the architecture triggers improvisation, interaction – life. The act of imagining and envisioning the destabilisation of architecture evidences a human need to test the parameters and possibilities of environments.

Considering the architecture of the McDonald's before the flooding, the design is an example of a mechanised retail and production space, where the presentation and sale of a brand and product, efficiency and customer experience are scripted in every detail and within every anticipated movement and thought of its occupants. As architecture it has order and purpose. But as the water enters, the architecture fundamentally changes. The composition of elements begins to uproot and to shift. Efficiency and order are replaced by a breaking down of order and function. The architecture becomes unfamiliar, otherworldly in its instability and mutation. Our collective fascination in disaster and destabilisation of everyday environments has been nurtured by cinema, TV and literature, from Hollywood disaster movies to JG Ballard's novels that agitate a need to imagine within the everyday, situations of exception. This is to satisfy our maverick hunger for instability, for the potentiality of difference in the mundane. Ballard's *Drowned World* conjures the top floors of skyscrapers as islands in a tropical sea.[3] So, *Flooded McDonald's* renders a mundane fast-food outlet as an architecture of exception and gives us a visual and aural experience that cements it in our imagination.

In the final scenes of director Jacques Tati's film *Playtime* (1967), the clean, functional Modernist architecture of the setting begins to break down, culminating in the collapse of a major portion of a restaurant ceiling. The protagonist, Monsieur Hulot, and some fellow diners immediately take advantage of a disorderly enclosure of partially hanging beams and ceiling tiles to create a spontaneous party setting that soon attracts the other diners. The destabilising of the architecture triggers improvisation, interaction – life. The act of imagining and envisioning the destabilisation of architecture evidences a human need to test the parameters and possibilities of environments. And in applying Barthes to this thinking, it is only in the participatory act of experiencing real or imaginary situations that profoundly rupture the everyday of our architectural settings that we can explore the extent of their essential meaning. AD

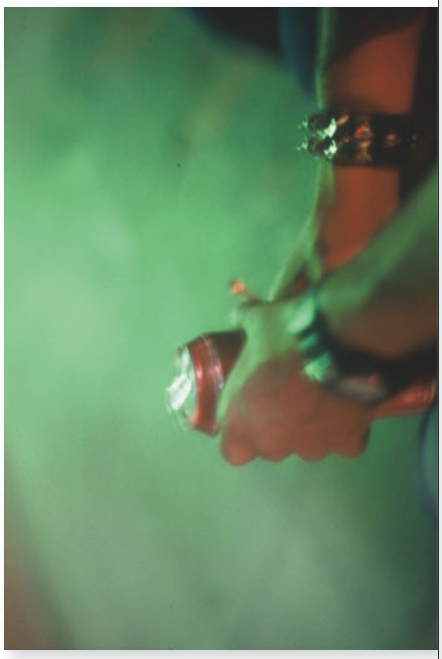
Notes

1. http://superflex.net/tools/flooded_mcdonalds.
2. Roland Barthes, [1967], 'The Death of the Author', in Stephen Heath (ed), *Image-Music-Text*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux (New York), 1978.
3. JG Ballard, [1962], *Drowned World*, Harper Perennial (London), 2008.

Jacques Tati, *Playtime*, film still, 1967
The 'demolition' scene of director Tati's *Playtime* in which the international-style architecture of 'Tativille' begins to fall apart, creating an opportunity for a spontaneous party.

TRANSGRESSION IN AND OF THE CITY

Can Altay



For Turkish artist and educator **Can Altay** 'today's cities are full of limits'. This unevenness can be regarded as the manifestation of current investment patterns and political and cultural conflicts. Does, however, transgression offer opportunities to subvert this? Is it possible for a city's inhabitants, artists and architects to open up boundaries and through the power of presence to intervene in the status quo?

Can Altay, *Minibar Projections*, 2003
Minibars force us to ask whether hedonistic consumption can become an act of political significance through the ways space gets inhabited.

The city is under/over, inside/outside and between/beyond buildings. The city is a conglomeration of stuff that most of us – the inhabitants of this earth – are born into. Urban space is not only a physical, infra- or super-structural construct, but also a social, political and economic one; constantly produced and reproduced. It is mostly composed of layers, of structural strata, of life, of institutional constructs, and of networks. These layers overlap and collide making the city full of borders, boundaries and limits. The city, in its making, involves an endless set of reconfigurations, in terms of use and the meaning attributed to its spaces. Such reconfigurations are mostly unpredictable, and sometimes violent, as in cases of demolitions or forced evictions. Today's cities are characterised by a climate of crisis, the urban community is of a divided and unjust nature, its geography uneven in every sense.[1] Whether through emergent investment patterns, or sheer conflict, today's cities are full of limits.

This essay is geared towards relocating transgression in the contemporary global city, which appears to be increasingly divided and full of limits; away from over-consumed subversive acts, which have in themselves already been internalised by the market as sales or advertising tools, and towards a concept whose power lies in its processes of making visible the limits, both of itself, and the systems and structures it inhabits/transgresses. Michel Foucault, in reference to the work of French philosopher Georges Bataille, discusses transgression as an action involving the limit, and an action that has 'its entire space in the line it crosses' including the 'flash of its passage … its entire trajectory, even its origin'.[2]

Through social observations, architectural impasses and artistic possibilities, this essay asks whether we, the inhabitants, can open up a boundary to dwell in through our presence, by 'being there'. It does so by looking at situations and moments such as the 'minibar' (the anonymously and misleadingly named social phenomenon from Ankara) where architecture is transgressed in the city; discussing the notion of 'setting a setting' as a way of thinking, proposing and making spaces; and through works such as the *Cybermohalla Hub* by Nikolaus Hirsch and Michel Müller, and the Musée Précaire Albinet by Thomas Hirschhorn, which provide clues for rethinking and reconfiguring our participation in the collective production (and consumption) of the urban. The aim is to show that inhabitation, 'being there' and the power of presence this generates can exhaust and reveal the limits of architecture within the city, by examining ways in which architects and artists intervene and contribute to such processes of transgression.

The minibar is significant as a display of the inherent possibilities of existing spaces through a temporary occupancy.

There is Hope in Transgression

Sometimes space is produced unknowingly, as a participant from the minibar scene states: 'I remember the first time. I thought we were going to some bar; turned out that we will just sit here on the pavement.'[3]

In Ankara, the minibar, as it is anonymously named, consists of young people's temporary utilisation of existing urban elements around and between buildings for the sake of socialising and nightlife.[4] The minibar phenomenon reveals a potential, because any simple element of architecture holds an inherent excess, and certain actions reveal this excess to shift meaning in the urban realm. The triggers of the minibar are not primarily architectural (in the designed sense); it is rather the sidewalks, the low masonry garden walls, and the spaces in between buildings that play more of a supporting role. Nevertheless, these built elements that are actually about maintaining boundaries, also make the minibar possible, by providing those surfaces and gaps as a 'setting'.

The physical boundaries open up to become inhabited, activated and dwelled in. The economic suspension of the service sector and the politics of the everyday transform a casual 'hanging out' into an act of political significance. Negotiations are made, publics are produced, conflicts prevail, meaning shifts, and those streets are never the same again.

The minibar presents us a moment where the limits of designed space are revealed and exhausted. The hedonistic consumption put aside, can the political potential of such a moment (when the city space is produced through conflict and shifting meanings) be in its transgressive nature? Or rather, as Georges Bataille, a key thinker in the theoretisation of transgression would ask, why exclude seemingly hedonistic consumption and self-exhaustion from political discourse at all?

Spatial Excess

As Foucault argues: 'Transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being,' it forces the limit to 'recognize itself for the first time'. Most often the existence of limits and boundaries gets acknowledged at the moment of their transgression, which 'forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance, to find itself in what it excludes'.[5]

Elizabeth Grosz calls 'spatial excess' the inherent excess contained within architecture or any conception of space. The excess is an 'extra dimension', beyond preconceptions, beyond the concerns of functionality, 'beyond the relevance for the present, and into the realm of the future'.[6] Whether or how this excess is revealed and activated relies on moments of transgression.

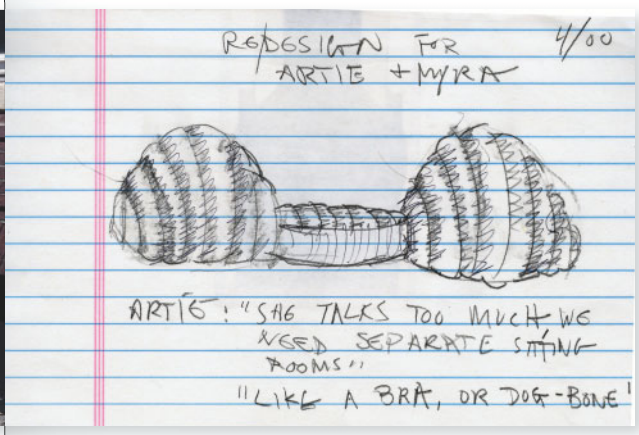
To define their boundaries, societies cast aside those who remain outside the norms they set, forgetting that any society is 'a collective of those who have nothing in common'.[7] The urban poor, the *sans-papier*, the homeless, the Roma, are such definitive groups whose rights are refused in today's cities. Yet this is also where the excess resides, a 'problematic more' that is also full of potential. The 'papermen', as they call themselves, go through the streets of cities such as Istanbul in search of recyclable items and material from the garbage. They collect and organise otherwise undivided masses of garbage into mobile piles ready for recycling. They act before the official garbage collection takes place so that they can inhabit a spatial and temporal limit within the city. Though they are clandestine, unrecognised, and definitely unofficial, their profession, the only choice of survival besides crime, becomes supportive of the very system that pushed them aside, through transgression.[8] Papermen do not cross, but move within a boundary. They make use of the refuse by working with the garbage. Like garbage, the excremental has a definitive role in the work of Bataille because the excremental is vital, and actually useful.

From Control to Manifest Collectivity

Architecture, by its nature, is subject to and part of a wider set of relations. One of its primary roles is determining the parameters of interactions. Architecture is hence a generator of performative collectivities produced by being together in the same place. Designed or not, the built environment is essentially a partial product, even though there exist attempts to control and prevent relations via building. Architecture has a dual nature; it is about both setting the grounds for relations and controlling them. Building eventually finds itself in the domain of authoritative command or prohibition. As Bernard Tschumi pointed out, the discipline of architecture tends to maintain that control (through education, discourse, practice). Architectural approaches evolve into 'paradigm-taboos' and become rules that are ever obscured in the processes of education and literature, making them harder to unveil.[9] However, architecture also cannot avoid letting go, no matter how hard its various actors try to keep everything intact. If it is to be lived, it is to have a life: attributed by those who come to live with it.

Can Altay, *'We're Papermen' he said*, 2003
Papermen go through the garbage of the city to extract recyclable material, forming a dignified informal sector with inventive ways of inhabiting and navigating through the city,

Michael Rakowitz, paraSITE, 1997
paraSITE attaches itself to existing ventilation outlets, providing heat and air for inflating as well as making visible the 'excess'.



For each *paraSITE*, Rakowitz works closely with inhabitants.

Papermen's practices relate to two important issues regarding how today's cities operate: recycling and reconfiguration (of meanings and spaces).

Nikolaus Hirsch and Michel Müller, *Cybermohalla Hub*, Manifesta 7, Bolzano, Italy, 2008
Each prototype or partial construction reveals the limits of the host institution, the hub itself and the urban condition in Delhi, while keeping a promise alive.

Nikolaus Hirsch and Michel Müller, *Cybermohalla Hub*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, 2011
The *Cybermohalla Hub* fragmented itself into its parts in order to be made and remade as 'settings'.

It is surprising how helpless the systems and structures become, and how offensive, when they encounter a group who do not fit their definition. The possibility of being without a home is incomprehensible to many, especially to those who 'run' the system.

Thomas Hirschhorn, Musée Précaire Albinet, Cité Albinet, Aubervilliers, Paris, France, 2004
centre: Each set of work is handled by the locals following the transfer of the delicate information of art handling as part of the project from the museum experts to the local youth group.

bottom: This makeshift museum brought original works by masters such as Marcel Duchamp and Le Corbusier, establishing solo exhibitions in a neighbourhood where such art could hardly ever be encountered.

In Crisis

'Perhaps it is like a flash of lightning in the night,' says Foucault of transgression, 'which, from the beginning of time, gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies, which lights up the night from the inside … yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestation' and disappears back into the darkness it has made visible.[10]

To write about such theory may appear to be irrespective of the urban condition of the 2010s that is primarily marked by injustice, conflict and refuge. We need to note that while Bataille's discussions on eroticism and transgression date from the 1930s, and Foucault's reading and Tschumi's reflections are from the 1970s, no one could claim that these decades were not marked by very particular and very serious crises of their own. In fact, Bataille's notion of general economy, and discussions around the 'delirium of the festival' and 'potlatch' was critical towards a political economy where 'a financial crisis would mean increased wealth for some and poverty for others'.[11] Even when social divisions were maintained, economic divisions were shattered in such primitive societal moments.[12]

Yet still, how do such theories of transgression perform in the face of crisis today? Crisis being the definitive mode of the state our cities are in; crisis defined by the fact that our cities today are constipated by the political-economical processes that have been shaping, transforming, degenerating and regenerating them. It seems we need more than ever to reveal the excess that is latent in our cities. Talking about the possibility of excrement here could come as a relief in the face of such severe constipation.

Excess Materialised

It is surprising how helpless the systems and structures become, and how offensive, when they encounter a group who do not fit their definition. The possibility of being without a home is incomprehensible to many, especially to those who 'run' the system. The late 20th century saw so much 'investment' and 'invention' going into making architecture 'homeless proof'. Yet there is all this excess, provided by the city and its architecture; such as a heating-ventilation-air-condition (HVAC) outlet that pumps heat and air out of a building continuously. A plastic bag could as well be heated and inflated to provide for a temporary shelter that appears and disappears. *paraSITE* by Michael Rakowitz involves the making of collapsible shelters for the homeless. Invisible excess literally and physically activates architecture for an unaddressed community, namely the homeless that the artist personally and individually engages with to make such shelter possible. While making visible the perceived limits of use in the city, the streets as much as the by-products of the buildings that compose it, *paraSITE* also shows how individualised such shelters can get.[13]

Setting a Setting

Now, 'excess' presents a political potential as we speak about a collective production of meaning. And it is because of such inherent excess that architecture can be reconfigured through use. Such reconfigurations can reveal the limits of systems, structures, and spaces we inhabit.

'Setting a setting' refers to a mode of practice that provides for, and focuses on, 'making space' as open-ended constructs and situations. Any drawn line, any built element creates new limits, insides and outsides. 'Setting a setting' refers to the attempts I have made in order to make such boundaries inhabitable through a mixture of self-reflexivity and open-endedness, initially in the context of the art institution and later in public space.

The repetition of the word 'setting' as verb and noun describes the conceptual and programmatic intentions and the formal processes behind such works.[14] Settings aim to produce social and spatial situations through events and exchange in an attempt to ask whether existing processes in the urban realm can coincide with debates in the art context. The settings are political, especially around the collective production of meaning, and try to think of a practice that acknowledges its product as partial, being reconfigured constantly, and perhaps cyclically.[15] Taking inhabitation as a fundamental question of existence (since there is always a wider system, structure or context to inhabit), the fundamental question for settings becomes: how do settings inhabit, and how do they themselves ask (or offer) to be inhabited?[16] In some ways a paradoxical limit that allows its transgression: a boundary that allows its inhabitation.

Especially in relation to art, settings ask whether it is still possible to consider spaces of art as public spaces. They ask, once more, whether a work of art can constitute a public space, a space for encounter, conflict and critical reflection, a space of civic presence. Furthermore, they ask whether a work of art (or, here, the setting) can make a contribution or intervention to an existing public space.[17]

Few works by contemporary artists and architects demonstrate the potentials of setting a setting while transgressing through inhabiting the limits of the art institution and the urban context.

Dislocations and Relocations

When a heavy-handed regeneration plan hit a 30-year-old incrementally built neighbourhood in Delhi, the inhabitants were directed to a 'resettlement colony'. Cybermohalla (*mohalla* meaning neighbourhood) is a project of labs and studios for experimentation, involving young people from different working-class neighbourhoods who were operating at, and thus inhabitants of, the evicted neighbourhood. When the relocation occurred, they invited the architects Nikolaus Hirsch and Michel Müller to design a 'hub' in a plot in the new colony.[18]

The designed response to this challenge did not wait for the actual plot to be secured or the relevant funds to be raised for its construction on the site. It fragmented itself into its parts, in order to be made and remade as 'settings', with each prototype or partial construction being shown in different museums and art centres to ultimately reach its destined plot.

And so the *Cybermohalla Hub*, initiated from the limits of a confined space of massive urban reorganisation and reflecting on those same limiting urban processes, manifested itself

In a time when boundaries in the contemporary city are becoming the norm, the possibility of public space as a challenge to such norms resides in the moments and activities that make those boundaries visible, inhabit them and thus transgress.

Can Altay, *The Church Street Partners' Gazette*, The Showroom, London, 2010
The Church Street Partners' Gazette tackled issues related to urban regeneration and daily life, through the publication of a local newspaper as a spatial intervention/contribution.

internationally and super-spatially, as parts and portions of it travelled with the support of an existing international structure called the art world. It has done so while enjoying the self-reflexivity that is allowed and nurtured by the spaces of art, and at the same time discussing the tangled and fractured wider urban scheme that the hub desires to inhabit: a 3 x 6 metre (10 x 20 foot) plot in the tight grid of the resettlement colony. Whether all the parts constructed offered a potentiality to be 'used', and whether or how these parts would reach their destined 'site', is one set of questions. Another set of questions revolve around how the *Cybermohalla Hub* inhabited institutional spaces throughout its journey, and whether or how this journey contributed to the actualisation of the project. Such meta-criticality towards the process and the context did not detract from the actual crises on the site; on the contrary it allowed a production of meaning that contributes to criticality towards such a toxic cocktail of neoliberal policies and urban cleansing discourses.

Inclusions and Exclusions

The art world as such contains many inclusions and exclusions, insides and outsides. Another work that transgresses both the perceived limits of the notions around where art should be viewed and by whom, and the limits to the current urban condition and its inherent injustices, is the Musée Précaire Albinet by Thomas Hirschhorn. In collaboration with youths from the housing blocks of the Parisian suburb Cité Albinet and the Landy area, Hirschhorn here created a makeshift museum in the neighbourhood and convinced the city's Centre Pompidou to loan works by eight 'masters' to be hosted in this precarious museum for periodical solo exhibitions. These true masters – Fernand Léger, Marcel Duchamp, Le Corbusier, Salvador Dalí, Piet Mondrian, Andy Warhol, Kasimir Malevich and Joseph Beuys – almost untouchable in their place in art history, are showcased at Albinet with accompanying workshops and talks by historians. As Hirschhorn himself claimed: 'With the loan of original works from the Centre Pompidou – which for a long time nobody really believed would happen – we reached the limits of the institution.'[19]

This museum as artwork does not only bridge a gap, or provide a space for art to be viewed in the *banlieue*, it performs a twofold transgression. The limits it crosses and makes visible are of the art institution, as well as the urban condition, questioning both the publicness of the art institution, as well as the latent spatial injustice in the city. The transgression reveals the political-economical impasses of these constructs, breaking them apart through the sovereignty granted to the artist, and the social implications and inclusions that the artwork embodies, albeit momentarily.

Site for Statements

'Supermarkets Battle Over Parking Lot' was one of the outcomes of a 'headlines workshop' that brought a small group of people together to come up with headlines before any news story was written.[20] This was the starting point of an artwork that involved the making of a local newspaper, *The Church Street Partners' Gazette*, in response to a landscape of regeneration around the Church Street area in London. The work provided the space and platform for a contingent community of diverse inhabitants from a neighbourhood and beyond. A sculptural device, a setting, that held the initial headlines, framed gatherings and meetings on hot topics related to daily life and urban transformation. The work opened itself to be inhabited by those willing to have their say on the urban condition. The discussions and the writings from locals of Church Street formed the contents, and as the exhibition closed, the publication was dispersed.

Presence of Power Versus Power of Presence

The artworks mentioned here relate to a duality that can be referred to as 'presence of power versus power of presence'. In public art (much like architecture) there is almost always power behind the work, ranging from the state to social benefactors, from seekers of prestige to developers with regeneration plans. This I call the 'presence of power'. Yet there is also the 'power of presence', referring to how the artwork works, what it calls for, triggers, transgresses, how it touches those who encounter it, and what such a work means to the people who co-inhabit public space with it. This presence is both similar and complementary to the presence of people, that question of 'being there', of inhabitation as an essential aspect of transgression in and of the city. In a time when boundaries in the contemporary city are becoming the norm, the possibility of public space as a challenge to such norms resides in the moments and activities that make those boundaries visible, inhabit them and thus transgress. Transgression as such allows us to collectively reconfigure the spaces and structures we are subjected to in the city. This leads to power of presence, which grows only through inhabiting and 'being there', through activities and performances in urban situations in ways that go beyond the preconceptions of policy makers, developers and other actors of power who appear to be shaping cities today. ⍷

Notes

1. Saskia Sassen, 'Afterword', in J Gugler (ed), *World Cities Beyond the West*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge), 2004, pp 371–86.
2. Michel Foucault, 'Preface to Transgression', in F Bolling and S Wilson (eds), *Bataille: A Critical Reader*, Wiley-Blackwell (London), 1991, p 27.
3. A quote from a minibar. Can Altay and Deniz Altay, 'Counter-Spatialization (of Power) (in Istanbul)', in E Guidi (ed), *Urban Makers*, bbooks (Berlin), 2008, pp 76–101.
4. Ibid.
5. Foucault, op cit, p 28.
6. Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture From the Outside*, MIT Press (Cambridge, MA), 2001.
7. Altay and Altay, op cit, pp 88–93.
8. Grosz, op cit, p 154.
9. Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, MIT Press (Cambridge, MA), 1996, p 77.
10. Foucault, op cit, p 28.
11. Benjamin Noys, *Georges Bataille: A Critical Introduction*, Pluto Press (London), 2000, pp 105–6.
12. Ibid.
13. Michael Rakowitz, 'paraSITE', in J Hughes and S Sadler (eds), *Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, Architectural Press (Oxford), 2000, pp 232–5.
14. public works and Can Altay (eds), *Can You Show Me the Space 01: Setting a Setting*, public works (London), 2007, p 6.
15. Ibid, p 10.
16. Can Altay, 'Setting and Remaking', in Nikolaus Hirsch and Shveta Sarda (eds), *Cybermohalla Hub*, Sternberg Press (Berlin), 2012, p 140.
17. Ibid.
18. Hirsch and Sarda, op cit, pp xi–xii.
19. Thomas Hirschhorn, quoted in *ICOM News*, No 1, 2006, p 3.
20. Headline from Can Altay, *The Church Street Partners' Gazette*, The Showroom, London, 2010.

URBAN DISTURBANCE

URBAN INTRUSIONS OF THE OFFICE FOR SUBVERSIVE ARCHITECTURE (OSA)

osa, Mobile Green, Cologne, Germany, 2009
Mobile Green refers to the growing number of inhabitants who quit the car to protect the environment, and proposes equity in terms of the usage of car-parking spaces.

The work of the office for subversive architecture (osa) 'crosses boundaries by thinking beyond, or further than others'. For the office's **Ulrich Beckefeld and Karsten Huneck,** transgression is both a conceptual and practical tool. For the work to communicate effectively, it has to stretch expectations and question norms. The urban public spaces within which they intervene are also the most tightly controlled areas of any city, which requires a subtle but pragmatic disregard for regulations.

Ideas can get blurred and weakened by going through the loops of formal processes, with armies of consultants, sub-consultants and sub-sub-consultants all exerting their influence. Few projects seem to be realised in a consistent conceptual way. osa tries to overcome the usual obstacles in order to realise ideas that have an impact on our public and urban spaces, buildings, systems, authorities and the people who use them.

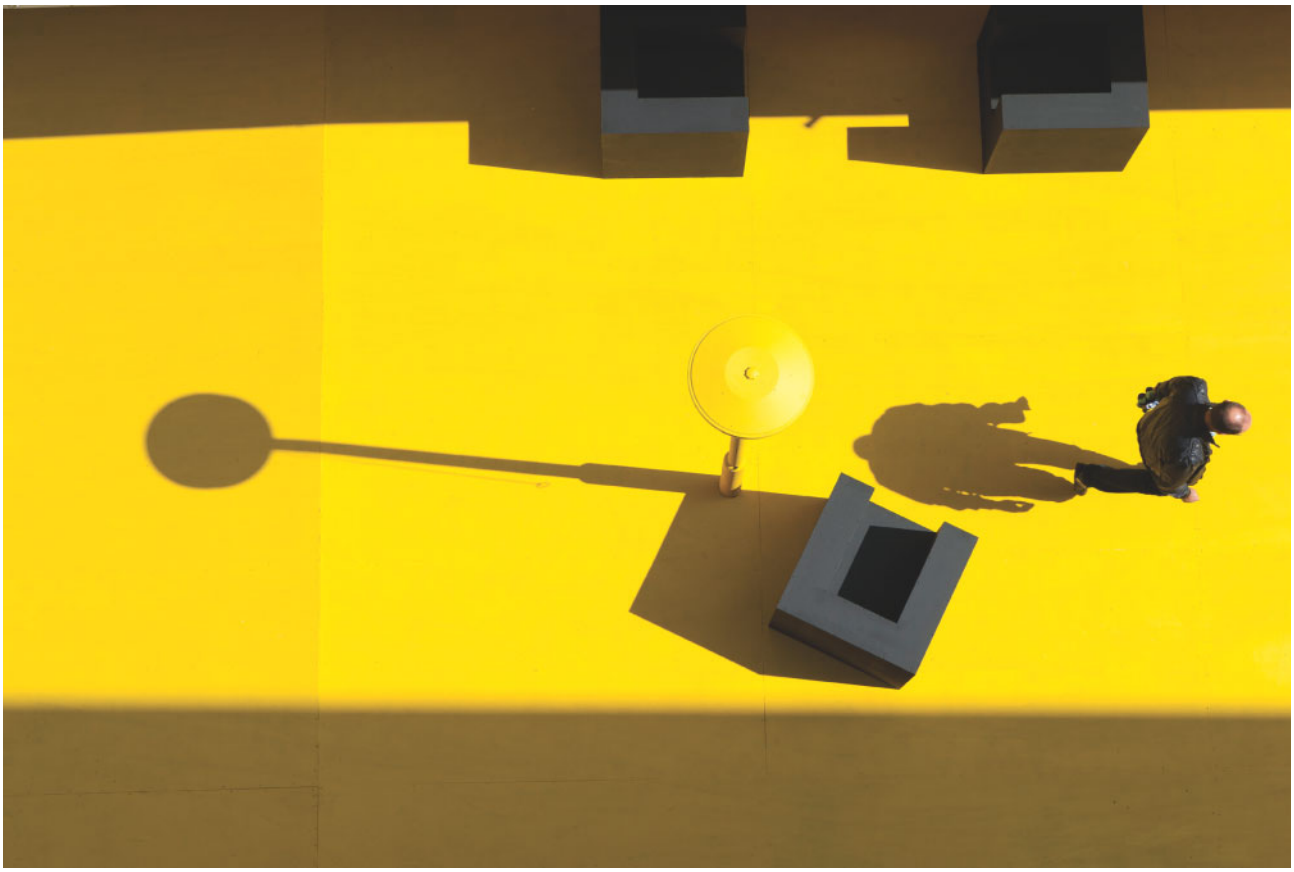
A major part of osa's work focuses on public spaces in urban areas, some of which are overlooked, forgotten or abandoned. Public space is actually highly controlled space. Laws, bylaws and other regulations are only part of this control. Perhaps even more influential are the expectations of the people who use it, whose reaction to public space is typically determined by the demands of everyday life. This is, of course, necessary and useful: to know where to find the next corner shop, a shortcut from home to the motorway, a quiet café to meet clients, or the next ATM. But in fact these demands are private demands, in much the same way as 'home' is a place where you can find your way from the bed to the fridge with closed eyes. osa tries to disturb these journeys, to open people's eyes.

osa, Intact, London, 2004
below top and bottom: Intact was an illegal makeover of a redundant railway signal box into a 'dream home'.

The office uses untraditional approaches and attempts to find appropriate solutions beyond the limitations of common architectural practice. The methods are simple, ranging from soft (performative) to hard (materialised). In some instances, formal and official procedures (fences) literally have to be jumped in order to realise the ideas. Such hurdles are dealt with by working with the subversive quality of play, where the rules are constantly bent or newly defined and displaced and, like in most games, a specific fragmented reality is created. By doing so, those involved are naturally placed somehow outside the 'system'.

So transgression happens in a subtle way and on different levels: at the level of law and order or regulation, as well as at a conceptual level. What appears to be simple is in fact a more complex operation, which in turn appeals to everybody, as the method leads to unexpected and imaginary solutions. These solutions are easily comprehended since they are born out of each site's history, context and story. This transgressive approach crosses the boundaries to illuminate what people do not dare to see in a space or site, or simply do not see, as they are so blinded by their own routines that they totally miss it. osa's work crosses boundaries firstly just by

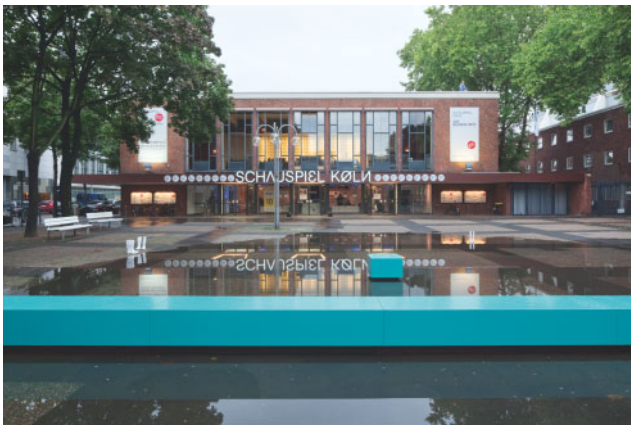
osa, Sleeping Policeman, Tilburg, The Netherlands, 2010
top: The proposal slows down pedestrians like a 'sleeping policeman' for cars.



Direct action and disregarding certain restrictions can be very successful, but it is a fine line between being irresponsible and acting within the realm of common sense.

Built as a bump, Sleeping Policeman uses the typical warning colours of yellow and black and contains additional elements referring to the adjacent building uses that encourage people to have a rest.

osa, Point of View, London, 2008
Point of View was an illegal addition to the 'Olympic fence'. It was developed in collaboration with *Blueprint* magazine as the first viewing platform for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



osa, Kölnisch Wasser, Cologne, Germany, 2010
Kölnisch Wasser (Eau de Cologne) was an interactive installation. The concept follows the logic of the classical motif of placing a play of water or a fountain in the centre of a square, which in this case will be a mundane puddle.

thinking beyond, or further, than others, and secondly by realising that thinking in some way, which for osa is the whole point.

Direct action and disregarding certain restrictions can be very successful, but it is a fine line between being irresponsible and acting within the realm of common sense. Furthermore, it is vital that the content (whether this is the objective, function, form or other content) triggers admiration, desire or a smile, so that the topic of regulation almost becomes invisible or unimportant in any case. In fact, the practice is not about breaking the rules at all; this is just a part of the process that has to be assumed in order to achieve the goal of the project, and becomes therefore a necessary by-product. When building the Point of View for the Olympic fence, or Intact, the little house on stilts, it was important not to violate the fence or anything regarding the existing itself, but simply to add harmless elements so that the intervention almost seamlessly became part of the existing. Who can have something against an intervention like that? ⏎

Mark Jenkins, *Untitled*, Dublin, 2011
Jenkins's blonde doll installation attracts 'the gaze' upwards and uses the city's rooftops as unknown emotional territory.

CITY AS SKIN

URBAN IMAGINARIES OF FLESH AND FANTASY

Like a human body patterned with tattoos, any city's public spaces are commonly covered with inscriptions. Artist and educator **Silvia Loeffler** describes how subversive and unauthorised interventions, such as graffiti, can be perceived as urban expressions of a 'sexscape' or body made of flesh, which emanate 'forms of longing and a dimension of the social'.

Silvia Loeffler

In exploring the body of a city through an emotional lens, one may speak of different scapes. The city can be a 'homescape' a 'smellscape' or a 'deathscape', and at times a 'sexscape', depending on its mood and energy flux. Rather than creating a narrative around the sexuality of buildings in their totality, instead a narrative where urban space and desire are intrinsically interlinked with the gaze is introduced here. This critical visio-cultural perspective urges the viewer to look at the inscriptions of public space as forms of longing and a dimension of the social.

Neil Leach's aesthetic approaches in *Camouflage* (2006) are based on a psychoanalytical narrative which relates belonging with architectural design practice. For Leach, camouflage is a form of inscription in space.[1] Drawing upon this perspective, visual blind spots that constitute traces of longing in the urban realm can be used as points of departure for critical reflections on the city that allow for implicit associations of desire and belonging, and how we visually engage with the city body and explore its skin. Blind spots may be understood as visual waste material, whether they are artistic interventions that cross the barriers between art and vandalism, or as graffiti and stencils that appear insignificant at first sight, but are nevertheless enmeshed in a context of social and political values.

Moving Architecture into Psychogeographic Space

The Apollo Pavilion (1963–70) by the British artist and architect Victor Pasmore is situated in a housing estate in the northeast of England. Its intended function was to serve as a free and anonymous monument to the urban community of the site. When Pasmore revisited the Newcastle region of Peterlee in the early 1980s to look at his controversial modern public art piece, he witnessed the defacement of the murals that he had designed as decoration for the building years before. Graffiti covered its walls. Pasmore was not disturbed by what others saw as acts of vandalism. On the contrary, he commented that the graffiti was an improvement that he could not have made himself. It was a form of intervention and an act of appropriation that humanised the building.

Jane and Louise Wilson, *A Free and Anonymous Monument*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, 2003
The Wilsons' digital installation based on various closed-down industrial sites in the North of England used Pasmore's pavilion as inspiration. Projected images on 13 screens were displayed in the shape of the Apollo Pavilion, and contrasted emblems of modernity with phantasmagoric remnants of a bygone era.

Victor Pasmore, Apollo Pavilion, Peterlee, County Durham, 1970
The architect is standing in front of the graffiti of 'his' public art pavilion in 1982. The monument close to a housing estate was supposed to stimulate play, which happened, albeit in a transgressive sense.

Pasmore's Pavilion shows severe cracks, its formerly pristine appearance dilapidated, the building primarily used by young locals for illicit sex and to urinate on passers-by. Its mood, 'shadowed by melancholia, is never nostalgia', as exemplified in the Wilson sisters' *Free and Anonymous Monument* (2003), a sculptural film installation which expands on Pasmore's understanding of architecture.[2] Traces of Pasmore's 'Self' and the marks of 'the Other' on its skin, the cracks of the Apollo Pavilion's concrete facade speak of unfulfilled desire and the failures of modern post-industrial design.

As in the conjuncture of the primitive (based on solidity and the appreciation of nature) with the modern (based on transitory experiences of a modern urban environment), a spatial discourse dealing with fragments requires the examination of fantasies and dreams, leaning on Walter Benjamin's ideas of montage, and on Georges Bataille's claim that the erotic, the taboo and transgression are determined by the intensity of our experiences. In his *Guide to Ecstacity*, Nigel Coates uses the body as a metaphor for building, the heaviness in weight, structures like bones, windows like eyes, the metabolism of a whole city based on energy flows 'like blood, food or sperm', suggesting a discourse to approach the city 'with an intimacy normally reserved for the bedroom or the backroom'.[3] Coates's design practice swirls around bodily movements and perceptions of intimacy. His *Casa Reale* (Milan, 2012) installations comprise various collections of lighting systems, one a cascade of glass angels, capturing the fragility of the body and the exhilaration of a free fall protected by light into a mysteriously dark, derelict house, complementing the beautiful objects with wasted, sensual space.

Nigel Coates, Angel Falls, *Casa Reale*, Milan, 2012
The crystal chandelier is a cascade of miniature glass angels falling into the dilapidated *Casa Reale*, emphasising a space of waste and ecstasy.

Anonymous, Streetwalker, Pearse Street, Dublin, 2008
In order to explore the concept of the intimacy with the streets, it is vital to investigate transient cultural roles, as in the spatial identity of street dwellers and streetwalkers, and take them out of their anonymity.

Snapshots of the City

When Bernard Tschumi refers to 'snapshots of the city' in 'Architecture and Transgression' (1976),[4] in which we see the momentary convergence of real (sensual) space and ideal (conceptual) space, the emotional value of space reveals itself in notions of sensuality and reason meeting at a point of eroticism. If the city as an entity is viewed as a body, its spaces emotive, its surfaces as skin, the question arises as to how this conception of the built environment might be understood as transgressive or lead to acts of transgression. The concept of 'public intimacy' concerns the very mundane act of moving the body through the city and 'being in touch' with the streets in multisensory ways. Space can be defined as a discourse in itself, a text that is readable as well as rewritable. Documenting the relation between the erotic (as a meeting point of sensuality and reason) and intimacy with reference to meaning-making and authorship, Georges Perec poetically describes our relationship to the world as something that is inscribed into space; space takes on a meaning of something that is clear and close to us, something intimate. We have rediscovered a meaning, namely 'that the earth is a form of writing, a geography of which we had forgotten that we ourselves are the authors'.[5] What has been inscribed on city skin, over and over again, creates imaginary geographies that are possibly erotic, possibly abusive, and possibly disturbing.

Mark Jenkins's hyper-real doll street installations are based on questioning our engagement with the public sphere. His work evokes free falls that lure the gaze away from mobile phones and the fantasy world of advertisements into fantasies 'of a different kind', and what Walter Benjamin may have had in mind in his musings on the fashion mannequin in the windows of the arcades: 'Fashion was never anything but the parody of the gaily decked-out corpse … [It] lures [sex] ever deeper into the inorganic world – the realm of dead things.'[6] Such urban erotic imaginaries open up the critique of gender and forms of representation. Processes of emotional mapping or 'deep mapping' are relevant in capturing 'the realm of dead things' and the mood of a place, rather than its factual meanings that have their origin in territorialisation and appropriation. This approach of 'deep mapping' can be traced back to the 17th century, to the Carte du Pays de Tendre of Madeleine de Scudéry, whose cartography circled around themes of gender and tenderness, where 'Scudéry established a practice of cartography of intimate space that designed a haptic route'.[7]

The projections of human desire that allow a glimpse of the fragmented intimacy of the public sphere appear to involve the same melancholic aesthetics of failure over and over again: an analogy of dead ends and dead things. Public intimacy can be exhilarating and exciting (in a psychogeographic fashion), as much as it can be life destroying (as in sleeping on and with the streets). Walking the city has been presented by two prominent figures of modernity – the flâneur and the prostitute. Benjamin's monumental collection of curiosities includes elaborations on the prostitute as portrayed by Charles Baudelaire – the streetwalker or flâneuse who turns into a commodified object of desire – and leaves her visio-spatial traces as pictured by Rotor, a collective that transgresses the boundaries of architecture, art and the material culture of space.

In Bataille's musings on sacredness, he states that the world of taboos and transgressions reflects humankind's two urges: to be either 'driven away by terror' or 'drawn by an awed fascination',[8] which influences the ways our gaze is constructed and the gaps and silences waiting to be mapped. The blind spots on facades, walls, lampposts or rooftops function like the metaphorical window into the fleeting and uncertain realm of public intimacy, and into a world of fantasy. They reflect a multiplicity of voices in an almost utopian light, and yet a perfect stillness. Their silence evokes Bataille's supreme transgressive moment, which suggests eroticism to be a certain kind of death. ⍷

Notes

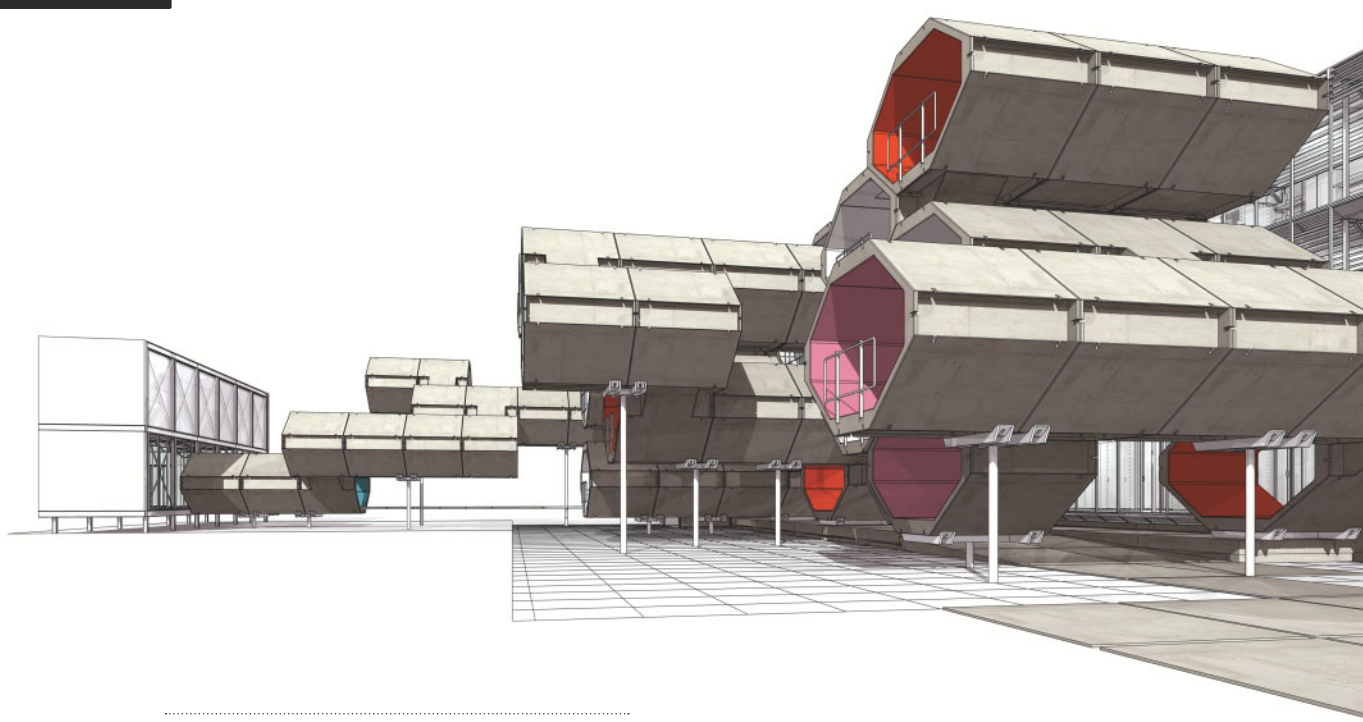
1. Neil Leach, *Camouflage*, MIT Press (Cambridge, MA), 2006.
2. Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts,* MIT Press (Cambridge, MA), 2007, pp 43–67.
3. Nigel Coates, *Guide to Ecstacity*, Laurence King (London), 2003, pp 221–5.
4. Bernard Tschumi, '*Architecture and Transgression*', *Oppositions 7*, Winter *1976*, pp 58–9.
5. Georges Perec, cited in Xing Ruan and Paul Hogben (eds), *Topophilia and Topophobia. Reflections on Twentieth-Century Human Habitat,* Routledge (London), 2007, p 150.
6. Walter Benjamin, cited in Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion,* Verso (New York), 2002, p 147.
7. Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion,* Verso (New York), 2002, pp 207–8.
8. See Georges Bataille, *Eroticism*, trans Mary Dalwood, Boyars (London), 1987, p 68.

Rotor, Blue Limestone Plinth, Brussels, 2010
A wall is revealing the body marks and scratches caused by the high heels of prostitutes leaning on a strategic corner in the centre of Brussels.

IN PRAISE OF TRANSGRESSION
THE WORK OF DIDIER FAUSTINO/ BUREAU DES MÉSARCHITECTURES

Architect/artist **Didier Faustino** regards transgression as a means of survival for a service profession, such as architecture, which is effectively up for hire. By illustrating examples of his own work he argues that the lifeblood of practice must be transgression, challenging all established parameters in order to fulfil the brief and explore a disruptive and often disturbing in-between space.

Didier Faustino



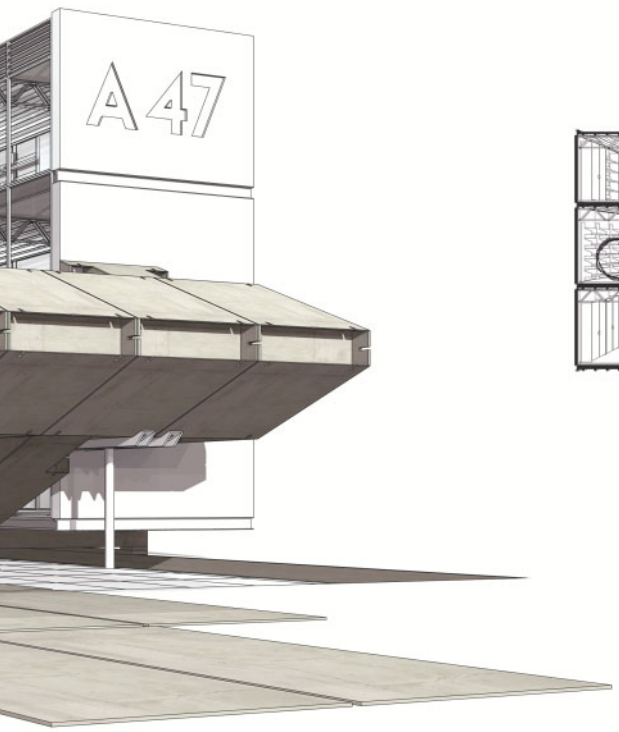
Didier Faustino/Bureau des Mésarchitectures, Alumnos 47 Foundation, Mexico City, due for completion 2014
The functionality and approach to programme is reflected in the tectonics of the volumes.

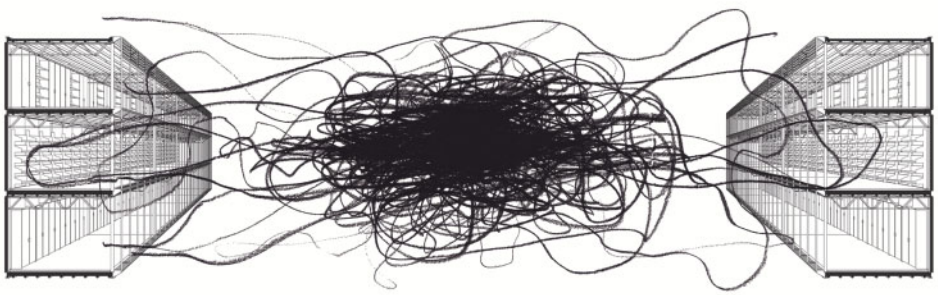
The architectural act is everything but trivial. It has no other value than to address a request, a commission and, most importantly, an expectation.

The only way to survive in this context is transgression. The question is not to obey orders, do as you are told and stay in line. You must constantly challenge, assess the evidence, push the limits to best fulfil the brief. There are rules, but they are not monolithic. If you assume that there is no pre-established system, the solutions deployed must themselves be permanently questioned. In architecture, transgression means going beyond the usual field of exploration to reassess and change it.

A quest for what is in between: between two worlds, social and marginal, private and public, unspeakable and expressed; between the world of seeing, doing, standards and uses, and dreams, fantasies and psyche, like the dark and never-ending passageway in David Lynch's film *Lost Highway* (1997), the 'uncanny'.[1] And this space in-between creates disruption as well as desire. It is both a connecting space between the known and the unknown, and a break from established rules, 'reassuring rationality'.[2] This notion of the space in-between is being developed in the AL47 project, a library in Mexico for the Alumnos 47 art foundation. Here, the key issue is to address the programme's in-between relation to the foundation's main purpose: a library as a place for enjoyment and exchanges. This leads us to re-examine the function of a library and its traditional usages, to challenge the very concept of a library as having a principal hierarchical function of holding and distributing books rather than offering a place of interaction. The project has chosen to go against the grain by focusing on enhancing the act of reading in relation to human interaction, and placing this use at the centre. The focus of the building shifts from a programmed, closed area to a more porous, permeable and interstitial space.

Didier Faustino, *Doppelgänger*, 2011
A double mask made of polyamide powder, *Doppelgänger* plays with the eroticism and the narcissism of contemporary Western society.





The project creates two programmed areas with a more loosely programmed interstitial zone.

Didier Faustino, *Double Happiness*, Shenzhen, China, 2009
Installed for the Shenzhen and Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture: City Mobilization, *Double Happiness* appropriates the structure of an advertising billboard as a site for play, not without an edge of risk, exhilaration and competition.

Didier Faustino/Bureau des Mésarchitectures, Sky Is The Limit, Yangyang, South Korea, 2008
opposite left: This tea house in South Korea is built near the border with North Korea.

opposite right: Sky Is The Limit faces the horizon like a pair of binoculars offering a double space that is both reassuring and endangering. Though it creates a feeling of domination over the scenery, there is still a sense of insignificance in relation to the elements.

You must create friction, to disturb the senses and question reality, as you would scratch a smooth surface or stifle a cry. Doing so endangers the body: it creates instability, a precarious balance.

You must play indeed with the interstices and cracks, with junction and connection spaces: the surface of a two-way mirror and the world unfolding behind it; the gap between two walls that suddenly fills, the contact area between lips locked in a kiss, as in *Doppelgänger*, an artefact to enhance the interstice, an erotic prosthesis to seal kissing lips and to transform a couple into Siamese twins.

You must create friction, to disturb the senses and question reality, as you would scratch a smooth surface or stifle a cry. Doing so endangers the body: it creates instability, a precarious balance. What you see is not quite what you get. To become aware of things our senses must stay alert, like a night in the forest where all of a sudden everything comes to life, down to the smallest leaf falling. It is only when you are suspended in the air that you get full consciousness of gravity, as with the *Double Happiness* swing that throws you above the city with a mixed feeling of fear and fascination. Similarly, when you are surrounded by immensity, only then do you realise the smallness of human scale, as experienced in the Sky Is The Limit tea house project in Korea, which immerses you into the natural elements with a double sensorial space, the first enclosed but offering a panoramic view of landscape, and the second bounded but open to wind and rain.

The architectural act must confuse and blur lines. What if a broken tower would suddenly rise above the rainforest canopy, questioning the relation between animals and humans, the natural and the artificial, the living and the dead?

Transgression means going against triviality. AD

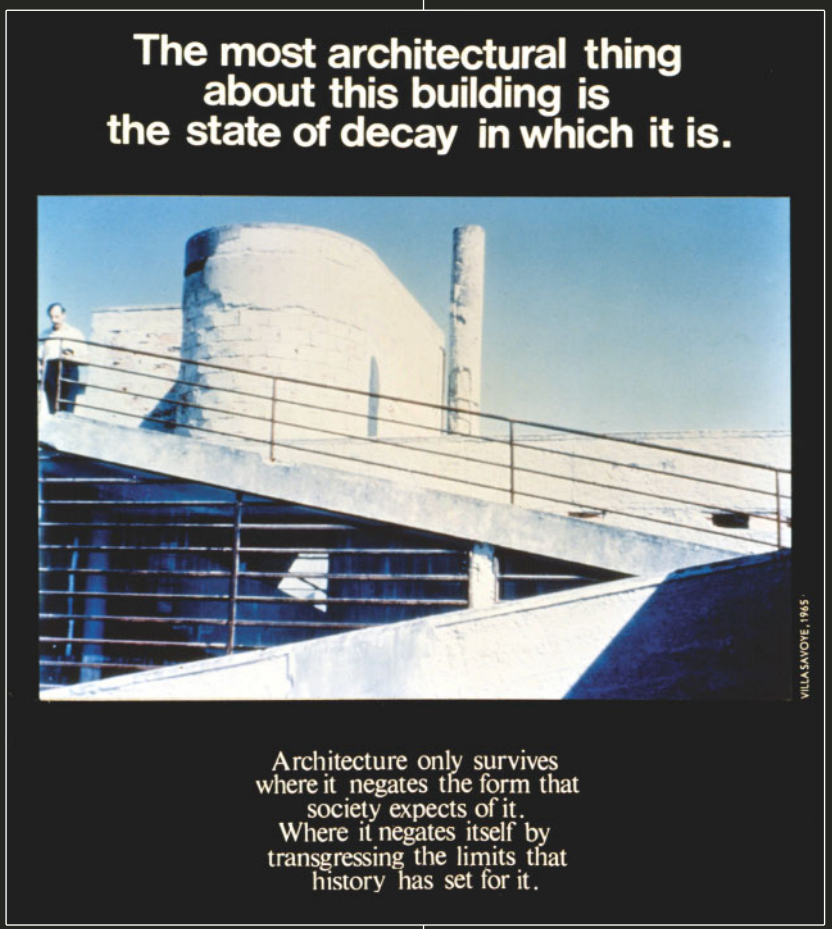
Notes

1. Sigmund Freud, *'Das Unheimliche'*, 1919. In this essay, Freud refers to an aesthetics of anxiety, exploring fearful and frightening worlds both within imagination and reality. *Unheimlich* (in English uncanny) is the opposite of *heimlich*, which can either mean familiar, intimate, secure or concealed, secret, private. In that sense, our in-between spaces aim to be uncanny.
2. Ibid.

David Littlefield

ASHES THROWN TO THE WIND

THE ELUSIVE NATURE OF TRANSGRESSION



Le Corbusier, Villa Savoye, Poissy, France, 1931
Le Corbusier's iconic villa became the subject of a poster by Bernard Tschumi in 1965, calling for a reassessment of notions of ruination, purity and beauty.

Transgression is not absolute. What constitutes a transgression is forever in flux, being redefined with the mores of society. The potential for transgression also does not halt with the completion of a building. **David Littlefield** examines the temporal character of transgression in relation to lived-in buildings, and the manner in which transgression lodges itself between a building and an idea. Here transgression is a by-product of the occupiers rather than their makers, sometimes to the extent that a building can take on unbearably horrific associations.

Transgression is a contextual term – in order to transgress one walks across a line, or acts in relation to an established code or order. There can be no transgression unless there is a boundary, or a zone, against which any transgression can be measured. Michel Foucault, for example, tracked the ways in which crime, behaviour, difference and notions of the monstrous have come to be categorised, treated and punished against criteria that have changed over the course of time, highlighting the fact that transgression has a temporal character. Norms shift, and transgression positions itself against both boundaries and time. Moreover, transgression can occupy the space between modes, positioning itself (like dirt) in the gap, or the vacuum, between one condition and another.

The extent to which architecture itself can be transgressive is a moot point. Apart from the transgressions of the building makers (dealt with elsewhere in this journal), the role of transgressor is more usually performed by those who occupy or mark buildings, deporting themselves within or beyond the codes against which society defines and regulates itself. It has, for example, become a relatively new practice to obliterate and remove the remains of houses where infamous murders have taken place: this is true of the homes of Fred West and Ian Huntley in the UK, for example, and Jeffrey Dahmer in the US. These houses become void. According to British psychologist Bruce Hood, who studies the mechanisms through which human beings infuse inanimate matter with invisible qualities such as value:

18 Victory Road, Derby, UK
The home of the Philpott family, damaged by a fire during which six of their children died. The children's father, mother and a family friend were convicted of manslaughter on 3 April 2013. The house is to be demolished.

> If there is nothing to look at, then shouldn't this keep the weirdos away? At least removing the visible reminder makes it easier for a community to heal and forget. But demolishing a building, crushing the rubble into dust and taking it away to secret locations with demolishers under oath not to reveal the final whereabouts seems a bit excessive.[1]

Since Hood wrote this, a further tragedy has resulted in yet another UK house being identified for demolition: 18 Victory Road, Derby. This semi-detached house, which would also require the purchase and demolition of its neighbour, was the site of an act of arson that killed six children. 'Who would want to live in a house where six children have died and why would you want to live next door to a house where six children have died?' asked Derby council leader Paul Bayliss. 'It is the council's intention to bulldoze the properties.'[2]

This obliteration bears all the hallmarks of a pre-Enlightenment attitude. In *Abnormal,* Foucault describes the treatment meted out to hermaphrodites around 1600, whose fate, for the crime of upsetting the natural order, was to be 'burnt at the stake and their ashes thrown to the winds'.[3] Such biological ambiguity could only, went the reasoning, be the consequence of Satanic relationships, hence the extremity of the punishment; later, the crime was not for bearing the biological forms of hermaphroditism itself, but for conducting oneself in a sexually ambiguous way. It was for this reason, not the fact of anatomy, that Marie Lemarcis, who lived as a man, was sentenced in 1614/15 to be 'hung, burned and her ashes scattered in the wind' (a sentence later commuted).[4] In demolishing and dispersing the homes of murderers, contemporary society appears unable to distinguish site from action: it conflates the two, and the house becomes something of an agent, implicated in the event.

Haunting the Mind

Writers of fiction have exploited this notion that buildings themselves can haunt the human mind to such an extent that transgressive behaviour becomes unavoidable. Stephen King's *The Shining* (1977) is one example. JG Ballard's novel *High Rise* (1975) is another, describing the behaviours (covering virtually every conceivable taboo from murder to cannibalism and incest) to which the middle-class occupants of an apartment building succumb; the suggestion being that it is the building that forces these repressed urges to surface. Cleverly, Ballard does not describe an architecture of simple cause and effect, where the building functions as corruptor; rather, it is the amplifier of transgressive ideas, nurturing and making abominably explicit behaviours that already reside deep in the minds of its occupants. Rather than being at the mercy of the building, its inhabitants feel able to use its spaces to explore cruder alternatives to contemporary living. 'Laing knew that he was far happier now than ever before, despite all the hazards of his life, the likelihood that he would die at any time from hunger or assault … He was pleased with his good sense in giving rein to those impulses … perversities created by the limitless possibilities of the high-rise,' says the narrator of the dog-eating protagonist Dr Robert Laing.[5]

The Schröderhuis in Utrecht, designed by Gerrit Rietveld for Truus Schröder-Schräder, tests another possibility – its reduction to an idea. From its completion in 1924 the building was continuously inhabited until Madam Schröder's death in 1985, by which time the house had long been a Modernist icon. The house became listed as a World Heritage Site in 2000. 'The significance of the Rietveld Schröder House as a historical material document does not lie in its occupational history. It was and still is considered to be a constructed manifesto,' says the UNESCO report on the building's cultural value,[6] which goes on to describe the building as 'an outstanding expression of human creative genius in its purity of ideas'.[7] The house-museum of today is not the house as occupied by Madam Schröder (Gerrit Rietveld also occupied the building after the death of his wife). Half a century of adjustments, including the construction of a private rooftop room and the relocation of the kitchen upstairs, have been reversed; further, the building is more weatherproof than it has ever been and the natural processes of wear have been made good. It is as if no one has ever lived there. As an authentic representation of an idea, the building is unsurpassed. The UNESCO report consistently refers to the building as 'the Schröder House' or 'the house'. But it is not a house. Visitor numbers are restricted, curators wear white cotton gloves, and the building may not be touched.

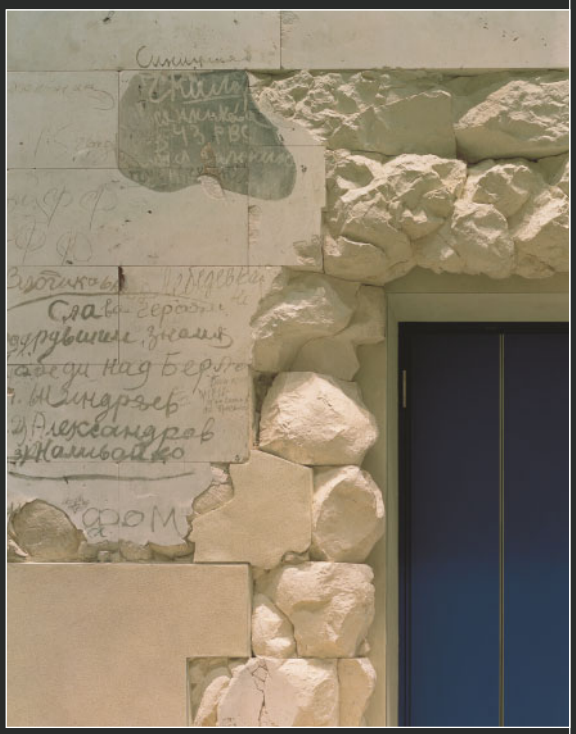
Transgression manifests itself in many ways, from the violence and taboo of *High Rise* to the inconsequential act of touching (or worse, marking) something you shouldn't. The Schröder House, though, also bears the hallmarks of transgression by dint of its elusiveness in terms of category; designed and built as a house, it is not a house. The Schröder House haunts itself; the idea of it is judged to be so compelling that it sits out of time, its own occupied past denied. Transgression need not be monstrous.

Erasure and Reduction

Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye, completed for Pierre Savoye in 1931, is similarly haunted/preserved. Unlike its Dutch cousin, however, this house was barely lived in; damp and a lack of comfort caused the client to all but abandon it. Thereafter, the building served variously as a barn, as a billet for both German and Allied forces, and later as a youth club. By the late 1950s the house was considered for demolition. In 1965 the ruined building was listed as a Monument Historique. 'Those who in 1965 visited the then derelict Villa Savoye certainly remember the squalid walls of the small service rooms on the ground floor, stinking of urine, smeared with excrement, and covered with obscene graffiti,' wrote Bernard Tschumi.[8] This is the state, however, which Tschumi identifies as a cause for some celebration: 'In the opinion of this author … the Villa Savoye was never so moving as when plaster fell off its concrete blocks.'[9]

Tschumi argued that society, and the architects who serve it, are comfortable with the ruin as bleached bones – the genuinely dead space, reduced to its essential structure. The putrefying building, the rotting body in the process of decay, argued Tschumi, provided a simultaneous moment of life and death that is socially unpalatable. This in-between state becomes for

Manifesto trumps function; horror trumps structure; inscription trumps graffiti; art trumps vandalism. Transgression is implicit within these binaries, appearing or disappearing as norms and value systems shift.



Foster + Partners, Reichstag, Berlin, Germany, 1999
Russian soldiers' graffiti was preserved during the reconstruction of the Reichstag after the German reunification in 1989, creating a 'living museum'.

Tschumi a moment where the building negates itself, doing nothing of what society expects of it – it is neither inhabited as designed nor cherished as art for art's sake. This, he says, is a moment of transgression, allowing for 'new articulations' of concept and experience, sufficient to create a unique moment at which to consider an architectural space. Indeed, he wrote, the Villa Savoye's state of decay was 'the most architectural thing' about it.[10]

Today, after more than three decades of restoration, this rot has been reversed and the building has become, like the Schröder House, a museum to itself. Its modes of occupancy, too, have been the subject of deliberate forgetfulness and, in curating the building, the fidelity to the authenticity of the architectural proposition has become privileged over the authenticity of the manner in which the building was historically occupied. Like the homes of murderers, there is an erasure at work – not a complete obliteration, but a denial of time and the marks of occupation. Anthony Vidler describes abandoned buildings as exhibiting something of the uncanny, a vague terror and unease prompted by the fact of being outside society: 'It is the home of smugglers and renegades, exiles and fugitives. Only those on the margin would feel at home in so disquieting an abode.'[11] The Villa Savoye no longer provides a space on the edge, for those at the edge. There is no graffiti on the walls.

Minding the Gap

Clearly, for purposes of heritage management, or the control over cultural authenticity and interpretation, gaps open up: building as idea and building as lived; building performing as designed, and building performing as ruin; building as matter and building as narrative. Between these states lies not a line but a space, a gap in which lies the potential for transgression – a social distaste or taboo. Society may then move to fill this gap, or adjust the borders in order to appropriate what lies between.

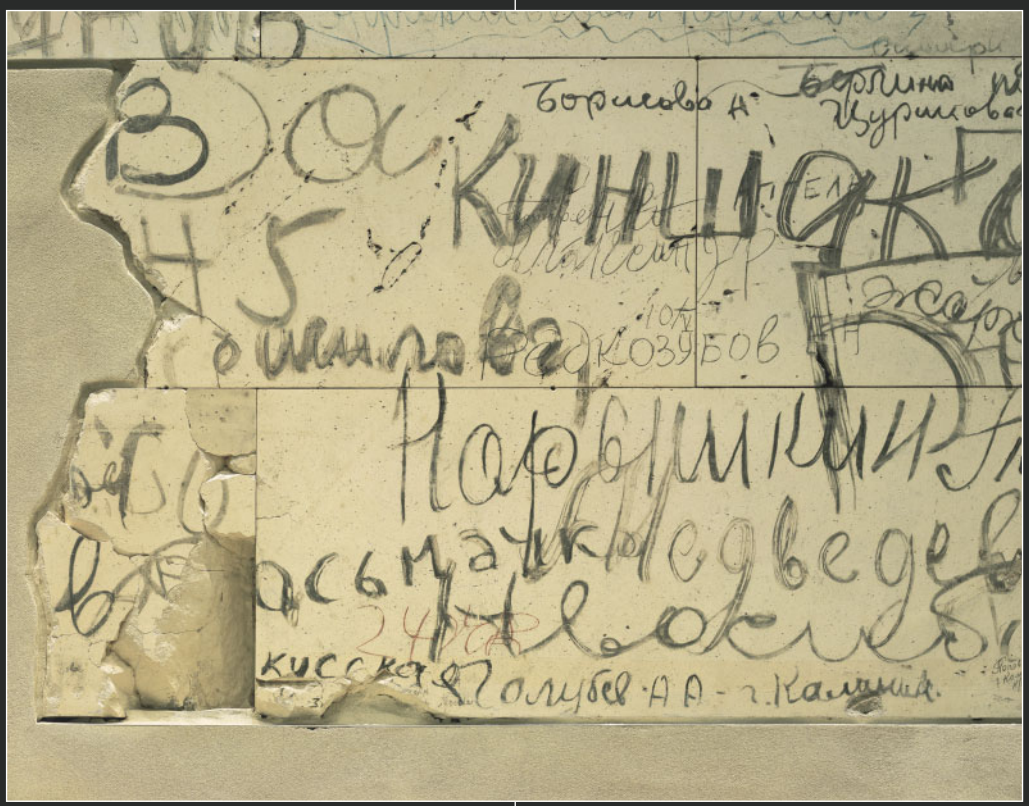
These gaps offer room for ambiguity and double standard. The marks of Russian soldiers scratched into the surface of Berlin's Reichstag in 1945 ('Kaput Hitler!') have become a historical document and remain on public view. The Palladian Bridge in Bath's Prior Park contains graffiti almost as old as the bridge itself, including 'TC July 1799', which the UK's heritage guardian the National Trust highlights for special tourist interest – it even sells prints of these marks for £15. Some transgressions, if old enough, become highly prized and authentically part of the host structure. Graffiti, having become authorised and authenticated, becomes inscription. The graffiti of Banksy has become art.

The problem with the concepts of heritage and authenticity is that there are many authenticities – more than one heritage. Further, these concepts are bound up with notions of purity which, in the attempt to present a place in a single true state, encourages decision-makers to exclude more than they include. Architecture becomes subject to revisions which deny its temporality and potential for multiple readings and histories. Often, in the search for purity or a singular meaning, heritage denies inhabitation. For the Schröder House to demonstrate such purity, it was made the subject of a cleansing so complete and lasting that it risks sterility.

It appears that if there is a choice to be made between the tangible and the intangible (stuff versus idea), the intangible has a knack of winning. Manifesto trumps function; horror trumps structure; inscription trumps graffiti; art trumps vandalism. Transgression is implicit within these binaries, appearing or disappearing as norms and value systems shift. Writing on pornography in 1967, Susan Sontag stated: 'He who transgresses not only breaks a rule. He goes somewhere that the others are not; and he knows something the others don't know.'[12] Equally, though, transgression can be evoked not by going, but by letting time adjust the boundaries within which one stands. ⌂

Notes

1. Bruce Hood, *SuperSense*, Constable (London), 2009, p 3.
2. http://www.thisisderbyshire.co.uk/Philpott-Council-wants-bulldozers-Victory-Road/story-18628344-detail/story.html#axzz2RUMnXHQ4, accessed 25 April 2013.
3. Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975*, Verso (London), 2003, p 67.
4. Ibid, p 68.
5. JG Ballard, *High-Rise*, Harper Perennial (London), 2006, p 154.
6. WHC Nomination Documentation, June 1999, p 16. Sourced from http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/965/documents/, accessed 27 March 2013.
7. Ibid, p 110.
8. Bernard Tschumi, 'Architecture and Transgression', in *Oppositions: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture 1973–1984*, Princeton University Press (New York), 1998, p 359.
9. Ibid, p 360.
10. Ibid, p 356.
11. Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*, MIT Press (Cambridge, MA), 1992, p 20.
12. Susan Sontag, 'The Pornographic Imagination', in Georges Bataille, *The Story of the Eye*, Penguin Classics (London), 2001, p 116. Originally published in *Styles of Radical Will*, Martin Secker & Warburg (London), 1967.



Transgression has a temporal character. Over time, unofficial marks can become inscription; graffiti can become art.

Patrik Schumacher

TRANSGRESSION INNOVATION POLITICS

As partner at Zaha Hadid Architects, **Patrik Schumacher** has become renowned for his substantial role in taking an experimental practice to a global level. Here he argues for some qualification in the way that transgression might be employed in architecture: Where should transgression stand in relation to a cycle of innovation? Should progress take uneven revolutionary leaps or a smooth accumulative path? By looking outside itself and engaging in political debate, could the architecture of transgression, in fact, be doing no more than burdening the discipline?

When I am taking a position against 'the architecture of transgression' I am certainly not arguing from a conservative position. The guest-editors of this issue credit the architecture of transgression with revolutionary force. I am arguing two counterpoints here, namely that transgressions are only productive during revolutionary periods at the beginning of a major cycle of innovation, and that in order to be productive transgressions must remain within the discipline's bounds determined by the functional differentiation of society.

As protagonists of the discipline's advancement we are all positioning ourselves on the side of progress, aiming for the innovation of the discipline and thus the built environment. The question is thus not the choice between architectural revolution versus the conservation of established practice, but rather in which direction architecture should progress. Another question is whether progress should take the form of a revolutionary transgressive leap or follow a gradual, cumulative, constructive path?

The answer to this latter question depends on where we are in the historical cycle of innovation.[1] What the notion of 'cycle of innovation' indicates is that evolutionary processes (including the evolution of civilisation as a whole as well as the evolution of any of its subsystems) move in a rhythm of alternating periods of accelerated change and relatively gradual change. With respect to the

evolution of organisms and natural ecosystems, evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould proposes a theory of 'punctuated equilibria', according to which evolutionary change occurs relatively rapidly, alternating with longer periods of relative evolutionary stability. This kind of pattern of evolution is to be expected in complex systems where many processes interlock in mutual dependency with feedback mechanisms of mutual stabilisation. It also applies to societal evolution, and the progress of professions like architecture.

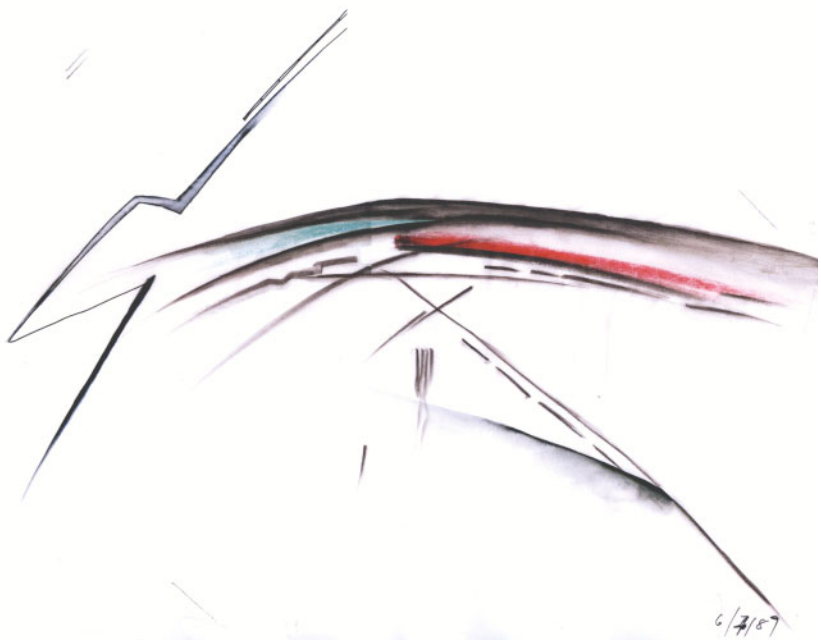
Thomas Kuhn has observed this pattern with respect to the developmental trajectory of individual sciences.[2] He is distinguishing 'revolutionary science' from 'normal science'. Normal science progresses within the framework of an established paradigm, and revolutionary science emerges when the explanatory power and fruitfulness of a paradigm is waning and the search for new answers beyond the confines of the dominant paradigms ensues. This period involves transgressions against the established paradigm, usually spurns several competing potential paradigms, and might eventually lead to a paradigm shift when the discourse converges on one of the competing candidate paradigms to an extent that the older paradigm is supplanted by a new viable paradigm that can re-cohere research efforts and inaugurate a new 'normal science'.

In *The Autopoiesis of Architecture* (2010),[3] I have adopted and adapted Kuhn's terminology and analysis to the development of the discipline of architecture by distinguishing revolutionary and cumulative design research. Architectural styles function as the design research paradigms of architecture. Accordingly I distinguish transitional versus epochal styles and the contested avant-garde stages and the hegemonic mainstream stages of the great epochal styles through which the discipline of architecture progresses. Revolutionary transgressions have played an important role in the progress of the discipline and might do so again in the future. For instance, at the beginning of the 20th century, architecture witnessed a momentous revolutionary period that ushered in the paradigm shift from historicism to Modernism (via transitional styles like Art Nouveau and Expressionism). Fifty years later Modernism went into crisis and a new revolutionary period ensued with transitional styles like Postmodernism and Deconstructivism, and a diverse, radical cast of protagonists like Superstudio, Robert Venturi, Coop Himmelb(l)au, Bernard Tschumi, Frank Gehry, Peter Eisenman and Zaha Hadid.

In my book *Digital Hadid* (2004),[4] I discuss some of the radically transgressive moves Zaha Hadid enacted in her design processes and designs at the beginning of her career. Her transgressions include the audacious move to translate the dynamism and fluidity of her calligraphic hand directly into equally fluid tectonic compositions, as well as the incredible move from isometric and perspective projection to the literal distortion of space, from the exploded axonometry to the literal explosion of space into fragments, from fish-eye perspectives to the literal bending and bulging of space. All these moves seemed to be wilfully irrational, akin to the transgressive operations of the Surrealists. And yet they allowed for a radical expansion of the design repertoire that eventually made the design process more versatile, agile and adaptive to the new level of programmatic and contextual complexity that started to confront the discipline from the 1970s. What started as seemingly irrational transgression or mutation was eventually selected, reproduced, refined and integrated into a new, more powerful design process rationality, and then further expanded and empowered by the new digital design tools that became increasingly available to the discipline from the mid-1990s.

This revolutionary practice matured into a cumulative design research programme – parametricism – that is now gearing up to go mainstream to impact and transform the physiognomy of the global built environment as Modernism had done pervasively in the postwar era. My key point here is to suggest that the spirit of transgression is required and arises in periods of paradigm crisis where the old ways are bankrupt and new potential paths are being charted. However, as potential ways forward emerge and gain adherents, further transgressions are less productive than the participation in a new collective, cumulative research effort. The transgressive spirit needs to be supplanted by a constructive spirit that is able to develop a new viable paradigm that might eventually mature to replace the prior mainstream practice, and to take on the responsibility of advancing global best practice in line with the new societal demands and opportunities. Accordingly, I believe that the current period does not call for transgressive practices in architecture.

The guest-editors maintain that this issue of Δ examines how transgressive practices are reinventing and repositioning the architecture profession in much the same way as the avant-garde of a century ago – Dada, Surrealism and early Modernism – subverted and subsequently



Zaha Hadid, Explorative Sketch for Vitra Fire Station, Weil am Rhein, Germany, 1989
These kinds of sketches operate like Deleuzian diagrams. They are abstract machines, transgressive engines of invention. There is no pre-established meaning or routine of translation from the sketches to built reality.

influenced established thinking and method. While I agree with the importance of the historical avant-gardes for the breakthrough of Modernism – and I indeed theorise the emergence of parametricism in analogy to this historical experience – I do not see such a potential in the projects promoted here under the banner of an 'architecture of transgression'. Nor do the most recent societal developments merit the inauguration of yet another paradigm shift. The paradigm shift from Modernism to parametricism is architecture's response to the epochal socioeconomic transformation from a Fordist society of mechanical mass-reproduction to a much more dynamic, internally differentiated and complex post-Fordist network society based on the new production processes made possible by the micro-electronic revolution and the new globalised societal dynamics unleashed by the new communication technologies.

The demise of the socialist block, the radical transformation of all centrally planned economies, phenomena like the privatisation of many state enterprises and services, corporate outsourcing, network organisations as well as a much accelerated globalisation are all transformations that characterise this new socioeconomic epoch, which emerged during the 1980s and 1990s. It is a fallacy to believe that the 2008 financial crisis and the great recession that ensued in its wake represents the beginning or opportunity of yet another epochal transformation that would merit yet a further reorientation of architecture. This is not a claim by an architectural theorist, but a matter of an architectural theorist surveying prevalent economics and social science discourses. There is no new structural transformation on the horizon that is being discussed as redirecting the trajectory from Fordism to post-Fordism. The Occupy movement that fascinates the guest-editors can in no way be taken as indicative of any substantial redirection of societal developments that might merit a re-inauguration of a transgressive spirit within architectural discourse. Therefore I maintain that an architecture of transgression in 2013 is unlikely to be productive. The task we are facing is a constructive one: to push the cumulative design research of the last 20 years into mainstream relevancy.[5]

In their Introduction to this issue, the guest-editors invoke and quote Bernard Tschumi's outline of three possible roles for architects in his introduction to *Architecture and Disjunction* (1976): that we become conservative, or in other words that we conserve our role in giving form to the political and economic priorities of the hegemony; that we act as critics who expose the contradictions of society through our practice; and 'Finally, we could act as revolutionaries by using our … understanding of cities and the mechanisms of architecture … in order to be part of professional forces trying to arrive at new social and urban structures.'[6]

I find Tschumi's distinction interesting but untenable, not least because all three roles distinguished here – translator, critic, innovator – must come into play within an ambitious, progressive architectural practice. There is no choice possible between them. More importantly, our theoretical account needs to reassert the distinctiveness of architecture's societal role. This distinctiveness and delimitation of architecture's role and responsibility is rarely in doubt in practice. However, in architectural discourse, demands and illusions abound concerning the possibility of transgressing architecture's institutionally circumscribed domain of competency. The guest-editors of this issue, too, are guilty of such illusory schemes for the expansion of architecture's mission, without raising the question of either its feasibility or legitimacy. They assert that 'in order for architecture to remain relevant, to position and reinvent itself in changing times, it has had to move across perceived disciplinary limits'. I think this statement is a crippling fallacy that is bound to ensure the marginality of its adherents.

The above quote from Tschumi also reveals a disregard for the fact that society is organised into distinct domains of competency when he is lumping together the innovation of social and urban structures as the task of the revolutionary architect. He is also obscuring the specificity of architecture's societal function when he credits the architect as critic with exposing 'the contradictions of society'. In contrast to this untenable and illegitimate inflation of the architect's competency, I insist on its proper demarcation. (In fact, it is not me but society who insists on this demarcation.) Although I am committed to the avant-garde architect as critic, in my view the architect as critic is neither called upon nor able to reveal the contradictions of society as such, nor is he called upon or competent to criticise society as a whole or any of its phenomena or subsystems (other than its architectural subsystem). His task is to reveal the contradiction between the established mainstream architecture and architectural discourse on the one side and those new relevant and pervasive facts and

Zaha Hadid Architects, Vitra Fire Station, Weil am Rhein, Germany, 1993
Although the sketch transgresses regular routine codes of representation, the built reality exhibits abstract key characteristics of the initial sketch. The originality of the building is the work of the transgressive design process.

tendencies in society – be they technological, demographic, socioeconomic or political – that have not yet been taken account of and adequately responded to within architecture. The task of the revolutionary architect is not social or political revolution, but to effect a revolution in the discipline's methods, repertoires and values in order to make them once more relevant and effective with respect to the societal transformations and new social requirements that are no longer adequately addressed and facilitated by prior mainstream practice. This is something rather different from what has sometimes been called 'political' or 'critical' architecture.

The currently fashionable concept of 'critical architecture' as a form of political activism must be repudiated as an implausible phantom. The paradigmatic examples from the early 1920s and the late 1960s that give meaning to the notion of politically engaged architecture were born in the exceptional condition of social revolution (or pending social revolution). During such periods everything is being politicised: the law, the economy, education, architecture, and even science. The autonomy of the functional subsystems of society is temporarily being suspended. During normal times architecture and politics are separated as autonomous discursive domains. They are autopoietic function systems within a world civilisation that is now primarily ordered via functional differentiation.[7]

Representative democracy is the form the political system tends to take in the most advanced states within functionally differentiated world society. Representative democracy professionalises politics and regularises the channels of political influence, negotiation, and collectively binding decision-making. The specialised, well-adapted channels of political communication absorb and bind all political concerns. Art, science, architecture, education and even the mass media are released from the burden of becoming vehicles of political agitation. The more this system consolidates, the longer this division of labour within society works, and the more false and out of place rings the pretence of 'political architecture'. Political architecture finally becomes an oxymoron – at least until the emergence of the next revolutionary situation, when a new sociopolitical upheaval re-politicises all aspects and arrangements of society. At that stage – within the throes of a genuine social revolution – we can expect the (temporary) meltdown of these distinctions and their underlying differentiation. Then we are no longer concerned with politics in the operationally defined sense that this term currently denotes.

Until then it is certainly not architecture's societal function to promote marginal political agendas that have scant prospects for becoming political mainstream any time soon. Nor is it its task to actively initiate political agendas. Architecture is no viable site for such initiatives. Those who feel that a radical political transformation of society is a prior condition of any meaningful architectural project and therefore want to debate and resolve political questions must do so within the political system.[8] Only there can they really form sustained political convictions and test the power of their arguments. Political debate within architecture can never amount to anything significant. Architecture cannot substitute itself for the political process proper. However, architecture can and must respond to transformative socioeconomic and political developments that become manifest within the economy and are processed within the political system. Accordingly, I propose the following thesis: To respond to hegemonic political trends is a vital capacity of architecture. It has no capacity to resolve political controversy. Political debate within architecture overburdens the discipline. The autopoiesis of architecture consumes itself in the attempt to substitute itself for the political system.[9]

Notes

1. The word 'cycle' is not a very happy choice here because history is evolving forward without returning to prior states. However, what does recur is the need of any societal subsystem to adapt to shifts in its societal context.
2. Thomas Kuhn, 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions', *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, University of Chicago Press (Chicago, IL), 1962, second enlarged edition, 1970.
3. Patrik Schumacher, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture*, Vol 1, John Wiley & Sons (Chichester), 2010, see section 3.7 'Styles as Research Programmes'.
4. Patrik Schumacher, *Digital Hadid: Landscapes in Motion*, Birkhäuser (London), 2004.
5. It is indeed unfortunate that parametricism has been misunderstood as wilful, exuberant iconicism and as such associated with the latest real-estate boom and bust cycle. This misunderstanding, together with the overestimation of the significance of the financial crisis and recession, has led many astray in thinking that parametricism is no longer tenable and that the task of architectural discourse is now one of fundamental reorientation. A certain reorientation has indeed been effected in some major schools of architecture that have accordingly transformed from leading, high-skill design research laboratories aiming to innovate professional best practice into debating clubs. However, there is no sign that these debates lead to any viable reorientation of the discipline. They are rather accompanied by either retrogressive aesthetics or the absence of design altogether.
6. Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, MIT Press (Cambridge, MA), 1996.
7. Niklas Luhmann, *Theory of Society*, Vol 1, Stanford University Press (Stanford, CA), 2012.
8. This also applies to radical 'urban politics' that challenges established socioeconomic and political institutions.
9. Patrik Schumacher, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture*, Vol 2, John Wiley & Sons (Chichester), 2012, Thesis 49, section 9.2 'Theorizing the Relationship between Architecture and Politics'.

Political architecture finally becomes an oxymoron – at least until the emergence of the next revolutionary situation, when a new sociopolitical upheaval re-politicises all aspects and arrangements of society.

Naïm Aït-Sidhoum is an architect and artist living and working in Grenoble, France, a member of the collectives Zoom and Pied la Biche, and teaches at the École Supérieure d'Art de l'Agglomération d'Annecy. Since 2011 he has produced and directed a fictive television serial drama based in the social housing district of Villeneuve in Grenoble with the collective Vill9 la serie.

Can Altay is an artist and Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Architecture at Istanbul Bilgi University. He investigates the functions, meaning, organisation and reconfigurations of public space. His 'settings' provide critical reflection on urban phenomena and artistic activity. His work traverses sculpture, photography and installation, and is also staged and manifested through the spaces and publications he produces.

Ulrich Beckefeld is a partner of the office for subversive architecture (osa), a pan-European network for spatial experimentation which is developing projects between art and architecture. After his architectural studies at the University of Darmstadt in Germany he moved to Vienna, where he currently runs an architecture practice with his partner Caroline Reder.

Edward Denison is an architectural writer, photographer and independent consultant. He has written and photographed several books and has a PhD in architectural history from the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London (UCL), for which he explored architecture and modernity in China before 1949, and was awarded a Commendation in the RIBA President's Award for Outstanding PhD Thesis 2012.

Guangyu Ren is a researcher and independent consultant specialising in architecture and the built environment with over a decade of experience working for international organisations in places as diverse as China, Africa and Europe. She trained as an architect at Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, and now lives and works in London on international projects, publishing books, and as an advisor to firms working in China. Denison and Ren's joint publications include: *Luke Him Sau, Architect: China's Missing Modern* (John Wiley & Sons, 2014); *The Life of the British Home* (Wiley, 2012); *McMorran & Whitby* (RIBA, 2009); *Modernism in China: Architectural Visions and Revolutions* (Wiley, 2008); *Building Shanghai: The Story of China's Gateway* (Wiley, 2006); and *Asmara: Africa's Secret Modernist City* (Merrell, 2003).

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Karsten Huneck is a partner of the office for subversive architecture (osa), a pan-European network for spatial experimentation. Together with another osa partner, Bernd Truempler, he also set up KHBT, which has studios in London and Berlin. They won the first ever special prize (runner up) at the YAYA (Young Architect of the Year Awards) 2009. Since 2008 he has also been an Associate Professor at the École Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris. After becoming a joiner and studying architecture at the University of Darmstadt in Germany, he worked in various architectural practices including Foster + Partners.

Chris Jenks was Vice Chancellor at Brunel University until October 2012. Prior to that he had been Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Sociology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He has published 30 books and numerous journal articles and chapters in books on topics including education, childhood, culture, cultural reproduction, visual culture, urban culture, complexity theory, transgression and extremes of human behaviour. His work has been translated into eight languages and he has lectured nationally and internationally. He currently holds emeritus status at Brunel University.

David Littlefield is Senior Lecturer in the School of Architecture at the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol. He has written, or made major contributions to, a number of books on architecture including *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings* and *London (Re)generation* (Wiley, 2007 and 2012). His research interests focus on notions of place and the role of art and design practice as narrative tools. He has worked as an artist in residence at the Roman baths, Bath, and is now collaborating with Bath Abbey. He currently leads UWE's Interior Architecture programme.

Silvia Loeffler is an independent artist, researcher and educator based in Dublin. Most of her work deals with the emotional scanning or deep mapping of spaces. Drawing and writing, as writing means to draw with words, are her guides to establish a narrative of public intimacy. She lectures on visual culture and emotional relationships with space at the Dublin Institute of Technology and the National College of Art and Design. She is currently working on Glas Journal, a transdisciplinary project that explores how people relate to a maritime environment based on concepts of belonging and the multiple meanings of 'harbour'.

Catie Newell is the founding principal of *Alibi Studio, a creative practice that has been widely recognised for exploring design construction and materiality in relationship to location and geography, and cultural

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Alastair Parvin is a strategic designer with cross-disciplinary architecture studio 00 (zero zero), London. He is co-author of *A Right to Build* (2011) and co-founder of WikiHouse, an open-source construction set, and a 2012 TED Prize winner.

Constantin Petcou is a Paris-based architect whose work stresses the intersection between architecture, urbanism and semiotics. He co-edited *Urban Act: A Handbook for Alternative Practice* (2007) and *Trans-Local-Act: Cultural Practices Within and Across* (2010). He is a co-founder of atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa), a collective that conducts explorations, actions and research concerning sociopolitical practices in the contemporary city. aaa acts through 'urban tactics', encouraging inhabitants to self-manage disused urban spaces, engage in nomadic and reversible projects, and initiating interstitial practices. aaa has been laureate of the Zumtobel Prize for Sustainability and Humanity 2012, Curry Stone Design Prize 2011, the European Prize for Urban Public Space 2010, and the Prix Grand Public des Architectures Contemporaines en Métropole Parisienne 2010.

Doina Petrescu is a professor of architecture and design activism at the University of Sheffield, and a co-founder of atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa). Her research focuses on gender and space in contemporary society as well as participation in architecture. Her approach broadens the scope of architectural discourse by bringing cultural, social and political issues to inform the design and thinking processes in architecture. Her research methodology combines approaches from architectural theory and design, contemporary arts, social sciences, political philosophy and feminist theory. She is the editor of *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space* (2007) and co-editor of *Architecture and Participation* (2005), *Urban Act* (2007), *Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures* (2009), and *Trans-Local-Act: Cultural Practices Within and Across* (2010).

Louis Rice is an architect, lecturer and researcher based in Bristol. He currently runs the MA in Urban Design, the MA in Architecture and contributes to the Masters in Architecture design unit at the University of the West of England (UWE). He is the author of numerous books and articles on architecture and urban design. His research focus is on the emergence of future cities, from China's burgeoning megacities, the informal cities of Mumbai and São Paolo to the abandoned cities of post-disaster Japan and post-industrialism Detroit. Across these interests is an appreciation and investigation into 'other' forms of architecture (www.otherarchitecture.org). The research is deliberatively trans-disciplinary and is undertaken collaboratively with a range of artists, sociologists, designers, activists and academics.

Alexander Römer is an architect and carpenter based in Berlin and Paris, and has been a member of collective EXYZT since 2005. Since 1997 he has been developing ideas and practices around accessible, low-budget and participative construction methods and moments in the expanded field of architecture and art with constructlab. EXYZT's 2013 Casa do Vapor, a temporary common house in Cova do Vapor, near Lisbon, continues the work of the construir juntos workshop for the Curators' Lab, which is linked to the Guimaraes 2012 European Capital of Culture.

Patrik Schumacher is a partner at Zaha Hadid Architects. He joined in 1988 and has been the co-author of many key projects, including MAXXI – the National Italian Museum for Art and Architecture of the 21st Century. Together with Zaha Hadid he built up Zaha Hadid Architects to become a 400-strong global architecture brand. He studied philosophy, mathematics, and architecture in Bonn, London and Stuttgart. He completed his PhD at the Institute for Cultural Science, Klagenfurt University. Since 1996 he has been teaching the AA Design Research Laboratory at the Architectural Association in London. In 2010 and 2012 he published the two volumes of *The Autopoiesis of Architecture* (John Wiley & Sons).

Ion Sørvin founded N55 in 1994. He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. He has 18 years of practice within art, architecture and design, including numerous commissions, talks and workshops at universities around the world, and at more than 180 exhibitions in 35 different countries. He has participated in approximately 3 metres of magazines and books.

Bernard Tschumi is an architect based in New York and Paris. First known as a theorist, he exhibited and published *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1976–81) and wrote *Architecture and Disjunction* (MIT Press, 1996), a series of theoretical essays. Major built works include the Parc de la Villette, Paris (1998), the new Acropolis Museum, Athens (2009), Le Fresnoy Center for the Contemporary Arts, Tourcoing (1997), MuséoParc Alésia, Alise-Sainte-Reine (2012) and the Paris Zoo (2014). His most recent book is *Architecture Concepts: Red is Not a Color* (Rizzoli, 2012), a comprehensive collection of his conceptual and built projects. His drawings and models are in the collections of several major museums, including MoMA in New York and the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Robin Wilson teaches history and theory at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, and architectural design at the UWE, Bristol. He completed a PhD at the Bartlett in 2007. His work has appeared in edited anthologies such as *Critical Architecture* (Routledge, 2007), *The Political Unconscious of Architecture* (Ashgate, 2011) and *Camera Constructs* (Ashgate, 2012). He is co-founder, with artist and photographer Nigel Green, of the collaborative art practice Photolanguage.

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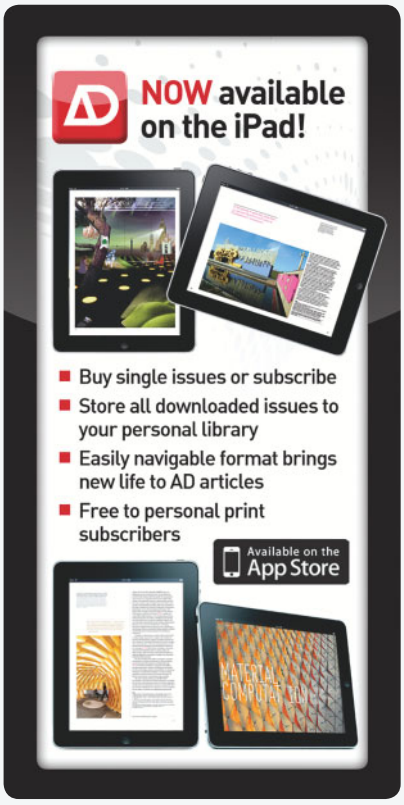

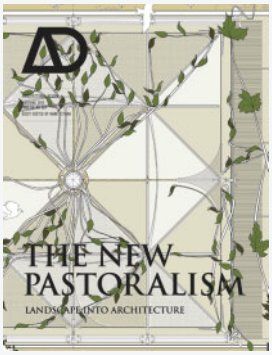

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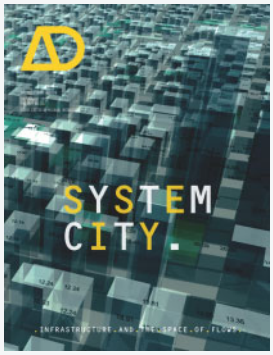

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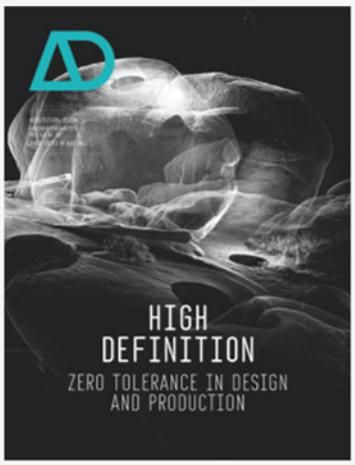

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014 - PROFILE NO 227
HIGH DEFINITION: NEGOTIATING ZERO TOLERENCE
GUEST-EDITED BY BOB SHEIL

A pioneering title, *High Definition* explores the onslaught of new and highly accurate digital metrology tools in large- and small-scale 3D scanning and 3D modelling. Capable of measuring space to an accuracy of less than 1 mm, these tools offer unprecedented precision for the development and interrogation of design before, during and post production. Over the last decade or so, the array of designers' digital tools to propose and make their ideas have evolved significantly, but the absence of high-accuracy, zero-tolerance design production has often remained the missing piece between design and fulfilment. Innovative technologies are thus substantially recalibrating the way that designers operate in the world between the drawn and the made, having the power to transform the architects' role from that of visualiser to one that is intensely involved with the realisation of objects and buildings. *High Definition* will examine the capabilities of advanced technologies in design production through their impact on design theory, practice and greater levels of collaboration between design and manufacturing. It will permeate the entangled world between means and meaning and unravel a new understanding between the representation and production of architectural design.

Contributors include: ScanLAB Projects, Territorial Agency, Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, Skylar Tibbits, Philip Beesley, Mike Webb, Zaha Hadid Architects, Gehry Technologies, Ruairi Glynn.

Volume 84 No 2 ISBN 978 1118 452721

MARCH/APRIL 2014 - PROFILE NO 228
DESIGNING FOR THE THIRD AGE: ARCHITECTURE REDEFINED FOR A GENERATION OF 'ACTIVE AGERS'
GUEST-EDITED BY LORRAINE FARRELLY

A demographic revolution is underway. Across the world, the number of people aged over 65 is increasing: whereas the over 65s in the US make up 13 per cent of the population, this figure will double to 88.5 million by 2050; China's current ratio of 16 elderly people per 100 workers is set to double by 2025, then double again to 61 by 2050. Urban design, housing and other built provision all require rethinking and redeveloping to accommodate this ever-expanding ageing population. The design of our urban centres will also need to be transformed to accommodate a more integrated way of living. Suburbia will need to be reshaped – retrofitting, in order to redefine a new type of interstitial space. Accommodating a range of different age groups is about adapting places and spaces to their needs as much as adapting the city for different cultural groups. Can visionary architectural solutions play a key part in the provision by creating sustainable cities for the changing profile of the population, reducing models of dependency for care and transport and creating opportunities for recreation, leisure and work? This issue of AD reflects on the forthcoming challenges that are to be posed globally in Europe, Australia, North America and Asia, while seeking out innovative responses to the problems, both at a practical and speculative level. The issue is to include international built case studies and competition-winning entries by practitioners and students.

Contributors include: David Birkbeck of Design for Homes, Francesca Birks of Arup Foresight + Innovation, Kathryn Firth of the London Legacy Development Corporation, Baroness Sally Greengross, President of the International Longevity Centre – UK, Jerry Maltz of AIANY Design for Aging, Robert Schmidt of the Adaptable Futures research group at Loughborough University, Sally Stewart of Mackintosh School of Architecture, Mark Taylor of the University of Newcastle and Walter Menteth.

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MAY/JUNE 2014 - PROFILE NO 229
MADE BY ROBOTS: CHALLENGING ARCHITECTURE AT A LARGER SCALE
GUEST-EDITED BY FABIO GRAMAZIO AND MATTHIAS KOHLER

Although highly ambitious and sophisticated, most attempts at using robotic processes in architecture remain the exception; little more than prototypes or even failures at a larger scale. This is because the general approach is either to automate existing manual processes or the complete construction process. However, the real potential of robots remains unexploited if used merely for the execution of highly repetitive mass-fabrication processes: their capability for serial production of non-standard elements as well as for varied construction processes is mostly wasted. In order to scale up and advance the application of robotics, for both prefabrication and on-site construction, there needs to be an understanding of the different capabilities, and these should be considered right from the start of the design and planning process. This issue of AD showcases the findings of the Architecture and Digital Fabrication research module at the ETH Zurich Future Cities Laboratory in Singapore, directed by Fabio Gramazio and Matthias Kohler, which explores the possibilities of robotic construction processes for architecture and their large-scale application to the design and construction of high-rise buildings. Together with other contributors, they also look at the far-reaching transformations starting to occur within automated fabrication: in terms of liberation of labour, entrepreneurship, the changing shape of building sites, in-situ fabrication and, most significantly, design.

Contributors: Thomas Bock, Jelle Feringa, Philippe Morel, Neri Oxman, Antoine Picon and François Roche.
ETH Zurich contributors: Michael Budig, Norman Hack, Willi Lauer and Jason Lim and Raffael Petrovic (Future Cities Laboratory), Volker Helm, Silke Langenberg and Jan Willmann.
Featured entrepreneurs: Greyshed, Machineous, Odico Formwork Robotics, RoboFold and ROB Technologies.

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSGRESSION

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Transgression suggests operating beyond accepted norms and radically reinterpreting practice by pushing at the boundaries of both what architecture is, and what it could or even should be. The current economic crisis and accompanying political/social unrest have exacerbated the difficulty into which architecture has long been sliding: challenged by other professions and a culture of conservatism, architecture is in danger of losing its prized status as one of the pre-eminent visual arts. Transgression opens up new possibilities for practice. It highlights the positive impact that working on the architectural periphery can make on the mainstream, as transgressive practices have the potential to reinvent and reposition the architectural profession: whether they are subverting notions of progress; questioning roles and mechanisms of production; aligning with political activism; pioneering urban interventions; advocating informal or incomplete development; actively destabilising environments or breaking barriers of taste. In this new dispersed and expanded field of operation, the balance of architectural endeavour is shifted from object to process, from service to speculation, and from formal to informal in a way that provides both critical and political impetus to proactively affect change.

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