

P4 Reflection paper
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***“The architect discovers, rather than creates the project,
encounters situations, rather than devises solutions.”***

Michael Hays

In and out of consciousness

Choosing the explore lab studio as a graduation programme implied setting my own theme along with its freedoms and limitations, which allowed me to investigate my fascination about the contrasting conditions of the conscious and unconscious states of mind and their relationship to architecture.

My research evolved around the statement that the decisions on one's actions, which are presumed to be made consciously, are actually made unconsciously before one even knows it. The challenge of my graduation project was to develop a design method which emphasizes this statement, one that derives from logical decisions, into one that relies on a creative process, free of conscious control. The drive of my design process was triggered by the theoretical research around the fascination of the unconscious as a design tool.

My design process mainly evolved around André Breton's definition for Surrealism: “Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express - verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner - the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.”

With this approach, I tried to come close to what Feyerabend suggests as a mean for ‘libidinal’ creativity – the playfulness of infants, who use, combine and play with words, until they grasp their meanings, in contrast to adults, who first need to first understand what the words mean in order to use them.¹

Thus, my preliminary explorations are based on a series of surrealist drawing and painting techniques – uncontrolled, irrational and abstract – which further have informed three-dimensional physical models.

I decided to design a winery, a program that I considered having the intrinsic potential of materializing my initial speculations.

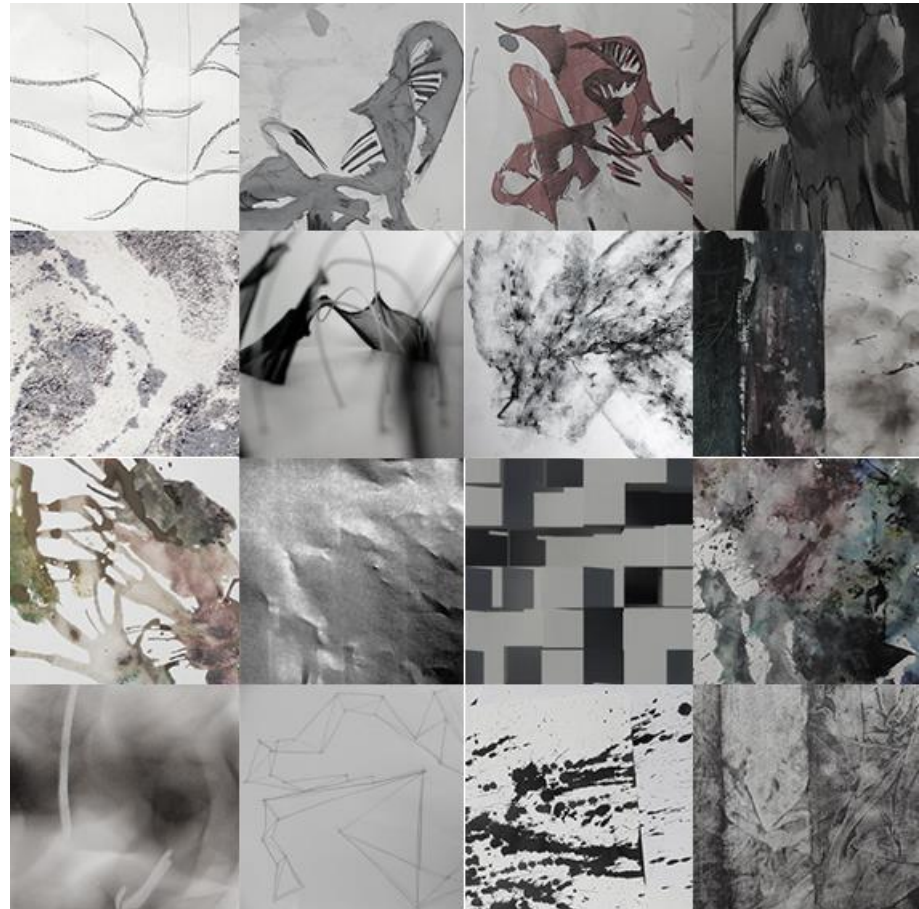
¹ Jyanzi Kong, *Geometry of the Unconscious, An Uncertain Truth in Architecture*, (Singapore: Page One Publishing, 2011), p. 61-73

As a first step I have tried to understand the surrealist techniques, by trying them out one by one, without a specific purpose or an idea of the finality of the experiments, and analyzing their spatial capabilities through further drawings and physical models. Throughout the drawing and painting exercises, the surrealist techniques implied a lack of control. This approach had its advantages in respect to the high proportion of chance and playfulness that marked the products.

After getting a grasp of the techniques, I continued by defining a method to apply my findings to the specific function I have chosen, which brought me to the next level of my explorations.

In order to enable the transition from the abstract drawings and models, towards the architectural design, I introduced a set of constraints into the process, which were derived from the function I chose, but which would not diminish the rate of chance of the product. On the contrary, I tried to introduce factors that would diminish my conscious control while filling the canvas even more, by looking at the drawing board through a mirror and painting with long threads instead of brushes. The constraints I applied according to the function were given by the parameters which I considered most defining for the winery: space and time. Space would vary according to the certain process which would have to be housed within a certain volume, while the unwinding of time would determine the development of the raw material into the finite product, the wine.

Consequently, I have introduced constraints of time for drawing and I have limited the space on the canvas, according to the functional characteristics of the winery. The products of this phase were one large painting, created with a series of thread strokes, which would become the main body of the design and a series of fragmented drawings, each corresponding to the certain



function of the winery and being limited by its temporal and spatial constraints.

By tracing, abstracting and merging these preliminary results, a first set of three dimensional speculation emerged. In respect to the surrealist process of creation, these raw products were used to develop the architectural design. How was the information of these products translated in my mind? How do I perceive it and what does it suggest to me? The brain has the uncontrolled tendency to find known patterns, shapes of objects or faces in random, chaotic agglomerations, and this was also a principle on which the surrealist creation relied. The interpretation of the artwork created by chance driven means was either entirely left to the viewer's mind or used as a base for further explorations by the artist, in which case his mind and imagination would dictate how it would be further used. This would be the case for my project as well.

Previous experiences, things I have watched consciously or seen without noticing would determine how I would interpret my drawings, what kind of spatiality I would see in them, what kind of object, structure, architecture. The drawings were translated into physical models, which in turn informed new drawings and again new models, whether they were doodles, hand drawings, tracings or actual CAD drawings, physical or digital models. Eventually, by leading the process through this series of drawings and models, which were also influenced by chance and my own perceptions, a three dimensional object with architectural potential emerged.

As the building started to come about and the realm of physical laws came into play, conscious decisions found, to a certain extent, their way into the designing process, yet the choice of spatial settings, structures, facades, materials, etc. were continuously drawn back to the drawings and models that



emerged during the process, even if it did not happen in a strict, coherent way.

As William James points out, there is so much one virtually knows, before one actually knows it. Decision making is not a matter of our conscious thought and weighing arguments - as Michael Hays suggests, we discover the decision, rather than consciously making it. The illusion of being in complete conscious control is, as Katherine Hayles suggests, 'merely the story consciousness tells itself to explain results that actually come about through chaotic dynamics and emergent structures'². The goal of my project was to explore these ideas, explore to what extent irrational decisions can lead to the design of an architectural project and to define a process that would enable and enhance this method of design, but to also question how this method affects the architecture, as the result might not carry the most practical, logical or functional characteristics.

Throughout the process of this project, I realized that the theme I proposed at the beginning of my project did not actually need a specific function or location and that it was more an exploration of the design method than of the function and its relation to a certain context. And although at the beginning I did not completely understand the direction of my project, in the process, my theoretical research was proving itself to me through all the drawing and modelling experiments and later the design, eventually leading me to agree with the here cited M. Hays, K. Hayles, Feyerabend or A. Breton and to conclude myself, that we are not as in conscious control of our actions or (design) decisions as we might think, that we "discover, rather than create the project".



² Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 288

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With the Gypsy Girls (fragment)

Mircea Eliade

Slowly, stepping on his tiptoes, as if he wanted to surprise them, he sneaked behind the partition. It seemed like he entered another room, which seemed to extend into a tortuous corridor. It was a curiously built room with a low and irregular ceiling, with lightly undulating walls, which would disappear and reappear in the dark. Gavrilescu made a few random steps, and then he stopped to listen. It seemed like just in that moment he heard some rustling and some fast steps passing on the carpet, next to him.

'Where are you?' he shouted.

He listened to his echo, trying to look through the darkness. He thought he saw all three of them in one corner of the corridor so he started going towards it, fumbling with his arms in front of him. But after some time, he realized he went in the wrong direction, as he discovered the corridor turning left a few meters away, so he stopped again.

'It's useless to hide, I will find you anyway!' he shouted. 'You'd better show yourself!...'

Then he started eavesdropping tensely, staring into the corridor. He was not hearing anything anymore. But it seemed to him that it was getting warm, so he decided to wait for them while playing the piano. He precisely remembered the path which he came on and knew he did not make more than twenty-thirty steps. He reached his arms out again and went on slowly, carefully. But a few steps later he suddenly touched a partition with his hands and stepped back frightened. He knew that the partition was not there a few minutes before.

'What got into you?' He shouted. 'Leave me alone!...'

He thought he heard some laughter and rustling again and plucked up courage.

'You might think I'm afraid, he started after a short break, trying to fake a good mood. Allow me, allow me!...' he added in a hurry, as if he expected to be interrupted. 'If I accepted to play hide and seek with you, I did it because I pitied you. This is the truth; I pitied you. I saw you from the beginning as innocent girls, locked up here, in a brothel, at the Gypsies and said to myself: Gavrilescu, these girls want to play a prank on you. Pretend you are falling for it. Let them believe that you are not able to tell, which one of them the gypsy girl is. That's the game... That's the game!' He shouted as loud as he could. 'And now, that we played enough, come out.'

He listened smiling, with his right hand resting on the partition, and again he heard running steps in the darkness, very close to him. He suddenly turned around and reached out with his hands.

'Let's see which one of you it is', he said. 'Let's see who I caught. Did I catch the gypsy?'

But after he turned around many times, reaching out with his arms, he stopped to listen. This time, not even the smallest sound reached him. 'It does not matter', he said as if the girls were just a few steps away from him, hidden in the darkness. 'We'll wait a bit longer. I see you do not know who you are dealing with. Later you will be sorry. I could have taught you to play the piano. You would have enriched your musical culture. I would have explained Schumann's Lieder. How beautiful they are!' he exclaimed enthusiastically. 'What divine music!'

He felt the warmth again, more intense than ever, and began to wipe his cheek with the sleeve of his tunica. Then he started to walk left, discouraged, constantly fumbling the partition, stopping from time to time, eavesdropping and walking again, stepping faster.

'Who made me putting up with some girls?' He burst suddenly, feeling furious. 'Excuse me! I was being gentle saying <girls>. You are something else. You know exactly what you are. You are gypsies. Without culture. Alliterates. Which one of you knows where Arabia is? Which one of you heard about Colonel Lawrence?'

It seemed like the partition was endless and the more he walked, the more unbearable the warmth got. He took off his tunica and after he wiped his face and neck furiously, he laid it on his naked shoulder, like a towel, and started fumbling again with his arms in order to find the partition. This time, he met a smooth and cool wall and laid on it, graveling along it. Sometime later, he realized he lost his tunica and because he was always transpiring, he stopped, took off his trousers and started to wipe his face and his whole body with it. In that moment it seemed like something touched him on the shoulder. With a short shout he jumped on the side.

'Let me go!' he shouted. 'I told you to let me go!...' Again someone, something, a being or an object, impossible to distinguish, touched his face, his shoulders and then he started to defend himself, spinning his trousers above his head. It was hotter and hotter; he felt the beads of sweat running over his cheeks and breathe heavily. In a sudden pull, his trousers slipped from his hands and disappeared somewhere, far, in the dark. Gavrilescu remained with his arm raised for one moment, squeezing his fist, as if he hoped to find that he was wrong and that the trousers were still in his power. He suddenly felt naked and went down on his lower legs, propping his hands on the ground as if he was ready to take off running. He started going forward, fumbling the carpet around him with his palms, hoping he could find his trousers. From time to time he found things hard to identify, some seeming like small boxes at the beginning, but turning out to be huge pumpkins covered in shawls after a more thorough palpation; others that seemed pillows or divan blankets in the beginning, were becoming balls after a more precise inspection; or old umbrellas filled with bran or laundry baskets filled with magazines; but he was not getting to the point of deciding what they could be, as he constantly discovered other things to fumble in

front of him. Sometimes he encountered big pieces of furniture and he avoided them carefully, being afraid not to overthrow them, since he could not tell their shapes.

He was not able to tell for how long he was wandering like that, on his knees or crawling on his waist. He gave up the hope to find his trousers. What upset him the most was the warmth. It was as if he walked in the attic of a house covered in metal sheets in an afternoon of blazing heat. He felt the closed air in his ears and the objects becoming warmer and warmer. His body was soaked and he had to stop at times to rest. In those moments, he stretched his legs and arms as much as he could, pressing his cheek against the carpet, breathing deeply and heavily.

Once he thought he fell asleep and an unexpected breeze woke him up, as if a window was opened somewhere, letting the chills of the night enter. But he quickly understood that it was something else, something that did not resemble anything known, and froze for a moment, feeling the cold sweat on his shoulders. He could not remember what happened after that. He got scared by his own shout and woke up to realize he was running crazy in the darkness, hitting the partition, throwing over mirrors and various other small objects on the carpet, often slipping and falling, but immediately rising up to run off again. He then surprised himself jumping over boxes, avoiding the mirrors and partitions and when he realized he got into an area of semi-darkness, in which he started to distinguish the contours, it seemed that in the back of the corridor, an unusually high placed window was opening, through which the light of the summer dawn was shimmering. When he entered the corridor, the heat became insufferable. He had to stop, to take a breath and with the back of his palm he was wiping his sweat off his forehead, his cheeks. He heard his heart beating, ready to explode.

Before arriving in front of the window, he stopped again, frightened. Voices and laughter and noise were reaching him, chairs dragged across the floor, as if a whole group rose from the table and headed towards him. In that moment he saw himself naked, skinnier than he knew himself, with bones showing through his skin, yet his stomach was bloated and low, as he had never seen it before. He had no time to run back anymore. He randomly grabbed a drape and started pulling. He felt that the drape was ready to give in and, pushing his feet against the wall, he bundled all his weight into his back. But in that moment something unexpected happened: he started to feel the drape pulling him towards it with growing strength, so that in a few instants he felt himself against the wall, and even though he tried to let the drape go of his hands, he could not, so he found himself very soon wrapped and squeezed from all sides, as if he was tied and pulled into a sack. It was again dark and very hot and Gavrilescu figured that he will not be able to resist much longer and that he will suffocate. He tried to scream, but his throat was dry and ligneous and the sounds seemed drawn into the felt.

The fragment originates from a fantastic short novel by Mircea Eliade, called “With the Gypsy Girls”. The novel is an allegory of the transition to death, seen as a modality to enter the sacred. It depicts the main character, Gavrilescu, on the journey that would initiate him into his death. The fragment is part of his purgatory experience, which begins in a brothel, towards which he is attracted because it is a very hot summer day and the courtyard of the brothel is being kept cool by the shades of big walnut trees. At the entrance, Gavrilescu meets an old gypsy who collects the entrance fee. He pays and is set up with three girls, a Gypsy, a Jew and a Greek, being told that he will be only rewarded if he guesses which of them the gypsy girl is. Gavrilescu fails to discover the gypsy girl and all the girls disappear, compelling Gavrilescu to look for them. In the attempt to find the girls, he goes through an intense shift through a labyrinth like space, forced to find his way out being deprived of his vision. Everything gets out of his hands, it is hot and dark, Gavrilescu loses his clothes, space is constantly changing and shifting its configuration and he becomes completely disoriented, running and crawling through the darkness, trying to hold on to the walls or carpets, stumbling upon things he cannot identify. Finally, when he arrives into semi-darkness, he tries to climb up some curtains in order to get out through an open window placed utterly high on the corridor wall. In his effort to escape, Gavrilescu gets squeezed into the curtain and faints, waking up next to the old Gypsy. After a short talk with the old woman, he leaves the brothel to slowly find out that he actually died. The novel ends with him and his long lost love approaching the woods in a carriage driven by an undertaker.

The story which happens around Gavrilescu`s purgatory experience is for the aim of this paper not further relevant. The reason why I started with the particular episode of the purification process is that I found it fascinating because of the spatial setup and Gavrilescu`s experience within it; even if it is an extreme and fictional situation, it shows the relationship between space and user under certain conditions. The deprivation of vision repulses Gavrilescu from the new discovered space and he decides to turn back at first. But the space tricks him and shifts the configuration he knows. He loses his orientation, not only because he is not able to see, but because the elements that constitute the space lose their contours. He is constantly confused in the dark space and heat and strange sounds add to his confusion. He loses the sense of time and finds himself running or crawling through the darkness, stumbling upon objects, fumbling them, but not being able to classify them by touch, because of the fast unrolling of their discovery. The objects which he senses to be big, he tries to avoid as much as possible, afraid not to overturn them. He does not even realise that at one point, he gets into a place with dim light, where he unconsciously recognizes the objects and starts avoiding them. He is not even questioning the position of the window or the strange curtains; his only aim is to escape.

The fragment shows how the deprivation of vision intensifies our experience of space: we start actually exploring things and spaces that would have perhaps remained unnoticed in the light and

start questioning the nature of our environment. We are not able to recognize depth anymore, because the boundaries of space blur, if not, disappear. Therefore, the objects and spaces “cease to be objects, becoming what they always were, in the beginning and in parallel: fluctuations. Visual runs. Experiential transition zones.”¹

Moreover, we can read from the fragment how our actions so often rely on the unconscious. Gavrilescu finds himself running like crazy through the dark space. Without him being aware of it, his body performs an action, which shows how the decision to perform had been made before arriving at his consciousness.

Last, but not least, and in no way suggesting that these are the only conclusions that can be drawn from the text, the fragment beautifully shows, how the relation between subject and object comes even before those very things it relates. Gavrilescu is running through the space in the darkness, stumbling upon objects, walls, falling and getting up again, because he is not able to detect contours, depth or distances. But then he suddenly starts jumping over objects, start avoiding them, and stops stumbling or falling, before he eventually realises, that he is able to see them and that he stepped into a dim lit zone, where he is able to recognize things. His moving through space, creating a relation to his environment happens before he perceives himself and the objects and his reaction towards the objects or the effect the objects have on him and vice versa.

This essay aims to explore the role and effect of our unconscious and irrationality within the discovery, the perception and the interpretation of our environment, mainly our built environment; to investigate the influence of the unconscious in the emergence of architecture.

That the unconscious has a major influence on our thoughts and actions has been widely discussed in the field of psychoanalysis and not only. It determines our relations to other objects and often lets us perform actions we are not aware and in control of. Literary critic in the fields of literature and science, Katherline Hayles draws attention to the relationship between embodiment, cognition and subjectivity and to the embodied unconscious of “bodily practices” that have become habitual actions and movements of which we are not consciously aware anymore, which display a strong aversion to conscious change, “as if the knowledge of how to perform the actions resided in ones` finger or physical mobility rather than in one`s mind”² and are able to “define de boundaries within which conscious thought takes place.”³ By now, experiments have proven that decisions regarding human actions are made even before they had arrived at the conscious mind and, moreover, that the sensory data that was arriving at

¹ Brian Massumi, Sensing the Virtual, *Hypersurface Architecture, Architectural Design* 133, vol. 68, no. 5/6 (1998), p. 30

² Michael Sacasas, The Internet, the Body, and Unconscious Dimensions of Thought, Part II, 2011: The Frailest Thing, <http://thefrailestthing.com/2011/09/13/the-internet-the-body-and-unconscious-dimensions-of-thought-part-ii/>

³ Ibid.

consciousness was already highly processed, so that much of it was already interpreted before the conscious mind was even aware of it. In the paper “Computing the human”, Hayles refers to the experiments of Benjamin Libet, a pioneering scientist in the field of human consciousness, who observed that when the subjects of his experiments were asked about the moment they were aware of the urge to act on certain commands, the action was already initiated by the brain. In response to that fact Hayles presents the answer of Rodney Brooks, professor of robotics and highly influential researcher in the field of artificial intelligence, the research of which she pursues in her paper. Brooks states that the results of those experiments are the consequence of the conscious mind operating only from a partial view of the world, exemplifying with the fact that the human eye has a blind spot in its visual field of which humans are not aware either.⁴ The blind spot Brooks is talking about is the head of the optical nerve, which is located on the sheet of photoreceptors in the human eye. The light from the surrounding environment of the eye is collected in its exterior part and falls on the named sheet of photoreceptors which are excited by light. Here the image of the surrounding environment is reproduced and carried further to the brain through the optic nerve, the head of which is located, as mentioned, on that sheet of photoreceptors. This spot does not contain any photoreceptors, which means there is no image projected here to submit to the brain; therefore one should have a blind spot in their vision. But one is not aware of it, because the brain interpolates that spot with images of its surrounding environment, so one does not actually visualize the blind spot of the photoreceptor sheet. Meaning, that the brain in a way ‘makes up’ a part of what is seen, without one realising it.⁵ But that should not be the only example of unawareness of the human.

Hayles often discusses human nature in relation to objects, usually computers or robots, and underlines hereby the fact, that human nature and evolution have been much influenced by the construction of artefacts and living spaces which coevolved: “a two-cycle phenomenon has been at work: humans create objects, which in turn help to shape humans”⁶. The creation of intelligent machines might be shaped according to human characteristics, but they also shaped and influenced human characteristics in return, as it is the case not just with the creation of those intelligent machines. We might have an influence on our environment, but our environment influences us as much. A suitable example is an experiment with a robot, part of the research of Brooks, called Kismet, that was designed with the purpose to engage in human interaction, specifically to encourage emotional responses from humans. The robot had movable eyebrows, eyeballs resembling the human eye, the ability to move its head in three different axes and, to detect humans and toys, to put prosody in its voice and to recognize prosody in human voices. Subjects, who were engaged in the interaction with Kismet, without knowing how it actually functions, employed in conversations with it, despite the fact that he would not answer with words, but just nonsense syllables, and reacted within the sequence of behaviours he was

⁴ Katherine Hayles, *Computing the Human*, *Theory, Culture & Society*, no. 22 (2005), p.135

⁵ Serendip, *Seeing more than your eye does*, <http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/bb/blindspot1.html>

⁶ Katherine Hayles, *Computing the Human*, p. 132

programmed in. But Kismet's 'actions' were given much more meaning that they indeed had, so that the attributes assigned to it by humans (activities, thoughts, feelings) were by far exceeding its actual capacities: "Perhaps it's not the robot understanding us, but us watching and understanding Kismet."⁷

We might acknowledge that, as in the case of the robot Kismet, objects are in our perception rather what we unconsciously designate them to be than what they actually are, and possess the affordances we attribute to them. In the words of Anaïs Nin: "We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are." That being the consequence of the fact, that every relation, action or reaction is the inevitable consequence of a different assemblage, as are we, therefore, as is our view upon things. We are not only the ones that create something but placed in the middle of the things that are shaping us.

In the idea that the unconscious influences much of our actions, that we make decisions before we are aware of them and that we virtually know so much before we actually know it, I would like to look at architecture with regard to its emergence from the unconscious.

As a way of negotiating the real, architecture is not only an investment of ideologies by its creator or user, but as well standing in its own right, through its effect and affect.⁸ Michael Hays examines architecture's desire as constituted by its "big Other", by its "laws and language, its original oneness: desire as the architectural unconscious"⁹, according to the Lacanian model, where the "object-in-itself" becomes an "object-different-from-itself", becoming Symbolic.¹⁰ "The object becomes a medium for a Real that does not simply reproduce, but necessarily both reveals and conceals, manifests and represses."¹¹ Hays expands on architecture's desire by discussing the architects of the late avant-garde, who were still guiding themselves by philosophical principles and who raised the question of where the symbolic, become architecture, comes from and what delegates its existence as architecture.¹²

Architecture, the subject of desire, as Hays refers to it, does not emerge in an intentional act, "it is the effect of what is repressed"¹³. By the repression, Hays refers to Lacan's L-Schema¹⁴ through which he filters architecture, according to which it can be noted, that the vector of the unconscious is absorbed by the image-screen, blocking its representation and blocking it to fully arrive back at the subject. Hays further argues that "architecture results from a practice of a very

⁷ plasticpals1, 2011: Kismet (MIT A.I. Lab), minute 02:00, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KRZX5KL4fA>

⁸ Michael Hays, *Architecture's Desire. Reading the Late Avant-Garde*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), p. 12

⁹ Ibid., p. 16

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 13

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid., p. 147

¹⁴ Scheme on the cover

specific and precise kind”¹⁵, the condition enabling it being anticipate any architectural project. The architect does not conceive the materials he works with In order to achieve the design, but those materials, operations and procedures have already a specific character, creating conditions and potentials beforehand. Therefore, “architectural decisions are already determined by the discourse itself: the architect neither invents, nor chooses them. The architect discovers rather than creates the project, encounters situations rather than devises solutions”¹⁶. So there is just the illusion of choice and nothing to be added to the autonomous architectural system and nothing to be done about it except the continuance, which will augment experience and understanding, a system called by Hays “the City”.¹⁷

“Thus the City is a determinant of architecture; or, put another way, architecture as the subject of desire is a City effect. At the same time, however, there is the haunting resonance that the whole thing could have been set up differently, that the entire architectural Symbolic and its authority are a fragile artifice. But rather than free, the practice of architecture from its autonomy, this arbitrariness further enforces the constraints of autonomy through the recognition that its necessity is not derived from the Real but rather an elaborate fiction added to it, a negation that gives rise to a chain of metonymic associations, libidinal substitutions, and empty intervals. According to this account the very making of architecture is a spacing out of the architectural Symbolic that cannot be concluded or sublated, only rehearsed endlessly unto death. Architecture must constantly be reiterated, repeated as architecture, constructed as subject of desire, which, on a trajectory through the architectural Imaginary, returns to the symbolic City, which is also architecture’s record, the storehouse where the endless relations are inventoried. Then through a kind of Nachträglichkeit, that repetition is crossed in the opposite direction by the vector of the architectural unconscious, the discourse of the Other. Thus is the City the beginning and end of both trajectories.”

“A piece of architecture is not ‘architectural’ because seduces, or because it fulfils some utilitarian function, but because it sets in motion the operations of seduction and the unconscious”¹⁸, states Tschumi. That architecture is not just about the built object, but also about experiences and concepts is clear. But Tschumi also underlined, that architecture corresponds to a certain kind of imagination, sensing, imaging and conceptualizing merging into the space of representation in various ways and expressions, architecture becoming an impulse that seeks and finds its representation, its sensual expression and libidinal investment, in different media not necessarily related to that of buildings.¹⁹

In Geometry of the Unconscious, Jyanzi Kong argues about the lack of just that ‘libido’ driven architecture in the East Indies in the time of decolonization. The consciousness of the

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 147

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 148

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 148

¹⁸ Bernard Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), p. 96

¹⁹ Michael Hays, Architecture’s desire, p. 136

archipelago has been, he says, concussed and disrupted by the mimetic representation of the European colonizer. But even after decolonization and denying the colonial influence, when it was expected that the “man of the archipelago”²⁰ would break away from the colonial references, the tendency seemed to be the exploitation of the established status quo and not its questioning, remaining loyal to an invisible colonial apparatus, the guidelines for modernity of which he imposes upon itself. Kong asks “Must there not be more than seven ways of being modern?”²¹ Kong does not suggest to deny the influences of the colonization and to return to what has been before, but to question the past, to use modernity to challenge it, to mediate between past and future and “include the Other to create our own version of modernity: an uncertain truth in architecture, of which the past is fermented with the present to produce a presence for the future”²².

“It is this dialectical and poetic urge to fulfil cultural functioning with self that may give birth to new”²³, Kong suggest, by dialectical and poetic urge meaning the collision of ideas in form of metaphors, analogies or allegories. He is not claiming a gradual approach to the truth, but the creation of alternatives, which might be incompatible, but which will push each other to exceed themselves and to develop the consciousness. In the process of creation, Kong, citing Levinas, advocates the awareness to the fact that “To exist does not mean the same thing in every region”, so the fact that every situation is an assemblage means that even existence has a different value in different regions or in different circumstances. Therefore “‘Copernican’ and other ‘rational’ views exist today only because reason was overruled at some time in their past. The opposite is also true: witchcraft and other ‘irrational’ views have ceased to be influential only because reason was overruled at some time in their past.”²⁴

In the urge to give in to the ‘libidinal’ creation, Kong cites Feyerabend, who proposes the possibility of following the model of infants, who use, combine and play with words until they get a grasp of their meaning, unlike adults, who first have an idea or a problem and then act on it. There should be no reason why adults could not follow the same system of the playful activity could lead to the final act of understanding and to empirical success, through the preconditions of the unreasonable, nonsensical, unmethodical foreplay. Through the clash between the edge that obeys and conforms to exterior infusions and the edge that is blank and can assume any contour, the necessary alternatives could emerge.²⁵

²⁰ Jyanzi Kong, *Geometry of the Unconscious, An Uncertain Truth in Architecture*, (Singapore: Page One Publishing, 2011), p.18

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 23

²² *Ibid*, p. 37

²³ *Ibid*, p. 44

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 54

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 61-73

The product of the explorations is in the end the complexities of chance, atmospheres, situations and circumstances merging into the object of architecture, a “Geometry of the Unconscious: a final existence addressed more to our sensibility rather than just our ration”²⁶. To question the validity of the end product is, according to Kong, redundant, because what will have been achieved is “only a by-product of an accumulated existential phenomenology which centers upon idiomorphic functioning. It includes transliterations of bipolar subjective-objective”²⁷ It will be the accumulation of processes, metamorphoses, choices, gained knowledge, intuition and experience that will eventually lead to the making of ““real” architecture and context”²⁸.

There is so much we virtually know before we actually know it – if not through our own perception, we should be convinced by this at the latest through scientific experiments which demonstrate this, for instance those mentioned above. In terms of creativity and producing new, the conscious mind might just hold us back. The *new* is discovered, as Hays suggests, and not consciously created. The illusion of being in conscious control would denote the ignorance of the world as an assemblage. In Hayles words: “Mastery through the exercise of autonomous will is merely the story consciousness tells itself to explain results that actually come about through chaotic dynamics and emergent structures...”²⁹

²⁶ Ibid., p. 83

²⁷ Ibid., p. 95

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999) , p. 288

**‘Sensuality has been known to overcome
even the most rational of buildings.’**

Bernard Tschumi

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COVER IMAGE

Jaques Lacan, L-Schema