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Means to a beginning

Pimlott, Mark

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Mark Pimlott

Means to a beginning



MEANS TO A BEGINNING

Dissertation

for the purposes of obtaining the degree of doctor
at Delft University of Technology
by the authority of the Rector Magnificus Prof. Dr. T. H. J. J. van der Hagen
Chair of the Board for Doctorates
on Thursday 25 September at 3 o'clock

by

Mark William PIMLOTT

This dissertation has been approved by the promotors

Mark Pimlott

Means to a beginning

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To begin



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Mark Pimlott, *Tbilisi GE 2004*.

1 The subject

How does one begin? Or more precisely, how does the architect begin? This question is likely either too vague or too ordinary to contemplate, yet it has been significant enough to trouble those involved in acts of creation, from the Abstract Expressionist painter¹ to God, or at least the writers of Genesis. It is a question I first posed to my own architecture students at the Architectural Association in London in 1988, asking them to imagine a situation in which there was nothing save themselves and the world as it appeared to them. Therein lay the key: how does one approach that world without the resources one might draw upon from within? It is a confrontation between the truly unknown—despite any measure of familiarity—with what one knows and has experienced, which itself is littered with lacunae.

The object of this dissertation is not the discovery of the unknown, but to offer means towards beginnings, and attitudes that the architect can assume in making work in the world. Anyone familiar with architectural practice will acknowledge the ever-expanding range of questions that demand attention and answers to move towards the understanding, development, and realisation of the architectural work.

Unlike the painter faced with a blank canvas, the architect is faced with a situation, a condition that exists, one with its own attributes, character, and past. That condition, since it is very unlikely to be untouched by human work upon it, has a distinct if variable story, narrative, or aggregation of ideas embedded in its features; those same features embody its ideas. The conditions the architect confronts are constructs, and the architect is, like the artefacts that constitute that condition, a subject of that—or another—condition, and so formed by it. The architect, therefore, must understand themselves as a subject that has been informed and formed by the conditions in which they were raised and the language(s) they were immersed in, and become conscious of themselves and the value systems they rely upon as being constructs. These can be wielded uncritically, and projected upon any given situation, or another approach can be taken that is both reflective and observant.

To do something, the architect can act in any variety of ways, but two directions stand out, and characterise two kinds of architect. One resorts to projection or the projective impulse, which does not depend upon the condition as confronted. Varying degrees of subtlety may attend to that impulse, but the work is always a projection *over* a given situation. The projective aspect of the architectural act is almost impossible to evade; the very tools the architect uses and the conception of the work, are by their nature projections in the service of something that does not yet exist. Nevertheless, I am resistant to the path that champions the principle of projection, and value another attitude which involves drawing very close to the nature of the situations that the architect encounters, encounters with something *other*.

Ideally, the architect would be able to act based on having insights into the nature of the conditions they were working with and within, and how their work would affect the situations in which their work was working. The architect would be able to interpret the appearances of those conditions in which their work was situated.

→ 0.01

How does one imagine a beginning? How does one begin? How does one begin the (architectural) project? What is there, if it is not really ‘nothing’, and one acknowledges that a beginning is one’s own beginning? What attitudes are brought to address the conditions one encounters, beyond those that are pragmatic, rational, functional, or instrumental? What is to be done with what one brings to the beginning: that which is known, the instinctive, the learned, the predetermined, the projected? Acknowledging that it is well-nigh impossible to abandon what one knows, and what one brings to an encounter with conditions, with something ‘other’, how might one begin, or begin to begin? These are questions that apply as much to the student of architecture as the established architect. They are questions that may apply furthermore to the planner, the landscape architect, the makers of policy, the photographer, the artist, and the citizen. The questions have little to do with notions of inspiration or the projection of pre-determined courses of action, and more to do with accepting and coming to meet pre-existing conditions and their complexities. The answers come from some understanding of what those conditions are, and what they embody. Means towards those answers in the following chapters are proposed so that the architect should come to understand how those conditions one comes upon, observes, meets and addresses are obliged to be seen, read, and interpreted. Methods of ‘listening’ are drawn from material cultural analysis, allowing one to draw closer to both object and subject. Such analyses assume the significance of language, of signs, of representation, of the shaping and presentation of appearances. They demand inquiry into the nature of appearances themselves. The means proposed are neither scientific nor detached. These means involve empathy, and attention, even towards the inanimate artefact that is the architectural object, an artefact that is, inevitably, situated amongst other artefacts, and situated within culture and its ideas. Models for the problematics of appearances, the readings of these appearances, and possible engagements with those appearances, towards the object of the beginning of the architectural project, are proposed through analyses of other specific paradigms and practices, notably within photography, and the visual arts.

The content of the chapters that follow is developed from my previous studies on territory and the interior, the ‘condition of interior’, and the public interior, in the books *Without and within: essays on territory and the interior* (2007), *In passing: photographs* (2010), *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (2016), and *A walk from here to an other* (2024); and from essays, interviews, and texts prepared for lectures, seminars, and symposia over several years. Insights that have arisen from my own inter-disciplinary practice, encompassing art, public art, photography, and design form an additional foundation for this dissertation.

2 The form of the work and its questions

The focus of the dissertation is the human subject who looks, who feels, who is shaped by their environment, who confronts it, who meets it and all its artefacts. It is a focus that arises from an artistic practice—my own—and the obligation of artistic practice

to form an individualised position and speak of that position through specific forms of exposure: the picture, the installation, the film, the artefact, the place, the text.

Questions that apply to artistic practice pertain even more so to the practice of architecture, or more precisely, to the attitude the architect assumes in preparing to address the world, its situations and contexts, for others. These questions, developed over time, have concentrated on three major areas: conditions; experience; and ‘listening’. These areas inform the main structure of my thesis, which promotes a synthesis of these considerations.

The chapters through which the argument of the dissertation unfolds assume the form of essays, whose origins are in lectures given to students of architecture, conferences, and symposia, and published articles. In this introduction, I have used the essay ‘Theory embedded and embodied’, from *Villard Journal*;² in chapter 1, I have drawn upon ‘Interiority and the Condition of Interior’, from *Interiority*³; and ‘Montréal: the Ville intérieure as Prototype for the Continuous Interior’, from *Underground Cities*.⁴

The first section of this dissertation—*Conditions*—consists of three chapters. The first, ‘Territories, interiors, subjectivities’, concerns questions of environments germane to urbanisation and its processes, and those conditions’ effects on the subject and subjectivity, and on ideas that become embedded in and embodied by the experiencing subject, a subject who may become an author, an artist, an architect. The second chapter, ‘Images, utterances, appearances’, pursues questions regarding the representation of ideas in artefacts, the image as construct and the matter of appearances. There are questions concerning imagery held within artefacts, and how one might come to know them through methods of analysis in the field of material culture. Practices in the visual arts and photography are helpful in that their imagery invites critical reading and analysis, from which the architect can learn. The distinct appearances of artefacts in the constructed environment are characterised as utterances, incomplete, yet meaningful. In the third chapter, ‘Contexts’, the issue of context is addressed at some distance from prevailing notions and discourse. If one is to acknowledge conditions as environments in which there are accumulations of artefacts, meaningful constructs, appearances and utterances, then the issue of context can be addressed more profoundly, and can be directed towards significance, learning from the example of T S Eliot’s thoughts about tradition and the literary canon. Models of different approaches to addressing conditions that both render them visible and affect their perception conclude the chapter.

In my view, the constructed environment is not simply an agglomeration of material and effects, but an accumulation of ideas about the order of human organisation and power. It was and remains important for the architect to recognise this in the forms of the city as they appear to them. In ‘Territories, interiors, subjectivities’, it was important, furthermore, to acknowledge that the urbanised environment transforms territories into interiors both ideological and experiential—creating conditions of interior—in which subjects are formed, and subjectivities are created. In such environments that tend toward the condition of interior, imagery and images play central roles. In this chapter, I ask, how does the constructed environment, in shaping subjects, make itself available for being ‘re-imagined’?

In 'Images, appearances, utterances', I acknowledge that images, too, are constructs, particular to culture and language, and are created to communicate: to speak, to be read, to be interpreted, and incorporated. Artefacts communicate their ideas, their messages, and to do so, they make their appearances, their ideas are given form. As representations of ideas—whether they are banal objects, functioning equipment, pavements, or buildings—artefacts are utterances that speak of those ideas, with varying degrees of coherence. The constructed environment is full of these utterances, forming relations with each other, creating scenes and contexts. In this chapter, I ask, how might one be able to read the appearances of that environment as fiction?

In 'Contexts', as one approaches a constructed environment, one made of the considered or ill-considered gathering of artefacts, the architect is confronted with the possibility of extending the language of that construct, of deciphering its specific nature, of changing that nature, of enhancing its language. However, this is only achieved by learning that language. How might the architect add to the poetry of this place?

The second section, *Experience*, addresses, through its single chapter, 'The Complexity of Experience', questions of perception and experience; of what it is that one sees when one is looking at something. An expression of doubt about the privileged position of phenomenology is met by the introduction of material culture and the problem of language, set in the gap between utterance and intention, and between signifier and signified. The indeterminate, the difficult, that which is not expressed, the gap or lack between intention and expression, between representation and the real, the matter of intuition, the presence of representation, are all reflected upon as aspects of experience that add complexity and additional obligations upon the experiencing subject, enriching and complicating the consideration of both the architectural artefact and its world. Here, representation is discussed as a significant threshold to the real. Acknowledging its presence in the constructed environment provides the opportunity to see and occupy its narratives, fictions and possible realities. Exemplars are drawn from both the visual arts and architecture.

In 'The complexity of experience', the position of the experiencing subject, the self, is shown to have been called into question by both Sartre and Lacan, so the integrity of an experience centred on the self, and feeling, seems inadequate. The object of experience central to phenomenological reading—man-made, rather than natural—is similarly de-centred: it is not just a primordial 'thing', but an artefact of language, culture, and the register of thoughts, intentions, and projections of others. This leaves the perception of artefacts, such as architecture, to be tentative, uncertain, and, positively, difficult. The perceiving subject is influenced by their situation and experience in culture and relation to others, while the object of their attention is both itself and a vessel for various impulses. The perceiving subject's sensitivity to this leads to the possibility of getting closer to the nature of the object of experience. Representation is drawn in not because of its unreliability, but for what it might hold; that an awareness of its role may provide access to the real. The question that both begins this consideration and arises from it is, what is it to fully 'feel' and 'sense' the constructed environment and its artefacts?

The third section—*Listening*—concerns the matter of approaching the other, whether condition, site or subject, and means towards a meeting, demonstrated or exemplified in practices in photography, art, and architecture. The first of its two chapters, 'The matter of attention' draws upon topographic and 'objective' photographic practices of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to demonstrate the dimensions of approaches that welcome the appearance of the other, as analogies of the conditions and situations faced by the architect in beginning the architectural work. The second, and the last chapter of the dissertation, 'The necessity of interpretation', concerns the task of the architect in reading and interpreting those conditions presented to them, acknowledging the investment of ideas that are embedded in them. Examples are drawn from my own practice in architecture, art, and art for places, which embody the concerns developed throughout the dissertation regarding attention to conditions, subjectivities, appearances, imagery, representation, and registers of the other in the constructed environment. The question that pertains to this section is, how can one draw close enough to the world of others and what have they made?

In 'The matter of attention', a meeting with the artefact, the constructed environment, and the other involves allowing these 'others' to appear as themselves, without the superimposition of one's own narratives. This requires awareness of what the appearance of the other *is* and being open enough to recognise and accept its significance. It demands a weakening of the boundary of the self in the face of the other. A withdrawal from the projective impulse is exemplified by the practices of certain topographic photographers, who allowed their subjects to appear rather than subjecting them to pictorial tropes. The question pertinent to this chapter is, how does one move towards the world, and so, towards the other?

In 'The necessity of interpretation', the movement towards the conditions one meets leads to involvement, and action, in this case, the work of the architect. Again, rather than merely 'feeling' the constructed situations the architect encounters, the architect is obliged to read and interpret their utterances, and act with them. As advocated by T S Eliot in the chapter 'Contexts', one is obliged to draw very close to those utterances, and to the cultures and embedded ideas from which they emanate, and make work with them, acknowledging that these utterances are co- or interdependent, by design or by circumstance. The architect's own work, if 'weak', can listen to these utterances, continue their 'speech', revive it, and make it available to those who have lived in their ruins. The question that attends this chapter is, how does the architect listen to what the environment offers, interpret its utterances, and speak among them?

All these questions come down to how one finds a position from which to look, and to listen, so that one may approach what one is confronted with, meet it, accept it, and speak. Some thirty years ago, among architect colleagues who had formed a discussion group regarding what their practices should be and what they should attend to,⁵ I posed the question: what do I see when I look at something? It was a question relevant to London at the time, and to the artefacts that figured its scenes. The question addressed the concerns that we perceived we shared, sharpened by a lack of opportunities in British architecture and the attendant absence of

architectural discourse beyond that surrounding Post-Modern or High-Tech and their protagonists. The premise of the question was that the city and its artefacts were outward manifestations of ideas, that ideas were embedded in things, their arrangements, and relations. This proposition had emerged in my own practice, which by the mid-1990s, had moved from architecture to the visual arts, making objects, installations, and photographs that could be characterised as being concerned with ideas, ideologies, and their representation in the constructed environment. In short, the question was the foundation for the questions posed and embedded in this dissertation.

Addressing these questions does not necessarily mean answering them, but rather, opening them for others, and through this, disclosing the possibility of action for others. My experience in teaching and an inter-disciplinary practice of art, photography, and architectural design since 1986 has led me to ask these questions of students, colleagues and other architects in various circumstances: first, in the discursive situation of the tutorial; second, in writing and lecturing on subjects such as urbanisation, representation, material culture, and the public interior; and finally, through proposed and realised works around and between art and architecture in the constructed environment.

3 The contribution and utility of the work

The dissertation, as it concerns beginnings, considerations, and attitudes that I believe the architect should assume in meeting the situations and conditions they face, is directed to architects in education, young architects in practice, colleagues in design teaching, and those academics concerned with the complexities that present themselves to architects as they approach their work, and think about the work of their work. My previous publications, *Without and within* (2007), and *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (2016), have been directly useful for architects in practice and those in training.⁶ The latter book was a result of fundamental lectures given to architectural design students at TU Delft, and so, integral to teaching at the time, and a reference work in Delft and other departments of architecture in Europe and further afield.⁷ *A walk from here to an other* (2024) was written as though spoken directly to a student of architecture or an architect at an early stage of their career. The dissertation deepens the discourse developed in this last publication, and although it lacks the directness of tone of *A walk*, it explains complex notions connecting urbanisation and subjectivities, images and appearances, contexts, perception, phenomenology, material culture, representation, attention, interpretation, reinforced by examples from practices in art, photography and architecture, and the working through of the essential questions posed through the perspective of experiences in my own practice.

The dissertation contributes to the fields of architectural education and architectural practice through its synthesis of concerns, and its calling upon practices within and outside architecture—in the visual arts and photography—to illustrate its argument. In academic architectural discourse, it aims to reconcile the epistemology

of phenomenology with that of material culture, and uses representation, integral to material culture, to achieve a broader basis for thinking and speaking about the subject of architecture. Finally, its turn to empathy, embodied in its advocacy of listening, attention, interpretation and a movement towards the other—embedded in the occupations, uses, and pasts of the constructed environment, reinforces the position of the those affected by architecture, for consideration of the architectural educator and architect alike.

4 Position

My own position has emerged from my formation, experiences, and influences on my thought that I have drawn from other practices, and those insights gleaned from my own practice. The span of my work over a long time and within different disciplines has provided me with varied perspectives with which to look at the urbanised environment, its shaping of subjectivities, its appearances, messages and provocations, and offer these back to others to provoke their own questions, distinct from analyses, into that environment.

The chapters of this dissertation reflect inquiries within my own writing and practice, which have their own histories, and have defined my position, as an observer, a critic, and as a reflective artist, designer, writer, and teacher. The following publications can be regarded as foundations for this dissertation: *Without and within: essays on territory and the interior* (2007),⁸ about territory, representation, and patterns of urbanisation in the American West and from them, the emergence of the continuous interior as a ‘typology’; *In Passing: Photographs* (2010),⁹ which depicted urban conditions and environments as artefacts of material culture and vessels for its ideas through my photographs from 1965 to 2010; *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (2016; 2022),¹⁰ which saw public interiors as representative articulations of material culture and its motivations through a series of themes, such as the Garden, the Palace, the Ruin, the Shed, the Machine, and the Network; and *A walk from here to an other* (2024),¹¹ a discursive argument towards a beginning, and the attitude of the architect, inspired by Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet*,¹² a condensed and colloquial prelude to this dissertation.

I am deeply sceptical about the projective impulse as it continues to dominate both mainstream and *avant-garde* architecture and the architecture of the academy, despite its deep relation to architecture and the architectural project.¹³ I am an advocate of considering architecture as continuous with other aspects of the constructed world, which I see as utterances of culture, language, and ideas. In this dissertation, I replace the word *project* with *work*. I am concerned with the work that the work of architecture does in its environments. I am concerned with architecture’s capacity to be conscious of how it executes the acts of building, its potential to embody ideas within its ground, its arrangements, its relations to other artefacts, its forms, its appearances, and its fictions. I reject the cynicism of approaches to architecture that, masking themselves in objective experimentation, diminish human experience and relations to subjugations to capital, consumption, and surveillance.¹⁴

Instead, I embrace looking at the world, and seeing its natures, its artefacts, the ideas embedded and embodied within them, divining relations between things adjacent and distant, listening to and interpreting their open utterances, and then, speaking back to them in their language through my work, and writing, so that things and their gatherings are reflected in things and pictures that are pictures of themselves. In seeing the constructed world as concatenations of ideas embodied in artefacts and their arrangements, it is possible to see that world as resonant with life. That is what I want architects to sense, and see, and meet, and engage with, so that they can continue the fictions innate to life, as they are expressed in everything that is made.

5 Apologia

I acknowledge that the concerns I write about are anachronistic; that architects or artists tend not to care about such things anymore; that most people in fields of activity have moved on to more urgent issues, like the fate of the planet, matters of social justice, de-colonisation, self-determination, and the de-centralisation of Man in the world. I respect all these issues and the concerns that accompany them. Nevertheless, my utterance, in the form of this dissertation, is the expression commensurate with my thought, counsel, and practice for many years, and my earliest understanding of the constructed environment, and the environment *as* a construct.

That early understanding was contingent on the fact that ideas are inscribed in the environment that one finds oneself in, in which one may be embedded, situated, informed by, formed by, subject to, subject of, subjected to; and that one was obliged to see how those ideas were implemented through the artefacts of that environment, their arrangements, their relations, and their appearances. In feeling, one might read these articulations of ideas, interpret them, and work toward engagement with them, which would, eventually, assume either assent or dissent, both of which were decisions of a political nature.

It became important not only to understand what was going on, but to see how figures, their appearances and the systems that sustained them—infrastructure, media—were the matter that one had to address, meet, decipher, analyse, to determine the ways and means through which one could act. One had to understand that the environment was designed to affect a complex of purposes, largely, under the category of obeisance, in which participants in society—workers and their dependents—were subjects whose desires and concomitant behavioural patterns were mostly predictable. One simply had to observe—and, in my case, picture—that total environment, to see how it worked.

The experience of this environment was bound up in the most straightforward way, with its materials and effects. These things had qualities, of course. There were many things. A railway tie—a massive block of hardwood—was a thing as much as an illuminated plastic sign—and its ‘message’—was a thing.¹⁵ One was obliged to recognise, and accept, that these things were altogether the constituents of the environment, whether one liked them or not, whether they were benign or

malignant; and that these things amongst other things acquired their utility, significance, and perhaps, their meaning.

One was obliged to look; to observe; to relate these appearances, one next to the other, how they all worked together. How they worked together was frequently ‘mechanical’, or ‘procedural’: the house sat on the street, the street led to the road, the road led to the train, the train led to the city, the station; the station led to the street, and to the building in which people worked until it was time to return to the house. How they worked together was also a matter of how it was to be offered, to be presented, to be ‘sold’; and this was a matter of diplomacy, or publicity, or image, or rather, a complex of imagery and signs that would contain the messages of policy and purpose, and present all of these in a coherent and integrated total image that may be construed as an ideal, a mirror for which citizens or subjects might hold themselves to account. The image, in its fragments, and in the totality of the accumulation of these, was legible, recognisable, readable, in the manner of a language—or a *pat-ois*—that met with almost universal comprehension, even if the world conjured up by the image was not a world one could occupy, denied by income, class, or race.

I used photography as a means of looking, as a method that selected incidents and arrangements and meetings. Photography was a documentary device, and a thinking device. I made photographs of urban scenes, landscapes, and interiors. I compiled fragments, which were witness to how ideas were uttered through things, and the meetings between things.

One does not look passively. There is language around photography, as a looking machine, that speaks of capturing the subject of the photograph.¹⁶ The photograph becomes a projective device, possessing its subject. One may think this to be true when one considers the uses of photography, particularly for the propaganda of advertising, which infiltrates so much picture-making and presentation. It is not that kind of photography that I advocate as model methodology. Rather, it is the photography that both regards the world and the subject as other, and acknowledges a space between the photographer (as self) and the subject (as other) to both exist and be a clearing in which a meeting might take place, where the self can lose the boundaries of the self in order to meet the other; and, where the other may alter their own boundaries in order to meet the self, in a kind of mutual empathy.

Walking and looking while walking is central to processes of unfolding, and of contemplating the world as it has been made. Remembering that one lives in a world of others—those who are with us, those who have gone, sometimes long ago, their intentions and ideas lost to the observer—one learns through reflecting upon what they have left behind, the residue and registers of their acts. Artefacts, their arrangements, and their appearances offer a wealth of information, on sight and on further inquiry.

There is a rich legacy of learning from walking: the Grand Tour was an elaborate walk through ruins; Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, and the road movies that followed by Wenders and many others transport that experience to the American continental interior, as re-enactments of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*; Lawrence Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristan Shandy, Gentleman*; *Tales of Gilgamesh*; Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*; and more recently, Iain Sinclair’s *Lights Out for*

the Territory; Patrick Keiller's, *London*, and *The View from the Train: Cities and Other Landscapes*. The artist Richard Wentworth's ongoing series of photographs, *Making Do and Getting By*, derived from walks across cities (predominantly London); as *dérives*, Guy Debord's own 'psycho-geographical maps', reconfiguring streets of Paris in accordance with experience and association.¹⁷ In my own history, the walk, carried out as a drive in the back seat of my parents' car as a child, offered the revelation of the urbanised North American continental territory, within which one could observe both the dominant homogeneity and subtle particularities of places, supported by the remnants of the natural world, whose features served as supporting scenery.

The walk is germane to the practices of filmmaking and photography that have been central to my practice and the approaches contained within this dissertation. A photographer either seeks or finds a condition that one might select for a view, to the exclusion of that which finds itself outside the picture-frame. In a walk, things and scenes do not simply pass by, as they might do when one is a passenger in a speeding train; instead, one's attention finds itself drawn to artefacts, an arrangement, a detail, a gathering of elements, a scene, or a view. The walk may be either purposeful or purposeless; it may depend upon familiarity or strangeness, comfort or curiosity. In the mid-1980s, the architect Tony Fretton and I made a regular series of walks from his apartment and studio in London's Fitzrovia, either in the neighbourhood, or further north, south, east or west, in the West End, which, even then, contained streets and alleyways that were not yet absorbed into obligations of 'performance' or 'efficiency' expected of contemporary real estate. The object of these impromptu and largely nocturnal expeditions was to see the city as it presented itself 'unconsciously', those parts of the city that were not meant to be seen but used; or those parts that were simply consequences of expedient arrangements over the years, decades, or centuries. Fretton led similar peregrinations with Jonathan Sergison when the latter was his assistant, from his office in Soho's Great Windmill Street.¹⁸ My own walks were of singular importance to me, reinforcing not only a way of seeing and speaking of the city and its lives as embedded in things, but a way of re-establishing my photographic practice, and beginning, in earnest, my practices in art and writing about architecture. The improvisation evident in these back streets, the echoes of past habits in the present, and the superimposition of layers of ways of doing manifest in the substance of buildings, shopfronts, garages, stoops, and areas, was all exposed to one's study. It was evident, as one made photographs, or objects, or designs with these settings in mind, that one was, intentionally or otherwise, engaging in their re-staging, their re-utterance, their re-presentation. It became evident, furthermore, that these re-enactments—conscious rather than unconscious—were not that unlike the re-iterations of habits of ways of doing typical of the quotidian, or, as some would describe it, the 'as found'.¹⁹

The re-enactments within my own practice—which attempted to reconcile various disciplines and fields of activity—acknowledged that the things I had observed were not outside considerations of value; they were significant, and as significant as 'consciously' constructed artefacts, such as buildings.²⁰ These ordinary things not made for aesthetic approbation, also contained ideas, and so conveyed meaning. When 'walking' further afield, it became clear to me that even objects

directly pertaining to specific tasks—purely functional objects—bore inflections that were particular to their place and 'language': a German pair of scissors were not the same as an Italian pair of scissors. In buildings, in streets, in the addresses and appearances of each place, there were agreements—not just in terms of policy or law—that were visibly manifest and specific to each place, or, more precisely, to each condition. One could not help but conclude that the condition-related specificity of these arrangements and appearances were utterances that held onto embodied and embedded cultural ideas. In relation to buildings, and to architecture, these utterances were not merely expedient, but at the very least culturally specific, and in the case of truly conscious constructions, culturally meaningful. Regardless of their reference to any kind of original, these constructions contained ideas.

I was obliged to think of Gottfried Semper's use of the so-called Primitive Hut—and Kenneth Frampton's reading of Semper's theory concerning the four elements of architecture—as both relevant and significant, in thinking of construction as embodying ideas both specific to the various aspects of work and desires of the craftspersons involved in each of those components' realisation and elaboration.²¹ From this to Semper's theory of *Stoffwechsel*, in which one material might allude to and be a conceptual substitute for another—such as patterned brickwork alluding to a woven reed screen 'original'²²—it felt to me that the 'utterances' embodied within artefacts such as buildings, and architecture—as building conscious of its means, effects, and appearances—could also be representations, and that representation was present in the constructed environment, its objects, its spaces, its connective tissue, the arrangements and relations between all these; that the constructed environment represented a succession of human fictions and desires.

Among those desires were those that cities have, for example, to emulate other cities, to resemble them, or in some way tend towards their imagined conditions. This is evident in Haussmann's Paris and its evocation of Sixtus V's Rome, or of 1900 London's desire to become—in the plans of Aldwych and Kingsway, and even Piccadilly—to become Haussmann's Paris;²³ or in Daniel Burnham's Commercial Club Plan for Chicago, to have the whole of the city conform to this image.²⁴ It is visible in Karl Friedrich Schinkel's visions of Berlin being a new Rome, as captured in the proscenium décor of his Schauspielhaus.²⁵ The resemblances to other places would be conjured by imagery that reinforced patterns, which triggered memory, and in the absence of memory, fantasy. New York's fantasy of being steward of the land upon which it was founded, was held in the image of Olmsted and Vaux's Central Park; a high-rise apartment block in Łódź invoking the skyline of Manhattan in its name and form;²⁶ the handball courts across England infused with the idea of being scenes of the same game being played at Eton College.²⁷ The forms hold the image, the image attempts to articulate the fantasy. With the image comes the dream. The *passages* of Paris, perfect streets under glass, sustain the dream of passersby that they might possess the commodities they desire, they might become people of means, enabled to realise themselves through their acquisitions.²⁸ The image accommodates the projection of pretences. In the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milano, a whole fragment of the city is preserved under glass, as a meeting of decorated streets, where citizens may imagine that their city is at the centre of the world.²⁹

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Giuseppe Mengoni, Galleria Vittorio
Emanuele II, Milano, 1877.

When one confronts the issue of the experience of architecture—which one insists implicates both the architectural artefact and its environment—one cannot avoid the matter of its image and its status as a phenomenon among other phenomena, its image struck among other images, its fantasy situated amidst the congregation of fantasies. Perhaps there is a view that place architecture beyond such considerations, as though they have ceased to be relevant, as though all these tainted associations and allusions ceased to exist after the expurgating winds of Functionalism had blown through architectural culture, leaving nothing of that which had been remembered or imagined remaining. Ludwig Hilberseimer's *Großstadt Architektur* is representative: all has been expunged, save the workings of the human nervous system, which is left with meagre gruel.³⁰

6 Methodology and meetings

My tendency, in both my work and within this dissertation, is to merge observations, lessons, ideas, and essences gathered from other practices and artefacts. It is impossible, in my view, to talk about the conditions in which architecture is situated, those situations in which the architect must work and ascertain how to begin that work without referring to urbanisation, the condition of interior, or the constructed environment's influence on subjects and subjectivities. Material pertinent to these aspects must be drawn upon, and that material is necessarily various. As the problem of how to begin is opened, the considerations become broader, as do the points of reference and what informs them. With these references, there is no direct translation of a particular exemplar to how an architect's work is to be done, but an interpretation of the work that is referenced that brings an idea to light. The method is by its nature synthetic, in that it draws upon literature, theory, artefacts in the world and exemplars of art and artifice. It uses and often mixes these to illuminate arguments concerning the broad range of considerations within this dissertation, each of which demands different means towards the disclosure of what is relevant to its purpose. This method furthermore mirrors those germane to artistic practice, whether it is writing, photography, art-making, or architectural design, recognising the synthetic nature of influences on those practices.

It is difficult to describe this methodology as scientific. Rather, my method is in part a consequence of my experience in practice and practices—architecture, design, visual art, photography—and a set of principles that I have gradually assumed in drawing lessons from the practices of others and ideas embodied in different expressions across different fields. My approach to theory can be characterised in much the same way. I have read in connection to issues raised within different areas of concerns and work, and that reading has tended to gravitate to writers who are also willing to cross fields and disciplines in their inquiries. I have used that writing to inform myself, to recognise my own patterns of thought and practice, and like those writers, to get to the essence of an idea or sets of ideas that inform my way of working, and, with respect to this dissertation, my way of talking about and writing about looking at the constructed world and how to go about

meeting it. The fact that this communication has been of late largely directed to students of architecture is significant. I have tried to offer students my experiences as my own considerations have developed, and that which I have seen and learned from my encounters with other practices, to help them develop fields of reference for their own nascent practices. I have felt a particular urgency in these last years, with the gradual and now rapid erosion of the discursive method in teaching in favour of a schoolish and contractual education, to set out clearings for attitudes that students could assume towards conditions and others. This has demanded my calling upon other voices, practices, and modes of manifest thought as I have done in my own practice.

The writings of others are not used to justify a position but inform that position. The practices of artists are not meant to be copied but to be learned from, particularly in the positions and propositions contained within them. The practices of photographers, similarly, are not meant to be imitated but to aid one in the thinking of how one can look at the world and create a situation in which the viewer is conscious of a way of looking at the world, and the position the photographer has assumed to do so. The practices of architects featured herein are also brought in to provoke thought regarding what work their work does. All these practices, aspects of them, episodes within them, provocations and propositions embodied within them, ideas revealed by them, are material that I work with.

In my work, teaching, and this dissertation, a kind of conversation or exchange occurs between works of literature, origin myths, theoretical texts in art, literature, architecture, anthropological sciences, historical accounts, art practices, photographic practices, architectural practices and my own work, offering insights into that work, with the work providing insights into theory. These exchanges often take place across different fields 'simultaneously', each field contributing something distinct to the understanding of a phenomenon. A case in point is to be found in the discussion of urbanisation, territorialisation, and representation of the American West that occurs in chapter 1, 'Territories, interiors, subjectivities', in which several different voices, from different genres of text and different practices are called upon to come to forge an understanding of processes of projection and subjugation of the other. The merging of different texts and practices that transpires is synthetic, from which ideas emerge, are tested, and then come to serve as foundations for further arguments embodied in practice, in teaching, in writing, and in this text.

Another key method used in this dissertation concerns the interpretation and analysis of artefacts, at every scale. Within my own practice, I have always drawn upon the material of the constructed world first as it has presented itself to my eyes. Observation, and the practice of looking with purpose that began at an early age, has left an enormous array of material 'at my feet' for me to consider, compare, and interpret. The photograph of André Malraux in his study, looking at hundreds of photographs on the floor, to be used in his argument that France was a *musée imaginaire*, reveals a shared process.³¹ In my case, in looking at a field of material, artefacts ranging from the banal to the intentionally significant, one notes connections, comparisons, categories, resemblances, relations, which yield

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a variety of narratives that hold these disparate appearances together. The method involved is one that gains credibility with repeated practice, which amounts to no more than informed speculation. From a vast array of artefacts, one selects those that speak eloquently of their inheritance of ideas and form, which are situated in culture. The study of these artefacts and their speech, their relations with other artefacts, their place, is the study of material culture.

The method associated with this is interpretive material culture analysis. This is subjective, but its subjectivity is restricted so as not to overwhelm the artefact with false narratives. The method is both descriptive and interpretive.³² It is not strictly scientific, but academic, based on an obligation to read appearances and the characteristics they share with other cultural artefacts. The work of this analysis sees artefacts held up as case studies, many of which are drawn from personal

encounters that have presented themselves as significant, as fitting into an argument, or confirming an idea. Within these case studies, observations are made as expansively as possible based on appearances, with the purpose of tracing relations in those appearances to other artefacts, regardless of scale. The interpretation of these appearances is close to the methods of hermeneutics, without the benefit of having texts to read. The artefacts themselves, as vessels for ideas, regardless of how ordinary these may be, are the texts.

A work of architecture presents itself as the ideal artefact for interpretive material culture analysis, as it is made in the context of cultures of architectural production specific to the societies that produce it, as well as those beyond society-specific boundaries. It exists, furthermore, within a canon or set of references inculcated through architectural education and national and international professional cultures, and within individual points of references drawn upon by architects and their colleagues. Architecture is also subject to external agreements in the form of cultural conventions, building regulations, and smaller scale negotiations over the specificities of its provisions and presence. Finally, it exists or is produced within regimes of publicity, is situated in contexts other than its immediate site, and so is an artefact among other artefacts in those contexts and their discursive fields.³³

Another aspect of the methodology employed in this dissertation concerns the descriptive method within writing. The description of buildings, for example, that of Peter Zumthor's Bruder Klaus Kapelle in chapter 4, follows a phenomenological model, which then, by making relations to other phenomena, such as the imagery embedded in its construction, moves towards a material culture description and analysis. The writing itself naturally moves across descriptive methodologies, disclosing aspects of experience through something like a literary method. The description of Erik Gunnar Asplund's Woodland Chapel in the same chapter works in precisely the same way, with the literary method opening further aspects of the artefact connected to social rituals which are 'invisible', yet very real. This method, bound to description, reading, analysis, and interpretation of artefacts of material culture, is used throughout the dissertation. It is a method that is based on reading, and therefore prone to other characterisations of reading, such as those germane to phenomenology, representation, and literature. The description of Montréal's Place Ville-Marie and *ville intérieure* begins with phenomenological disclosure, to a material culture analysis, situated in both a 'real' local context, and a media context, which 'enhances' its intended reception and performance.

7 Literature and its presence

Following this description of my methodology and the notion of encounters between figures of literature, theory and artefacts from art, photography, architecture and the constructed world and my practice, there are specific texts that have been important to my thought for many years that have been significant for the argumentation within this dissertation. They have illuminated each chapter and my engagement with them have prepared foundations for this work.

Regarding urbanisation, Joseph Rykwert's book *The Idea of a Town* has been central.³⁴ Its discussion of the rituals surrounding the establishment of Roman colonial settlements, especially the line drawn or ploughed around their gridded interiors, separating them from the world, has taught me much about the significance of without and within, and acts that create such distinctions. Of similar support to understanding the development and growth of urbanisation—again, closely connected to the management of colonisation—the writing of the architectural historian Leonardo Benevolo has been indispensable, particularly his *Architecture of the Renaissance*.³⁵ It was Benevolo who introduced me to the engraving of the establishment of Savannah, Georgia in 1735, and the system devised fifty years later by Thomas Jefferson in the Land Ordinance, as well as its significance in breaking with a human-based order to the imagining and ordering of urban form.

From Benevolo's work in this area follows that of Manfredo Tafuri with Francesco Dal Co, understanding the forces that drove the exploitation and development of the American West, effecting the genocide of its indigenous people. Their two-volume *Modern Architecture* set the story of American urbanisation within the context of an always insecure exceptionalism and expansionism.³⁶ That American territory as world of the other raised another issue that has abided with me for over thirty years and has provided a foundation for considerations of encounters and meetings with and representations of the other. The topographic photography of Timothy O'Sullivan was introduced to me by Daniel Wolf's collection of nineteenth-century views, in his book *The American Space*.³⁷

Meetings with the other as a theme has been reliant upon several key texts, notably those by John Berger, whose humanist position is manifest in books, essays, and television series, the most important, in my view, dating from the 1960s and 1970s (not surprising given the formation of my consciousness in that period). *Ways of Seeing* is a classic material culture study whose impact lies well beyond art criticism.³⁸ It is about society and how people ultimately treat each other, and ought to treat each other, whether in attitudes towards women, or, in much of his writing, how the other is treated, whether they are poor, labourers, patients, or animals. His essays on photography have been very important to me, and those dealing with the photographic portraits made by August Sander in his *magnum opus*, *People of the Twentieth Century*, which touch upon appearances and the making of appearances through presentation and representation of the subject to the photographer, are very significant. A text of similar importance, concerning the space of meeting, with especial relevance to the theatre but a model for those rarified encounters the architect faces with people and space, is the theatre director Peter Brook's *The Empty Space*.³⁹ That meeting happens in a kind of clearing, in which the play can unfold, and it is reminiscent of Martin Heidegger's referring to a clearing as being the space where self and other might indeed meet.⁴⁰

Relations between self and other, self and world, and the workings of critical image-making are important to this dissertation, in that the conventional subject-object relation limits the possibilities for perceiving the nature of the world and exaggerates the centrality of the perceiving self. The self is not central, and everything else is important. Norman Bryson's essay, 'The Gaze in the Expanded

Field' reviews and challenges simple subject-object/viewer-object relations—the gaze—in painting, unpacks Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist undoing of the self, Jacques Lacan's extended agency for the inanimate object and concludes with Eastern philosophical notions of perception in an all-over field.⁴¹ This has been vital in informing my own notions of weak and inter-dependent form in the constructed environment. Challenges to the paradigm of transparency in architecture, related in my view to the matter of the gaze in painting, are laid out in relation to the work of the artist Dan Graham and the glass architecture of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson in the artist Jeff Wall's essay, 'Dan Graham's Kammerspiel'.⁴² This work has been very important for connecting the problem of projection in urbanisation and architecture as antagonistic to recognition of the other and intersubjectivity.

I have found myself in gentle dispute with Christian Norberg-Schulz and the early writing of Maurice Merleau-Ponty for their apparent narrowness on the nature of perception within a phenomenological paradigm, with Norberg-Schulz rhapsodising a condition of autochthony amidst his poetic readings of experience, and Merleau-Ponty rejecting analysis in favour of using the body to completely feel (there are echoes in Susan Sontag's views regarding the interpretation of art).⁴³ Yet I have found solace in the writing of Steen Eiler Rasmussen's book *London: The Unique City* for its binding of experience to the material culture of a city, wherein its landscapes, expressions, and *techné* are all of a piece, natural and inscribed in language and culture simultaneously.⁴⁴ It may be another instance of *genius loci*, but it is one that is not attached to the suffocating parochialism of the village.

The question of what constitutes that kind of nature, the poetry of a place, its canon of its own fictions that allow it to modify itself, sometimes dramatically, sees its echoes in T S Eliot's essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', a text offered to participants of the Goldsmiths' College Master of Arts course, myself included.⁴⁵ The surrender to language and the literary canon required of the poet, so it is so thoroughly known that it is lived, and can be either abided by, extended, or radically upended within its own tradition, not by some exhibition of the artist's personality but by the language itself, is analogous, in my view, to the obligation of the architect in working with the constructed environment and its legacy. The role of language is especially significant within poetry, where it is extracted from its quotidian, colloquial role, and returned to its primary status, arbitrary yet close to meaning and the real. Its vulnerability, malleability, and revelation through poetry reminds me of the place of architecture in relation to building, the consciousness of its constituent acts, its appearances, its relations.

As one looks to other texts to find supporters and opponents of one's position and argument, cities look to other cities, as in a mirror, to craft and refine their self-image. London and Chicago's attempts to emulate Haussmann's Paris in the early decades of the twentieth century are a case in point. A city may see itself as many other cities, or fulfilling promises established in other places. In this regard, Italo Calvino's book *Invisible Cities*, myriad accounts of cities of fantasy, a literary invention in which Marco Polo tells stories to Kublai Khan, are the fantasies pertaining to one city, Venice.⁴⁶ It reveals a truth about desire, and idea, taking

hold to shape the form and image of cities, and the construction of fictions that its inhabitants will become subjects or prisoners of. The fictional aspect of the image is important, in that it contains a narrative, a story that is taken by its observer for what it is: a suggestion, a direction towards the involvement or immersion in its world of associations. Regarding this aspect, Roland Barthes's essay 'The Rhetoric of the Image' has been indispensable, informing my approach to the descriptive, interpretive analysis of artefacts of material culture.⁴⁷ Appearances that suggest other appearances or other areas of knowledge through associative connection are the basis of my interpretation of conditions and the figures within them.

The charged nature of language as a vehicle for allusions and associations brings one to the threshold of how language appears and the real that it contains, which is germane to representation. William Shakespeare clearly understood the core of the English language, the human nature immersed and manifest in words and expressions. It is an episode from his play, *The Winter's Tale*, that is focused on that threshold between the word and its idea, or in this case, representation and the real, that representation appears, or *re-presents*.⁴⁸ The statue of the Queen Hermione, presumed dead for many years, is brought to life—it is in fact the very-much-alive Hermione, posing as the image of herself, then moving upon a command—and in that moment, the surface of appearance becomes much more than is commonly appreciated: it becomes the vessel for life and for its impetus, love. This passage has had an enormous influence on my thoughts about what one is surrounded with in the constructed world, the human world, the world of ruins, the world of others. It is a great world of investment, of ideas, of human desires, of human failures, of hubris, of banality, of great beauty.

8 Theory, embedded and embodied

One's own practice is a constant articulation of one's position in relation to actual conditions, in which one's work appears. One relies upon one's own readings of the conditions the world offers, in which one is immersed, formed and conditioned, and an innate sense of resistance to its coercions and restraints. One seeks further means of understanding those conditions, which inform, sometimes guide, and at other times deepen one's own convictions as to what must be done. One might call those means, embodied in texts and in other practices, past and contemporary, 'theory'. The observations and the work one makes in light of this are not enactments or realisations of theory. Rather, aspects of that theory consciously and unconsciously become part of one's worldview, and find themselves embedded in what one says, writes, teaches, proposes, and makes. These accumulate, and as one finds one's practice needing to use various means and media, and to appear and engage in different actual and discursive contexts, one's points of reference or guidance in other practices, discourses and texts become correspondingly, varying, diversified, and eclectic.

The place of theory in this dissertation is similar to that of literature I have described, its uses and influences. It has penetrated and infused this text, which is

of a piece with my practice over many years, to the point that it is not always possible to separate them, to distinguish between what I have thought, said, and done, and what I have imbibed and absorbed. My practice, incorporating photography, installation, public art, architectural design, and writing on art, architecture and urbanisation, is theorised, but not an articulation of theory. It has come into being through interpretations of the world, those actions that seem to form it, and these have, through critical reflection, obliged me to form a position in relation to both the appearances of the world and those actions. It is a position that is open to those conditions that have presented themselves to me, in which I have learned from looking. I have made work following the sense of what I have seen and interpreted. I have tried to place it, describe it, situate it in the world, among the acts and thoughts of others. After many years, it would seem that I have accommodated theory in the forms of writing and others' practices, and that my own work, whether written or made, has consciously or unconsciously incorporated these forms of theory. Similarly, theory is both embedded and embodied in this dissertation.

The theory that has brought me to my position is aligned with observation, critique, and resistance. Writing that has witnessed and described the damage of capitalism (which declares itself as non-ideological) has offered me a foundation for different ways of imagining the world, and relations within it. Regarding the scenes of urbanisation that are set for the actions of the architect, my readings both past and present of Michel Foucault, Manfredo Tafuri, Roland Barthes, Marshall Berman, John Berger and others have facilitated my critique, which may be perceived in this text, as have the writings of Walter Benjamin, Guy Debord, Susan Buck-Morss, Joachim Schlör, Marc Augé, and Peter Sloterdijk.⁴⁹ All have contributed to my own descriptions of a condition of interior and its shaping of subjectivities, and the roles of representation, phantasmagoria and spectacle that are features of a continuous, unfolding interior landscape of *laissez-faire* capitalism and its offspring, neoliberalism. These texts, or their influences on my thought are present, particularly in the first two chapters, 'Territories, interiors, subjectivities', and 'Images, appearances, utterances'.

Considerations of cities and their own operative fictions, their dreams of being like other cities, evident in my photographs and my films, are also evident in the first chapters of this text. Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*;⁵⁰ Johann Friedrich Geist's work on the arcade;⁵¹ Georg Kohlmaier and Barna von Sartory's work on glasshouses;⁵² Bernd and Hilla Becher's photographs of industrial and domestic typologies;⁵³ and Dan Graham's 'Homes for America'⁵⁴ have all acted as confirmation that appearances, arrangements and relations are 'genetically' bound. Finally, colonial settlements, which replicated the administrative systems and appearances of their imperial source, as described by Joseph Rykwert, reinforced the notion that ideas—associative, allusive, fictive—were both formative and normative.⁵⁵ Marshall McLuhan's *The Medium is the Massage* further reinforced this idea of a projective network as the device for extending Western impulses towards influence, possession and power.⁵⁶ The third chapter, 'Contexts' is particularly indebted to the 'theoretical' essay concerning poetry and tradition by T S Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'.

As this dissertation addresses beginnings and the potentials for practices, theory has been particularly helpful with regard to questions of experience, perception, the narrative of beginnings and the scenes of the origins of architecture. It has also informed the understanding of appearances, all of which play out in chapter 4, 'The complexity of experience'. The matter of perception was shown to be reliant on the fundamental theories of both Edmund Husserl and Ferdinand de Saussure, as the experience of phenomena was drawn close to experience connected to language. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger and Christian Norberg-Schulz were important for extending the bases of phenomenology and establishing my own questions about the adequacy of the phenomenological paradigm, while Roland Barthes's work on semiology pointed to the nature of material culture in one's reading of the world, as well as the slippery relations between signifier and signified, reinforced by re-readings of Saussure.⁵⁷ Norman Bryson's discourse on the gaze,⁵⁸ adding to that of John Berger concerning painting, advertising and photography, and Laura Mulvey, concerning the male gaze in film,⁵⁹ served to further focus thinking about the relations between self and other, from Jean-Paul Sartre to Jacques Lacan, concluding with explorations of the thought of Keiji Nishitani, and completely different orders of perception removed from the self.

The readings of material culture that are explored in the same chapter have not been so much derived from theoretical writing, but returned to the issue of the sign and that of representation, the last of which turned to the origins of painting as described by Pliny, and the writing of both William Shakespeare, as discussed, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, in *The Double*. Theory embodied in the art works of Michelangelo Pistoletto, in which the threshold of representation becomes palpable, have been critical to the development of my arguments in this chapter. In order to read architecture as phenomenon, material culture construct, and representation, I turned to theoretical re-enactments of the beginnings of architecture, dependent both on evidence available to their authors, and on speculations, projections, or theories. Genesis, Vitruvius, Alberti, Serlio, Palladio, Jones, Blondel, Perrault, Laugier, Chambers, Viollet-le-Duc, Semper, all sought, through their contact with what was before them—inevitably, ruins—to find inspiration as to how to account for origins and their meanings, and in so doing, create an order for architecture that might stand on equal footing with Creation. Through this legitimization of the human project, there might be a way back to the Garden. Kenneth Frampton's reading of Gottfried Semper and the tectonics of the Caraïb Hut as well as his expansions on Semper's *Stoffwechsel* theory have been important in the development of the text.⁶⁰ Descriptions of the experience of architecture in ways that reconcile phenomenological readings with those of material culture and representation, were initiated long ago from the interpretations of Stuart Wrede of the works of Erik Gunnar Asplund, mixed with my own long study and several experiences of Asplund's representative work.

In chapter 5, 'The matter of attention', discussions of photography are indebted to the writing of both Roland Barthes and John Berger, especially in his reflections on the work of August Sander. Stephen Shore's reflections on his own practice in topographic photography have been valuable, and an example of practice

as theory. I posit that the photographic work of Shore, Sander, Thomas Struth and Timothy O'Sullivan are manifest theory, to which I have turned and returned, in considering attention and empathy as means towards approaching the constructed environment and the other.

In chapter 6, 'The necessity of interpretation', the positions of John Berger and Susan Sontag are held in complementary opposition to each other to make a case for an approach to architecture that goes beyond feeling towards interpretation of conditions in which artefacts are interdependent. This co- or interdependence as a notion has been reinforced by artistic practices that embody theory—again, Pistoletto's Arte Povera work is notable with regard to weak form—by readings of Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski's 'poor theatre', and finally influenced by Gianni Vattimo's notion of *pensiero debole*, or 'weak thought', manifest in my own installations and works for places. This complements my view that architecture, as practiced and realised, is theory manifest. The calling upon of Michelangelo's designs for the Biblioteca Laurenziana in chapter 2, 'Images, appearances, utterances', is similarly a way of demonstrating that architecture is constructed theory, as much as constructed conjecture or provocation.

9 A note regarding other practices

I have noted that I have treated the non-textual works of artists, photographers and architects to be manifestations, rather than illustrations of theory. I have used these works to illustrate and support arguments concerning the placement of ideas into the constructed world. This occurs in chapter 3, 'Contexts', 4, 'The complexity of experience', 5, 'The matter of attention', and 6, 'The necessity of interpretation', in which realised works offer material for reflection for the architect, and indications of ways forward for the consideration of the architect, and the meeting with the world and other that is manifest in practice. Several practices—or exemplary representative works from those practices—stand out and are used as points of reference around which the argument of this dissertation unfolds.

In the visual arts, I have used the early *Oggetti in meno* by Michelangelo Pistoletto, the glass pavilions of Dan Graham, and the *Untitled Film Stills* of Cindy Sherman to make arguments for criticism and alternative ways of thinking about the fictions and freedoms of the constructed urbanised environment. Each of these questions how one stands in the world, and examines, criticises and overturns its subjugating norms.

The photographs of the American continental interior, still the domain of indigenous nations, made by Timothy O'Sullivan are exemplary, as their idea, ethos, attitude, and implications are all present in the works themselves. I believe this to be the case of the photographs of Thomas Struth as well, which do not require texts to impart what is evident. Their thesis is embodied in each photograph. Stephen Shore is more explicit about what he is looking to affect through his photographs, and I appreciate his objective of trying to re-present the experience of the world as it appears to him.

In the case of architecture, I have used specific works not only to illustrate aspects of an argument, but as crystallisations of ideas of what architecture is and does, of how it occupies a place in human culture and in the environments that are made for people to live in; its conventions, its accidents, its inconvenient truths. The works of Roger Diener, Tony Fretton, Álvaro Vieira Siza, in chapter 3, 'Contexts', and Erik Gunnar Asplund, in chapter 4, 'The complexity of experience', have all been called upon as world views made explicit.

10 Some possible conclusions

The question of how to begin in the face of these conditions gathers several of the influences and considerations that have typified my lectures and conversations with students, and takes the form in this dissertation of a peregrination through which myriad concerns emerge, from the consideration of conditions, and ideas that have projected over territories and subjects, to representation and its presence; the example of practices of artists and architects that suggest possibilities for action; and attention and empathy as means of moving toward the other. With the world open to one's perceptions, it may be possible to speak of it, to it, and within it. The considerations within have been offered as means towards listening, seeing, reading, interpreting, and acting, suggesting various possibilities for a practice of architecture, and the freedoms for others that might be realised through it, as means towards a beginning.

The conditions and opportunities specific to my own practice have played their part in the ways I speak about architecture and about how one might go about speaking in the world through architecture, with all that is there, in essence ruins of the ideas that have shaped it and the lives lived there. That inter-disciplinary practice has proposed that the urbanised world is a concatenation of fictions that can be disturbed, interrupted, diverted, and enriched through precise and subtle interventions, dependent on acute readings of contexts: of what is there, what was there, and the possibilities of hope therein. I am—perhaps hopelessly—optimistic about transformations of the constructed world that might be realised by the interpretation and consequent unravelling of fictions and their representations, so that new possibilities of association and action might emerge, creating new freedoms.

In the end, the attitude that is assumed by the architect in encountering the world is not defined by this dissertation. The questions it poses are not really questions that can be answered here, but within those situations the architect finds themselves in. These are encounters that are characterised by uncertainty, tentativeness, in which something that is unknown is addressed by what the architect brings with them and what they can glean by listening, by approaching, by asking what it is that one sees when one looks at something. There are, in the end, a vast set of questions as that approach is made, that unfold as one meets the otherness of the environment, and the other.

11 Acknowledgements

This dissertation reflects the development of my own thought over a very long period, which has been influenced by the different disciplinary fields that I have occupied and dedicated myself to—architecture, art, and education. Each of these has led me to consider the matter of what environments are, what their appearances say about them, and imagining how one might reimagine their beginnings and new beginnings. In my practice and my teaching, I have wanted to synthesise what I had treasured from each of these disciplines, making works that would allow people to see what their environments were and were meant to be—fictions—and encourage them to find freedoms in the realisation that these fictions could be engaged with and rearranged. It is not the disciplines in themselves that have influenced my thought, but those speaking within those disciplines, from the examples of their practices, from their writing, and from their direct teaching. My work has been inspired and focused by mentors, collaborators, and colleagues. Their conversations, provocations, guidance, and work have been invaluable, and in ways akin to friendship, synthesised in my own approaches that have come to be communicated to students in new conversations, tutorials, lectures, and writing. I wish to acknowledge them and thank them here.

First, I wish to thank first those who have been readers of this text in its gestation and development, especially my promoter, Prof. Dr. Klaske Havik, who has been the most patient, careful and generous reader, and has helped me move beyond my fears of solipsism, of writing about 'the world according to Mark'. I wish to thank Prof. Daniel Rosbottom, my co-promotor, and the Chair of my education group at TU Delft for encouraging this project when I felt that my way had narrowed and being a gifted teaching collaborator with whom discussions of art and architecture have been illuminating for the past decade.

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in representation, and in critical attention to depictions of the American West that served as engines for the colonising imagination and territorial urbanisation was actively developed at Goldsmiths’, and a sense of the work of the work of art was further reinforced through key discussions with artists and writers who acted as affiliated mentors there, particularly Michael Craig-Martin, Andrea Fisher, Dan Graham, Craigie Horsfield, and James Lingwood. My teaching colleagues Andrew Brighton and Marysia Lewandowska at the Kent Institute of Art and Design attuned me to the conditions of visibility of the work of art, and, by extension, those conditions that surround and determine engagements with architecture.

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In my teaching, I am especially indebted to Tony Fretton, who brought me to TU Delft after a period of collaborative teaching and designing, for inviting me to write about the interior, with the object of writing a theory of the interior, and establishing a platform for writing and speaking in far more focused and consequent manner than I had previously achieved. Our conversations about popular culture, the visual arts, the city, and its unconscious architecture became embedded in discursive, critical, and nurturing ways of teaching. Those conversations are, somehow, deeply interwoven with concerns within this text. My former colleague Prof. Dr. Christoph Grafe’s explorations of sociability as embodied in architecture’s interiors, and the policies and polity that enabled it, were extremely important for my thinking of what a relevant and necessary architecture of the public interior might be. My former colleague and cultural anthropologist Dr. Irene Cieraad’s work with people affected by architecture—not just its users—has enriched my feeling for architecture’s obligation to be generous, and that people live amidst the ruins of the ideas and lives of others. I am grateful for the care and indulgences of my colleagues in the group Interiors Buildings Cities in the Department of Architecture at TU Delft, who have supported my work, and made it—and me—feel valued. I thank Susanne Pietsch, Leontine De Wit, Dr. Jurjen Zeinstra, Sereh Mandias, Sam De Vocht, and Dr. Amy Thomas for their apparently tireless support.

And finally, I wish to thank those friends and colleagues behind the scenes who have been exceedingly generous and have given me so much hope, strength, succour and assistance in the preparation of this work.

1 THE SUBJECT

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2 THE FORM OF THE WORK AND ITS QUESTIONS

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- [3] Mark Pimlott, ‘Interiority and the Conditions of Interior’, in Paramita Atmodiwirjo, Yandi Andri Yatro, eds., *Interiority*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Universitas Indonesia: Depok, 2018): 5–20
- [4] Mark Pimlott, ‘Montréal: the Ville intérieure as prototype for the continuous interior’, in Pamela Johnston, ed., *Underground Cities: New Frontiers in Urban Living* (Lund Humphries, 2020) 22–41
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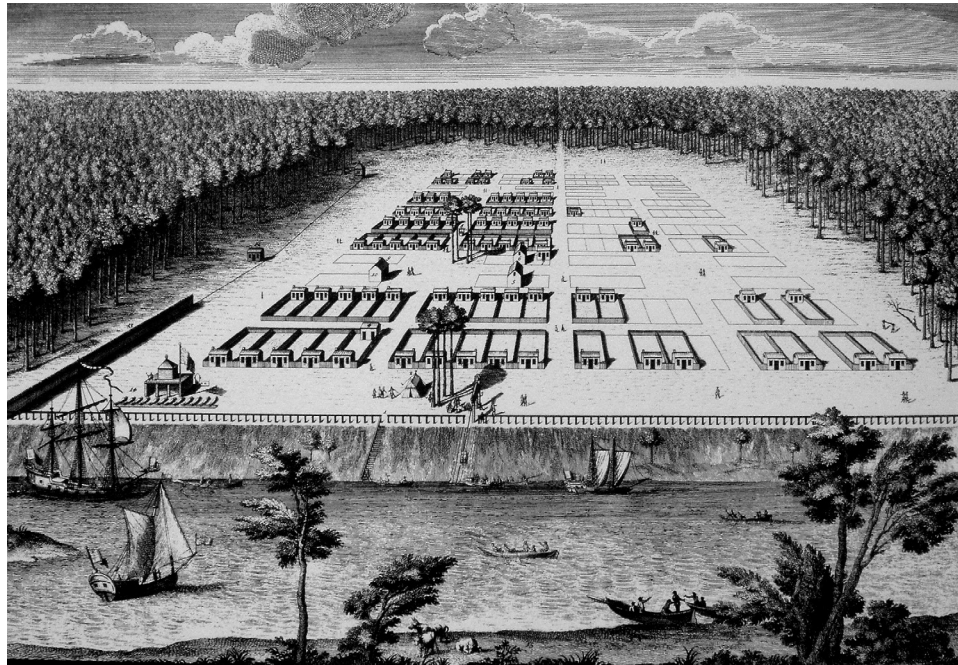
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1 Territories, interiors, subjectivities¹



1.01
Peter Gordon, *A View of Savannah*
as it stood on the 29th of March 1734.

1.1 Two scenes

1.1.1 First scene

An engraving shows an arrangement of buildings standing on a riverside escarpment, set in a clearing of a forest of apparently endless dimensions. No other buildings can be seen in the space beyond that which is the focus of the image. In the foreground, a fragment of landscape, with scattered trees and fauna, quite possibly livestock. An open boat is at the near shore, about to embark with another. The river is a very broad thoroughfare for many boats of varying sizes, from the modest to the very substantial, and clearly date from the age of exploration. The largest of these are near the escarpment, while smaller landing ships approach its base. Steps and a funicular hoist draw goods up onto the plain, where they are met by a few people, a small cluster of trees, a tent, and one representational building, possibly a customs-house or weighing house, a large flag flapping above its portico. A range of cannons is set in front of it, pointing out towards the river, defending the burgeoning settlement on the plain.

The plain itself has been laid out in the manner of a township, with some buildings occupying marked out plots of land, either together, forming streets, or isolated on lots awaiting construction. One can see that the arrangement of lots forms a grid of major and minor streets, with the major streets demarcating four quadrants. At the centre of each quadrant, there is an open space that one might call a square. The forest has been cleared to accommodate these lots. From this, two small clusters of trees remain, one set in one of the squares, and the other mentioned earlier. The effort of clearing the forest was significant, in its labour, its scale of destruction, and its meaning.

The clearing constitutes the space of a new settlement, with both constructed and suggested boundaries. There is a border between the space of the river and that of the settlement, marked by a continuous railing, with goods passing over from outside to inside. There is a section of wall along one side that appears to be incomplete, just one part of a long boundary intended to separate the settlement from the forest, with two small structures, gatehouses, separated by some distance that await the wall's completion and engagement. On the two other sides, there is a space between the settlement and the forest, a neutral zone very much like the glacis that are cleared between fortified cities and villages beyond for the conduct of defensive warfare. There is, however, no fortification around the settlement yet, only the partly constructed wall on one side. There is no suggestion yet that the settlement may be fortified. The settlement cannot expand over the water, but it can grow into the forest beyond it, in the manner of the clearing of the plain upon which the settlement stands. The clearing is devoid of characteristics. Its plan is abstract, and apart from the squares and the 'accidental' clusters of trees within, featureless. This is part of the plan's intention. It is not a place with propitious qualities; any qualities it may have had have been erased by the act of the clearing itself, which promises only expansion. Without fortifications, it is the act of clearing itself which serves as both defence and attack. Its potential for endless expansion promises the elimination of the wood and renders redundant the sense of a vulnerable interior set against the harsh world without.

→ 1.01

Peter Gordon's engraving, 'View of Savannah as it stood on the 29th of March 1734' is a document, a photograph *avant la lettre*. Savannah was a settlement in the British North American colony of Georgia, so named in honour of King George II, and established in Savannah, even less defined than in this view, by General James Oglethorpe on February 12, 1733. It was the thirteenth and last British colony to be founded. It was also the southernmost of these colonies on the eastern coast of a continent whose extent was only partially known. The colonies were small, perhaps as frail and tenuous as Savannah in Gordon's view, but imagined to be as extensive as they might be, their extent projected westward across the unseen continental territory, along parallel lines of latitude between their northern and southern borders, in a realisable future.²

With this understanding, the forest depicted in the engraving is living on borrowed time. It will be felled as ruthlessly as the wood that was cleared for the settlement. The future of the colony suggests its endless expansion, the elimination of the forest, and the elimination of the denizens of its feared hinterlands—the other. All that is alterity and 'without' would be replaced by the governing logic, ideology, and condition of the interior, which would assume the infinite dimensions of the territory into which it expanded. In the place of the territory, whose frontiers would ultimately disappear, a *condition of interior* would prevail.

1.1.2 Second scene

The setting is a western suburb of Montréal, as viewed from a rectangle of gravel bound by wooden pegs and string, the area being prepared for a new asphalt driveway in front of a single-storey tract house. The house is on a street that leads into a development of many other tract houses, each looking very much like the others. The street leads out onto a perpendicular service road, parallel to a six-lane motorway, parallel to railway lines, another service road, and another suburban development beyond. Overhead, airplanes fly in and out of the nearby international airport. In short, the scene is set amidst a network of complementary infrastructures of local, urban, regional, continental, and transcontinental scales. It is summer, 1964, some 230 years after the significant day in Savannah documented by Peter Gordon. Since that day, the programme of expansion embedded in the plan of that settlement became both policy and method towards the urbanisation of the American continental territory and set a precedent for the methods and ambitions applied to the colonisation of the United States of America's northerly neighbour, Canada. In 1964, I was a six-year-old, sitting in the midst of the gravel rectangle, alternatively looking out at what was all around me and being absorbed in the text describing the political situation surrounding the reign of a young pharaoh in the years 1351–1343 BCE, in the catalogue of the exhibition 'Trésors de Toutankhamon/Tutankhamun Treasures' held at the Museum of Fine Arts in Montréal.³ I imagined the bound gravel plain to be an archaeological site, and that I occupied two periods at once: the present, in my suburban neighbourhood, and the past, in a distant place, nearly three and a half thousand years earlier. At the same moment that I saw the present and the past connected, as it were, through a sequence of lives, I understood that here and

elsewhere were connected and conditioned by systems of affordance and movement: land, and networks. All around me was the territory of greater Montréal, which, at the time, was undergoing a profound programme of modernisation, of its infrastructures and centre.⁴ Roads, rail lines, and air routes took people to the centre of the city and to the vast domains beyond it: the motorway traversed the entire country; the railway line was transcontinental; the airport accommodated continental and transcontinental flights. My thought turned to one vast space drawn together by literal and suggested lines of communication. I was aware then of the generic nature of the setting in which I was raised, spread over the island of Montréal, and all over urbanised Canada, and some *idea* that allowed a suburb of Montréal to be virtually identical to another in Vancouver.

In a very short time thereafter, the new structures being built in Montréal were, from elevated motorways to shopping malls, office complexes, airports, public transit systems, and experimental buildings, apparently seamless extensions of the inter-connected world, and distinctly utopian in character. The spaces, made by these new structures, largely interior, created the impression of a coherent idea and suggested boundless freedom, which at once enabled unrestricted movement across city blocks and the urban landscape, associations between great concentrations of people, and the unity of geological and cultural time. Whether this was the multi-block development of the downtown core, or the new underground mass transit system (the *Métro*), elevated motorways, or the Universal Exposition of 1967 (expo67), all were compelling, and all were interconnected, contributing to the perception and reality of a condition of interior that was consistent with that of the entire territory, which was expressed, in a condensed way, in the public interior of the city's new downtown core.⁵

Beyond these physical, infrastructural characteristics were representational structures, bound to the streets themselves, the houses that surrounded me, the interiors of the homes, shopping centres and, very soon, the 'public interiors' of the shopping malls. These 'structures' could also be noted in clothing, in the uniform attire of white-collar workers—mostly men—returning to their homes from work, the division of labour implicit within this group, and the roles of women receiving them at home. I refer to them as structures because of their repeated, normative quality, shaped by the rituals of the environment. In the case of the suburbs in which I was raised, the new development was attractive to those same workers and their families, and became, by default, an enclave of such workers, fuelling their desires through press and television advertising, and catering to these with interiors that facilitated consumption and the realisation of those desires, or at least, the illusion of self-realisation through consumption. The whole environment as it appeared, as it was managed and advertised, reinforced the notion of a subject, created that subject, and, through various representations embodied in things and media, shaped the subjectivities of sections of society. It is this extended notion of 'conditions' that I wish to expand upon through environments created with an idea—the fruit of urbanisation—that shapes at once infrastructure, buildings, architecture, and the interior, a condition of interior.



This chapter is concerned with conditions germane to Western urbanisation and its processes, on ideas that become embedded in and embodied by cities, buildings, and interiors, and their effects on the experiencing subject and subjectivities. To address this, the matter of conditions that exist and await attention must be acknowledged, recognising that those conditions shape people's engagements, responses, and behaviour.⁶ How might one inquire into the determinations of the constructed environments and their devices, in the form of their organisation; in urbanisation; in conditions of interior? How might one recognise the shape and form and ideas embedded in these environments? How do these same forms and their appearances shape the subject, and create subjectivities? How might the recognition of one's position within such environments, and acknowledgement of the shaping of conditions of others, create circumstances for the creation of one's own active stance, one's approach or movement toward the other, one's acts? My own subjectivity was initially shaped by a 'condition of interior' whose effects—environmental, ideological, and representational—have come to be iterated worldwide through the absorbed influences of American *laissez-faire* capitalism and its legacy, neoliberalism. This experience is not unique: the conditions of agreement that pertain to urbanised environments in the West affect subjects, their sense of themselves and their relations to others. The particular concerns of this paper are 'Western' conditions arising out of 'Western' ideas, and not those that pertain to urbanised realms beyond, which have their own specific histories, of which I have neither sufficient experience nor expertise. That said, it is proposed that the question of one's situation, position, and subjectivity become central to one's considerations of 'here', elsewhere, the other, and approaches towards their address and 'meeting' through practices of looking, 'listening,' and finally, acts of architecture.

What proceeds from an understanding of the conditions one encounters are the organisational and representational motifs through which they function, and the myths that they use to sustain them. Particularly significant are origin myths or those of rebirth, of making and remaking the city, with ideas of what people are like within them; how they are to behave, perform, or assist in the operation of the city's organisation and representations. The plan is a crucial motif for the setting of relations: the grid as used in the Americas (both Spanish and English colonial formats); Haussmann's re-planning of Paris;⁷ and Cerdà's *ensanche* plan for Barcelona⁸ are representative, as are Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse⁹ and Ludwig Hilberseimer's *Großstadtarchitektur*.¹⁰ Archizoom's critical project, *No-Stop City*, should be seen as a recognition of urbanisation that arises from United States-centred *laissez-faire* capitalism.¹¹ Situated in the midst of the city—understanding the city as dispersed, incorporating both centre and periphery—the public interior is the environment in which those ideas are given form, bearing allusions and fictions bound to the city's idea of itself. These are communicated to the urban subject, binding them to those fictions, rendering their behaviour and performance predictable and efficient. It is necessary that the architect is attuned to the signs of these ideas and fictions. Then, a strategy might emerge that either works with them, in the manner of resistance

or productive extrapolation, or deploys other techniques, such as selectively reading and interpreting the city, finding spaces of affordance, piecemeal strategies of appropriation, re-imagination, or re-engagement, from psychogeography to 'making do and getting by.'¹² It is important to understand that one lives in conditions that have been made by others in the past. One operates in the fields of those ideas, their fictions, and in the ruins of the lives and experiences of others. The architect must be engaged with that legacy to add to it, and, inevitably, change it.

1.3 Origin myths and operative fictions

The production of a 'condition of interior'—distinct from interiority, which I reserve for questions of subjectivity, to which I will return¹³—would seem to have been one of the necessary objectives of colonial empires throughout history, to aid the control of vast territories, along with their indigenous populations and resources. This is evident in the case of Roman military outpost settlements, which set apart a distinct site, cut boundaries in the earth to render the settlement distinct, and, using a grid, laid out space within those boundaries to create a representative order—of politics, worship and behaviour—for life therein: an interior.¹⁴ Their mostly square forms, defined by walls with entry points at the ends of the perpendicular cardinal routes, the *cardo* and *decumanus*, and the distribution of monuments, temples, theatres, baths, other facilities and dwellings within, all constituted representations of Roman civic and administrative order, and Roman ideology. The Roman settlement was effectively cut out of the space of the world, and a culture of agreement prevailed within its walls, which would then be deployed across the landscape without, in the form of agricultural land divisions, and various markings of the land. The procedures, rituals and measures that attended the Roman settlement could be implemented anywhere in the Empire. There were two layers to the condition of interior created by the Romans: one pertaining to the settlement itself, and another to the territory beyond the settlements' walls, which was subject to systematised legislation, agricultural practices, and connective networks.

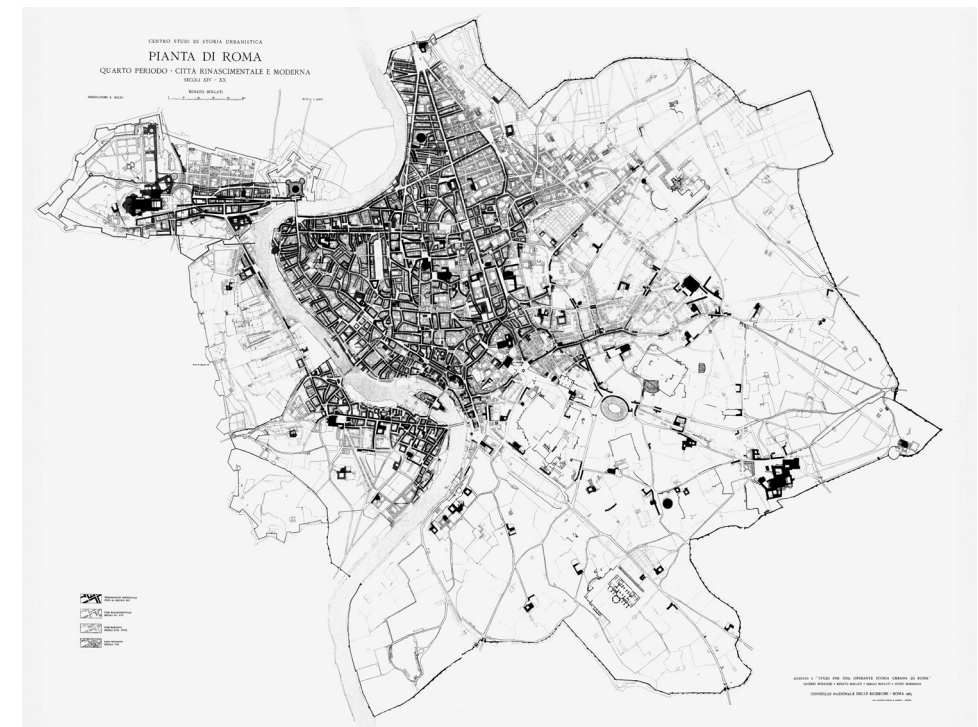
The settlement as the basic element of the Roman colonial system was an idealised construction that represented Roman organisation and method, rather than a reflection of how Rome itself was organised. It was an operative fiction, one that carried the idea of Rome's presence wherever a settlement might be situated across its vast empire. It would certainly have served as a reminder for those who dwelt within that they were not simply at some far-flung outpost, but a place that was essentially Roman, whose policies and ideas were embedded in its fabric, through the rituals of the settlement's foundation, the layout of its plan, the distribution of its monuments, the codified language of its architecture. The settlements' subjects must have felt their behaviour tempered and shaped by Rome. The only expressions that exceeded this were the inventions and exaggerations of these settlements' monuments.¹⁵

The Roman colonial settlement indicated possibilities in planning which were echoed in urban design in sixteenth-century Europe, confronting problems of internal population expansion, rationalisations of medieval centres and their

recalibration in accord with expressions of ideal societal and representative organisation. There was also the impulse of military necessity, the urge towards displays of power, and the entirely new possibilities that emerged with the colonisation of far-flung territories and the design of different types of settlements there, that became the basis for great experimentation.

Careful recalibrations of the centres of Italian medieval cities in the fifteenth century brought about images of the balance of religious and secular power. These were exemplified in the design of the *piazza*, the church of Santa Maria Assunta, and Palazzo Piccolomini at Pienza (1459–1464),¹⁶ and more radical reworkings, such as in Firenze, Giorgio Vasari's works under Cosimo di Medici to the Uffizi, the *piazzale* connecting the Piazza della Signoria and the Arno, and the *corridoio* connecting the Palazzo Vecchio and the Palazzo Pitti being emblematic.¹⁷ Ideal cities were proposed throughout Europe in the sixteenth century, influenced by Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516),¹⁸ and its idealisation of the organisation of the urban form and its society, and these idealisations resonated through the ambitions of 'real' cities.¹⁹ Ideal cities' plans tended towards geometric abstraction and militaristic order, which was relevant to their frequently anticipated roles as fortified outposts: many plans, in France and Italy in particular, were indeed realised as fortified towns. A great variety of plan types were imagined that would respond to the geometry of fortifications that encircled them, and the occasional natural infrastructure, such as a river, that they might take advantage of.²⁰ One notes the octagonal Palmanova, in which a certain asperity prevails; the rectangular Richelieu (1585–1642), whose rigorous grid, central axis, and two terminal squares illustrate its erstwhile hierarchical structure of governance; the centre of Karlsruhe (1715), the circular routes surrounding the Schloß, and the thirty-two streets radiating from it. Significant in these plans are their representations of ideas of how the patterns of a city and its territory might impose an order upon them and all those who lived or would live within them. These ideas were bound in geometry, yet they marked out environments that would suggest forms of behaviour—and obeisance—to be realised by and within their subjects. Those designed environments would create subjects, and subjectivities.

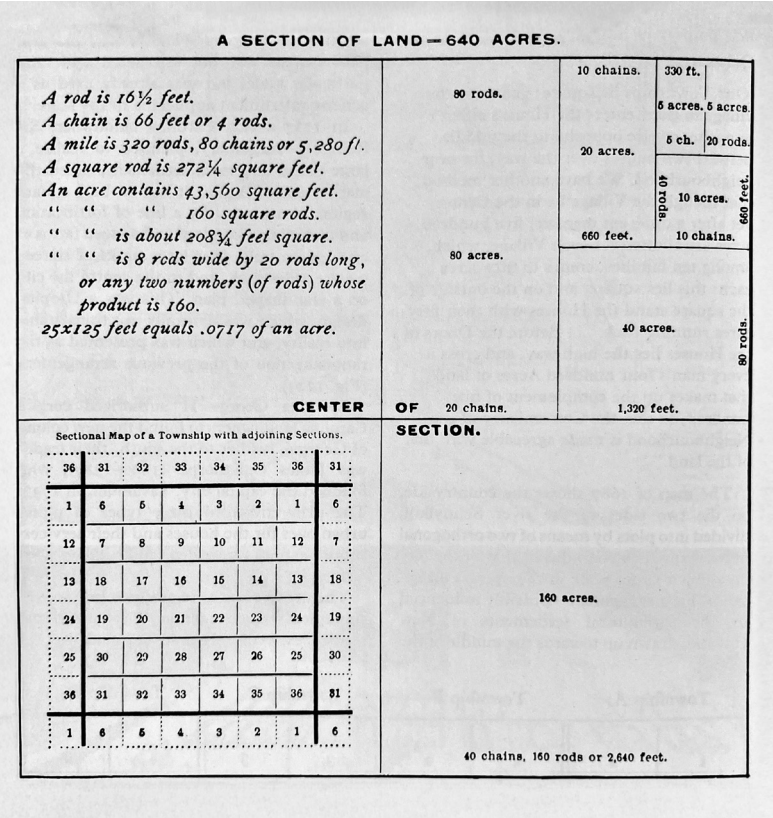
In the many urban designs of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, new patterns of streets and squares were imposed upon extant, informally ordered street patterns of urban settlements, creating new connections, relations and narratives, in which newly created spaces became decorative—and significant—scenography. Perhaps most representative of these were Pope Sixtus V's interventions in Rome (1585–1590), in which existing skeins of routes were extended through open land within the ancient city walls, necessitating demolition in the corrective realignment of streets and connection of ancient monuments and religious building complexes. The existing, chaotic city inherited from ancient Rome, variously modified or abandoned, was re-fitted, its new sense established by lines that connected its significant features, natural, ancient, less ancient, and modern. Those lines became streets, routes of peregrination between the great religious complexes that either terminated at those complexes, such as San Giovanni in Laterano, or met and passed them, such as at Santa Maria Maggiore. Or, they gathered at new *piazze*, such as Piazza del Popolo.



Further interventions would complement these, such as the cutting of the Via Condotti, terminating at Piazza di Spagna. The streets as built were settings of high artifice, confected as stage sets. Citizens would be drawn along these newly reinforced lines of communication to arrive at places of high theatre, revealing the city's representative structure. Their points of focus displayed the power of the papal state.²¹

Such projects constituted a courtly urbanism, which would be echoed in various seats of power on the European continent. Yet it was a growing managerial approach to the expansion of cities, using the grid for its potential for maximisation of possibilities of land use, such as in the expansion of Lisbon,²² that proved useful to approaches in the design of settlements in the new, distant colonies, particularly in the Americas, from the sixteenth century onward. Their evident order and distribution of various components, from dwellings to institutional and religious buildings, could serve simultaneously necessities of security and internal social control. As they were very distant from the countries that established them, a certain freedom of experimentation emerged, as well as adaptability to the uses and purposes of the grid plan, embedded in notions of management. This diversity and invention caused Leonardo Benevolo to conclude that it was colonial urban planning that provided the greatest achievements of urban design in the sixteenth century.²³

The pragmatic grid that typified the Spanish approach to the design of settlements in the Americas was effective through its observance of urban patterns already in place in their indigenous societies; the grid offered the possibility of



infinite expansion in any direction in each territory, adaptable to different scales, from the urban to the rural. The grid offered flexibility in that it could serve different kinds of populations, from military to civil. In some cases, new cities were intended to be occupied by indigenous people, who, to the Spanish, had to be attracted from their various places of dwelling in lands both local and distant from extant urban structures, which had been sites for monuments and great gatherings, but not dwelling. Some of these were not to be occupied by Europeans at all, save the Jesuit agents of the Roman Catholic church, who accommodated populations of indigenous people for the purpose of their indoctrination. These *reducciones* featured significant walled spaces, bound by the church and facing the landscapes in which the settlements were set.²⁴

In other spheres, there were instances of an idea originating from the colonising nation being superimposed on 'host' sites. Settlements that were exclusively trading posts, without ambitions for further urban expansion beyond their confines, replicated patterns, motifs and ideas from their colonisers' experience, as was the case in the outposts established by the French, the English, the Portuguese, and the Dutch in the Americas and Asia. The results were curiosities, fragments of a distant motherland, often impractical in their translations to exotic circumstances, fields

for fantastic projections of memory and hoped-for futures. The dweller of such settlements might live with the illusion of being somewhat at home—with all its attendant paraphernalia—far away from home. Macao (1557) in southern China is such a city, an image of Lisbon or Porto, Goa (1510) in India another, or Pondicherry (subject to the rule of the Portuguese (1521), French (1674), and then Dutch (1693)) with its French axes, villas, and gardens. In cases where such projections proved unworkable—as in the Dutch settlements of Batavia and New Amsterdam—the host environment would not yield to urbanising processes held as exemplary at home, enforcing either abandonment or profound alteration of plans. In Batavia, it was crocodiles in the canals, necessitating the eventual relocation of the settlement (which is currently sinking); in New Amsterdam (now New York), it was the granite bedrock of Manhattan stymieing the digging of canals and enforcing the adoption of a grid-based arrangement.²⁵ In such cases, manifestly different from experiments in urban planning practices by the Spanish in the Americas, which became more codified towards efficient operation and bureaucratic control as the sixteenth century progressed, the settlement bore imprints of the society from which it came; its morphology, its appearances, its notions of performance, and its ideas, which were ultimately embedded in its settler-occupants.

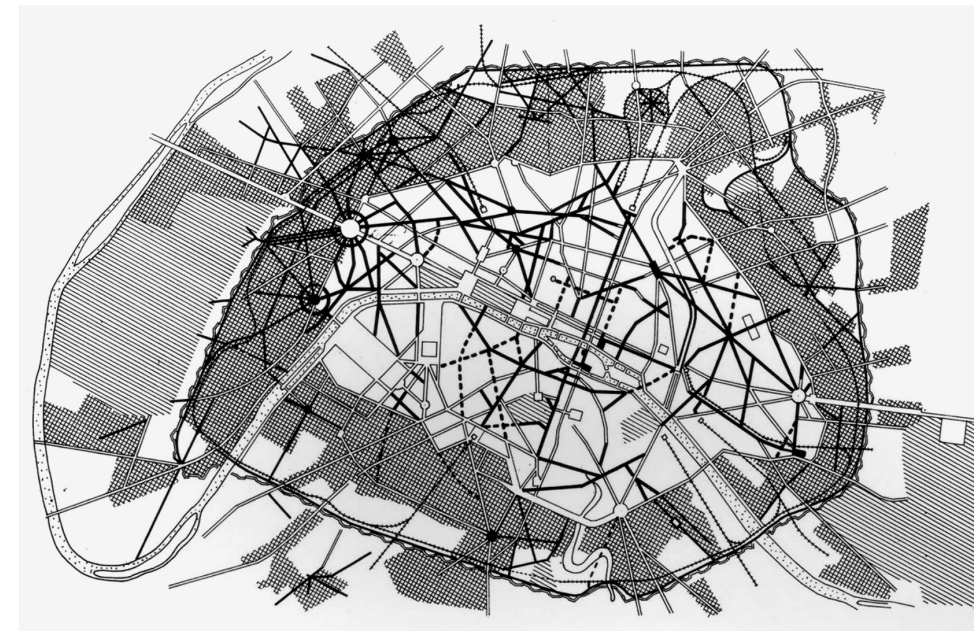
This was true of other outposts of European colonial enterprises that bore signs of the motherland, established from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, along trading routes around Africa and into the East Indies. Such settlements were bases, either trading posts, or devised as 'fortresses' against indigenous populations and imagined competitors, establishing an interior order. Within these settlements, new conditions were created that combined measures of bureaucracy, pragmatism and idealism, at odds with local considerations. Within each such settlement, an environment was created that resembled or evoked another distant place and its ways, but was artificial, an interior set apart from its environment. European colonisation of the distant lands of others was typified by the setting out of settlements that bore the idea of their land of origin. The space of the settlement stood in opposition to its environs: the space of the unknown. The project (and process) of colonisation was one of commanding the resources of that space to the point at which the unknown was eliminated. It follows that the other within this space was correspondingly either assimilated, indentured, or eliminated.

A particularly powerful illustration of this last course is found in the projective acts that enabled the colonisation of the continental territory of the American West by the United States of America. The making of what is thought of as the American Space proceeded on the basis of projective strategies from the time of the establishment of British and French colonies: it, along with everything within it, was intended to be possessed, from the east coast to the west, as far as it would go, the continental territory, as yet unknown, divided like slices of cake along lines of latitude. In an independent United States, these projective acts were both conceptual and legislative, embodied in the Land Ordinance of 1785, devised by Thomas Jefferson: an ideological project enshrined in what appeared to be a procedural policy of land surveying, marking and parcelling.²⁶ A grid, at once abstract and operative, was designed for the survey of land and its division thereafter, determining

property boundaries from the scale of territories to those of townships and individual properties, the layout and relations within those townships, and the measures and dimensions of materials to build them.²⁷ Its premise was universal land ownership and individual freedom manifest in a non-hierarchical order that, in its deployment, was indifferent to geographical conditions and existing occupants. This was a serious development in the execution of colonisation: specificity in relation to local conditions was removed from its method of process, and so, too, the notion of resistance. An abstract system was conceptualised and enshrined in legislation, which operated thereafter in the manner of a machine.²⁸ This system was deployed inexorably over topographies and others unseen and unknown. Difficult terrains were subsumed by the grid; difficult others were displaced or killed.²⁹ The idea of a *tabula rasa* was established, requiring the elimination of indigenous populations, both in order to command natural resources and to create—through a ‘re-Creation’—purified territory for white, European American settlers. The displacement of indigenous nations was achieved through military force and various claims on their domains: industry claimed natural resources, and settlers were encouraged to claim and inhabit land so to render it productive. The Homestead Act of 1865 offered land cleared of indigenous populations to those who would make it useful, thus tying the ‘American space’ to notions of possession through labour, and ‘defence’ against the other.³⁰

The physical characteristics of the continental territory were transfigured into a repertory of mythical imagery, and so the grid, at once abstract and physical, gathered representations into its implicit network. At one level, this was consistent with the displacement and replacement of indigenous peoples and their domains; on another level, it was essential to the creation of representational ‘figures’ through which the condition of interior could be identified and continually renewed.³¹ The mark of the Land Ordinance is easily recognised when looking at American land and cities from the air; it is also built into European Americans’ sense of individual agency and its freedoms, fortified by an operative, antagonistic adjacency. A certain kind of subject is created by such an environment, defined by the United States Government from the time of Jefferson’s Land Ordinance as the *interior*, complete with its own Department.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the American space assumed the role of a ‘garden’, ideal for white, European settlement—central to the attendant ideology of Manifest Destiny.³² Its latent imagery—that of Eden—authenticated its occupation by settlers and supported notions of its possession through labour and individual realisation, which ultimately effected its complete occupation. Thereafter, the logic of the grid was coupled with the mechanics of speculative development on a territorial scale; the repertory of mythical imagery that was the legacy of the Yosemite Valley was deployed to legitimate an ongoing project of diffuse urbanisation that characterised American policy in the 1860s, in the great projects of the New Deal in the 1930s,³³ and continues, with the workings of the Market, to the present day. The processes of territorialisation and urbanisation in the 1860s unified the interests of capital, industry, government and military power; created new origin myths that sustained these interests, and imagery that illustrated them.



New spatial conditions emerged in the environment as it was planned and built. The American example provided a pattern for planning and architecture that transpired to be perfectly suited to *laissez-faire* capitalism, and ultimately, to dissemination to other distant environments, manifest since 1945: the extended period of American economic, military, and cultural dominance.³⁴

That logic and the representational effects the American space has gathered have been visibly deployed in American urban developments from the nineteenth century to the present, which have seen the entire continental (and conceptual) territory subjected to a diffuse urbanism and a condition of interior, which can be recognised in the layout of cities, the sprawl of suburbs, the distribution of motorway networks, the layouts of shopping malls, casinos, airports, hotels, offices; and, in exported reiterations of these that are familiar to Europe in particular. The images of those scenes are pervasive, a condition of interior ubiquitously depicted, as idealised tropes of advertising, television and film.

All these representations are equivalent; all contribute to a condition of interior. The legacy of this American variation on colonising urbanisation is repeated, *ad infinitum*, in urban developments and constructed interior environments far away from the territory of the United States, following American precedent: they propose conditions in which predictable behaviour, performance or obeisance is required. These same environments project, paradoxically, the promise of individual freedom. As these proliferate worldwide, they come to constitute a normative condition; within, they suggest that they are natural, and public, and yet their offer of freedom is contingent upon either efficiency, or consumption and its promises of self-realisation and the fulfilment of desire.

1.05 ←

The abstractions of the Jefferson grid—complemented by ideology, the myth of originalism, self-realisation and supporting imagery, along with provisions of legislation such as the Homestead Act—created a ‘subject’: white, European, who embraced the fictions of self-reliance, superiority to the other, ungovernability, and independence. Such a subject could be directed, shaped; enhanced by policy and legislation that addressed their environment. The rationalism underpinning Jefferson’s ideological environment was echoed in Europe in the radical ideas applied to the making of the metropolis in the almost contemporary plans of Georges-Eugène Haussmann in Paris (1854–1870) and Ildefons Cerdà in Barcelona (1855–1859). The object of these plans, the ordering and rationalisation of their cities’ distribution and infrastructures—including, in Paris, those of governance, tax collection, security, health and time—was the possibility of a new urban subject: one that could be reliable, whose behaviour would fall between acceptable norms.³⁵ In the case of Barcelona, and in accordance with Cerdà’s programme of *urbanización*, this subject was a new figure, the inhabitant of a complete urban environment, a subject conditioned by that environment. In the extension of Barcelona, there was to be no more distinction between city and countryside; rather, the condition of the city—spread over a repetitive yet variously diffused grid—was to be everywhere.³⁶ This was another iteration of a condition of interior.

1.4 Urbanisation and the condition of interior

1.06 ←

In Paris, the demolitions of the city centre following Georges-Eugène Haussmann’s plan for the city’s reorganisation tore into its medieval fabric and its ‘dark interiors’, the domain of the poorest, exposing them—and their denizens—to the light. Districts were shaped into local units, each with their own mayor and tax-collecting powers, bound and separated by a network of boulevards designed for communication and rapid deployment of state forces. The object of the plan was manifold: it was to reform the system of the city’s governance and collection of tax revenues by dividing it into *arrondissements*, each with their own powers of administration and revenue collection; to establish infrastructures which would benefit the movement of troops to quell internally fomented unrest; to destroy the environments in which that unrest originated;³⁷ to institute infrastructures that assisted efforts to improve movement, hygiene, all enhanced by the intelligent deployment of large- and small-scale urban facilities and equipment; to generate a real estate market through the construction of significant quantities of housing accommodating a range of social classes; and to create didactic infrastructures, using streets and boulevards cut into the urban fabric to create places for the display of representative monuments, existing and new.

The city was transformed by Haussmann into an enormous machine that processed and situated its citizens in the manner of a total environment that embodied its orders of organisation, shaping their experiences, subjecting them to its operations, producing their subjectivities. Within its buildings, social strata were accommodated in regular and repeated arrangements; on its streets, a unified treatment

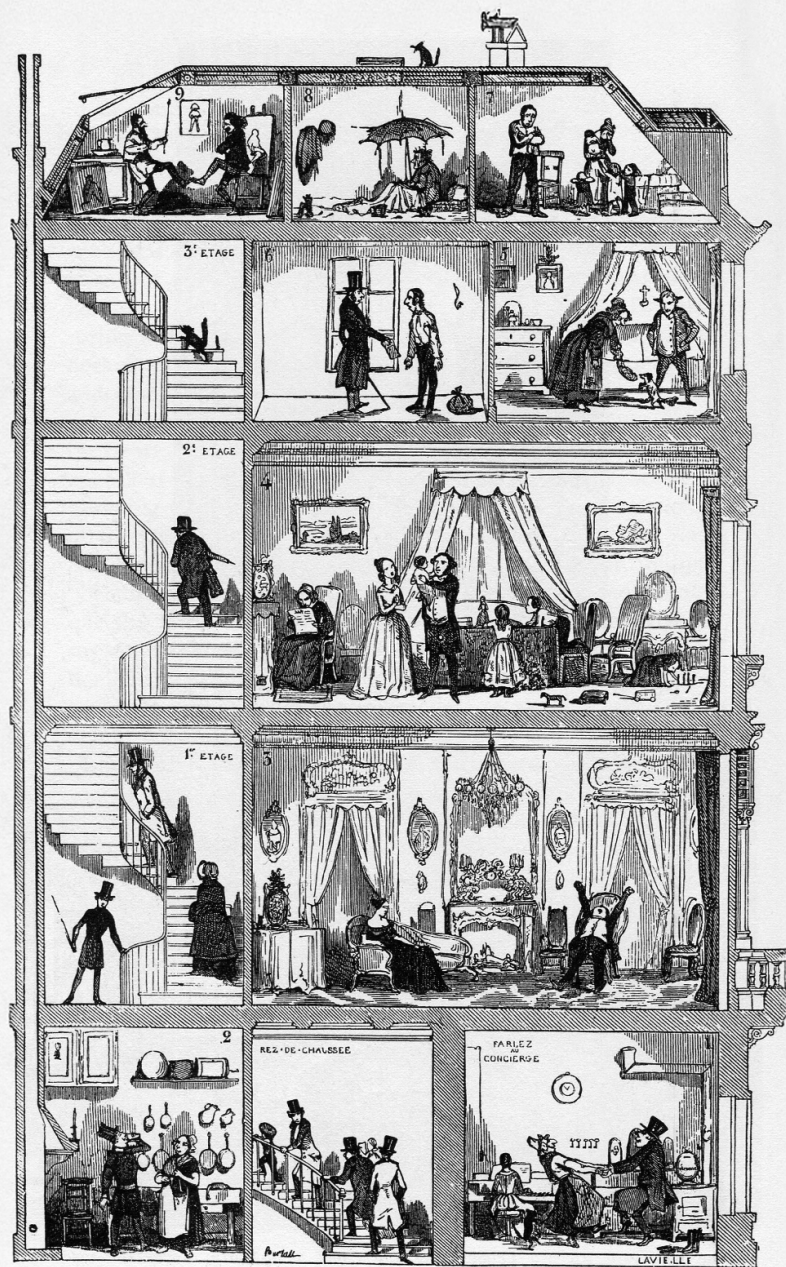


of all elements connected with sanitation, comfort and publicity was integrated with planting, pavements and roads. A sewage system evacuated the city’s waste, an underground subway enabled rapid mass transit across the entire construction. The streets themselves were broad and connected so to ease the congestion of traffic, as well as shorten the routes of police, fire and military vehicles. And yet, despite the completeness and pervasiveness of this machine-environment, it offered anonymity as a gift: the machine could be used by the individual, for their own purposes. The streets exemplified this, fully equipped for utility and anonymous engagement. The working equipment of the city processed individuals, from the train station to *grand magasin*, from the library to market. The construction and appearance of this equipment assumed its own, new, and varied representative forms that signalled roles that were recognisable, guiding forms of behaviour.³⁸

The boulevards formed a template for new streets in the design of roads, pavements, and street furniture of all kinds, setting an environment of experience for the citizens of those districts for which the boulevards acted as at once a boundary and a site where not only other citizens, but the image of the metropolis was encountered. That image was reinforced by the design of buildings themselves, which followed rules set for all new construction (other than important public buildings and monuments) concerning their materials, window proportions, balconies, string courses, cornices and mansard roofs,³⁹ becoming the uniform cladding of an interior containing—from ground to garret as humorously yet accurately portrayed by Edmond Texier⁴⁰—shops, commercial offices and/or servants’ quarters; and above, dwellings pertaining to social class, from the highest on the *belle étage*, to the lowliest in the garret. The metropolis, as shaped by Haussmann, was the same for everyone:

→ 1.07

1.06
Demolitions planned by Haussmann to create
Avenue de l’Opéra. Charles Marville, *Between
rue de l’Échelle and rue St Augustin*, 1877.



3. Cross section of a Parisian house about 1850 showing the economic status of tenants varying by floors. (Edmund Texier, *Tableau de Paris*, Paris, 1852, 1, 65.)

1.07
Cross-section of a Parisian *immeuble*.
Edmond Texier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1852.



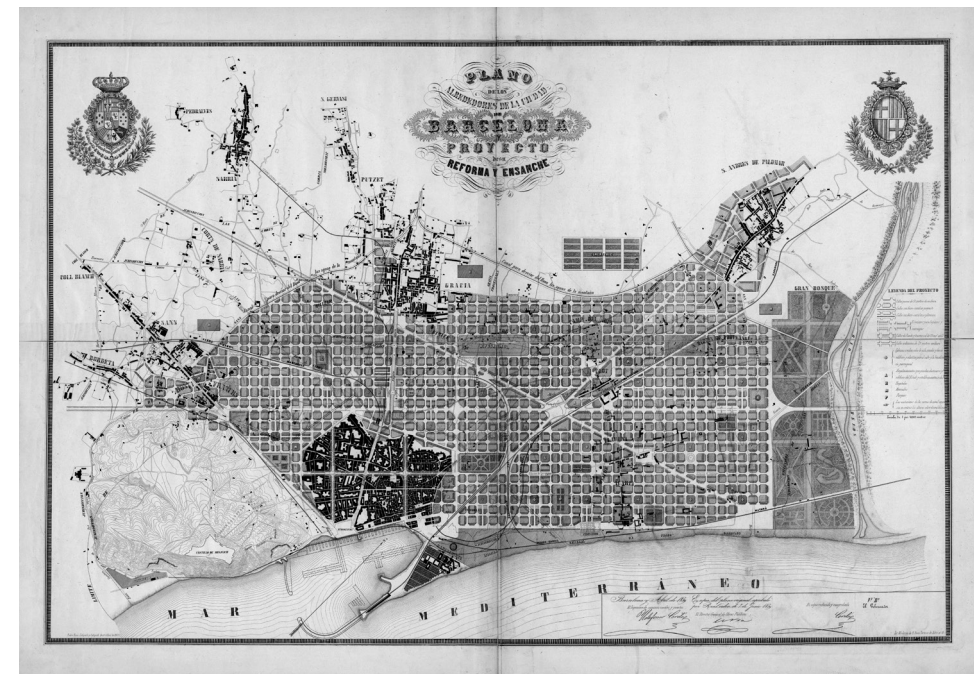
1.08
Gustave Caillebotte,
Jeune homme à sa fenêtre, 1875.

the evidence of its workings and organisation were inescapable and implicitly obliged its citizens to comply with its transparent workings. Richard Sennett writes of the metropolis's citizens adopting their clothing—their cladding—to mask their individuality to conform to their station, role, or occupation, with subtle distinctions of tailoring,⁴¹ akin to subtle indications that one might find that distinguish special buildings from more ordinary ones. One was exposed to the workings of the city, exposed to its spectacle, exposed as a body. Clothes offered the guise of conformity and protection of the self. One could retreat from this exposure to the private interior; yet, as in the paintings of Gustave Caillebotte, the city was always outside. The public interior was where the daily workings, movements and entertainments of the metropolis were most intensely seen and experienced, and where the pressing of the individual into managed behaviours and responses were most acute.

The metropolis, as a large-scale machine, accommodated large-scale environments for consumption, the *grands magasins*, which embraced their role as serving many social classes, and as sites of spectacle. The *grand magasin* Au Bon Marché (1852), established by Aristide Boucicaut after having been inspired by a visit to the Crystal Palace at the Great Exhibition in London 1851,⁴² was conceived as an everywhere, a three-dimensional bazaar, in which all people and all prices could be seen, giving the illusion of a kind of transparency, equality, and free agency.⁴³ More specialised, 'élite' institutions, such as the Opéra, provided not only the spectacle of operatic theatre, but that of bourgeois Parisian society itself. People could see each other as they looked at each other; and in the design of the Opéra, that was a matter of looking at people with differing levels of agency, each of whom had their own prescribed routes, intertwining, yet separate.

Hypertrophied versions of the railway sheds, markets (and even libraries) appeared at the *expositions universelles*, where the technological (and cultural) achievements of metropolitan society could be displayed to overwhelming effect; their large-span, glazed structures sheltered interiors that contained everything, displayed everything, and replaced the world with their contents. Those who visited, and watched, were being told a story in which they were situated, as both subjects and agents by agreement. The public interiors of Paris were prototypes for those that appeared throughout European cities, and they produced urban subjects; a special variety of subjects for whom the metropolis and its manners affected their own behaviour, their dress, their habits, their ambitions, their expectations, their feeling of power, or more precisely, their lack of power. They could only watch.

In the paintings of the circle of painters around Edouard Manet, and particularly in the paintings of Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894), one sees urban subjects viewing the newly-made city from various positions: in the streets, in the scenes created by Haussmann-legislated *immeubles* and *îlots*; walking past new pieces of infrastructure related to cross-city transport; on balconies at the top of buildings looking onto the grands boulevards; in the windows of apartments, looking into the streets; in their apartments, reading next to full-height windows, the street present immediately without. In other paintings, they are shown in groups, in the street or at work, almost as though in the service of a grand project: the metropolis, its scenes and its myriad institutions.⁴⁴ It was quite possible for individuals to be



overwhelmed or alienated by the metropolis, as is clear in the work of other painters of the city, who felt obliged to be witnesses to modern life; and in the experiences of those adversely affected—akin to shell-shock—by the metropolis's abundant disorienting stimuli, such as the multitudes, movement, and electric light.⁴⁵

Through its display of its machinery, the great environments of its working elements, the affordance of its equipment, the display of its idea of itself in large structures that typified the regularly held *expositions universelles*, a Parisian subject, in a variety of guises, was created.

The urbanisation of Paris, like the territorialisation of the American interior, was fruit of thought emerging from the Enlightenment,⁴⁶ which, as characterised by Leonardo Benevolo, left its identification with the human body, its measures and its limits, and became more detached, more mechanical.⁴⁷ Man was no longer at the centre; rather, Man was both the source and subject of projective machinery, in plan and policy. Ildefons Cerdà's plan for the expansion of Barcelona was very precise in what it was intended to achieve: this was not only to extend the historical core—it proposed a completely rationalised field all around the *Barri Gòtic* and *Barri Xinhès*—but to create a completely urbanised territory, eliminating the distinction between a notional urban centre and its hinterlands in creating an *urbé*. The urban block itself was representative of this ambiguity. The block, now perceived as an entirety, was planned to be open on varying sides, creating secondary spaces through the blocks, whose orientations changed from north-south to east-west. The object of this between state of *urbé* was to create a new kind of subject, one of *urbanización*, whose behaviour and interactions would be shaped by the new environment.⁴⁸

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→ 1.09

Much like the Florentine practice Archizoom suggested through their *No-Stop City* project,⁴⁹ I regard the common experience of the urbanised environments of the West as one of total urbanisation, which, in common with the programmes of the colonial territorialisation (and interiorisation) of the American West, the re-configuration of Paris under Haussmann and the *urbanización* of Cerdà in Barcelona is essentially bureaucratic and managerial,⁵⁰ intended to elicit predictable forms of behaviour from subjects, including the illusion of the freedom of the individual subject through the promise of self-realisation through consumption. It is, at once, a deception and an entrapment. Archizoom's project perfectly represented this contradiction—that of the possibility of freedom within an environment designed to deliver its illusion—in an endless interior whose characteristics were borrowed from *bürolandschaft* and the parking garage, with consumer appliances and fragments of nature nestled in a grid of mirrored columns all under an illuminated ceiling. The subjects (when pictured, naked, in the manner of the Edenic first family) have endless space and material available to them but are indeed subject to their condition. There is only within, only an interior, and nothing beyond it.

This is a *condition of interior*. Although the project of Archizoom was a critique in the form of a nightmare, concerning tendencies or effects of American capitalism seen from afar and within from a European position, this condition prevails. The devices and effects of global capitalism or neoliberalism as represented in the diffuse urbanised environment are extensions of those processes germane to *laissez-faire* capitalism that preceded it, and of those pertaining to American colonialism before that. All share the object of producing a particular kind of subject, affecting a condition of interior, or, in the case of neoliberalism, what Peter Sloterdijk has called a 'World Interior of Capital'.⁵¹

I propose that this condition of interior must be recognised and understood by the architect. In so doing, the architect should then seek strategies for affording the subject new possibilities for engaging with their environment towards possibilities of emancipation. The first strategy concerns interiority.

1.5 Interiority and subjectivities

This *condition of interior* I have tried to define is distinct from the term *interiority* that is used consistently in academic discourse in interior architecture, to suggest all that comes with the character of the interior.⁵² In English, the word 'interiority' denotes 'inner character',⁵³ and infers a condition of inwardness and individual contemplation. This is a valuable definition within the context of thought about the interior and the condition of interior as manifest in the urbanised environment. Interiority, in my view, and at odds with the growing orthodoxy, pertains to the individual, who, in withdrawing from the world to situate themselves in relation to it and to others in order to make it their own, entertains a kind of freedom.⁵⁴ The retrieval of the experience or perception of 'freedom' within a condition of interior—which touches upon the room and the spaces of the urbanised environment alike—is an urgent concern, particularly in response or resistance to a prevalent

ideology—that of neoliberalism—which insists that there is no possibility for the political, as it only restrains the 'natural' impulses of individualism and those of the Market.⁵⁵ How architects can articulate, through their work, scenes for consciousness or perceptions of relations and fictions at work in the urbanised environment, and affordances for individual interpretations within its condition of interior, should be a central objective. It is interiority pertaining to the individual, allied to consciousness of the conditions in which one is situated, rather than devising an interior character that is supposed to re-enact the assurances of the domestic or private environment, that offers a direction for how the architect can think about the affordances provided within their work, its frameworks for interpretation and misinterpretation.

It is this order of interiority that Richard Sennett, in his lecture 'Interiors and Interiority' given at Harvard University Graduate School of Design in April 2016, described, drawing attention to Georg Simmel's essay 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903).⁵⁶ Simmel had offered that it was the street rather than the home or the community that produced subjectivity within the individual. Simmel presented the metropolitan citizen as an agonist who *appears* in the street and responds to its space of excessive stimulation with externally blasé behaviour, all the while being affected by that space. The street and exposure to others produced feelings and thoughts: subjectivity, individuality, and interiority. Simmel described the metropolitan subject as capable of observing complex external conditions and harbouring quite distinct thoughts simultaneously. In the street, one could be detached from others, and develop a reflective position; and, through being able to observe external conditions without interaction or direct involvement, one could experience a kind of freedom.

One can see this order of subjectivity produced by the environment not as a restraint upon the individual, but as a vehicle of that individual's personal experience, stimulated by that environment's many distracting episodes. Such a subjectivity is exemplified within the ruminations and reflections of the character Leopold Bloom as he walks, for his purposes, around Dublin, in James Joyce's *Ulysses*.⁵⁷ One could characterise Bloom's meetings with the city variously as reinventions of the environment for his diversion, or as productive misinterpretations of it, elaborations for the benefit of his interior world, in which encounters transform the environment to create and refine a subjectivity. This subjectivity is in fact a kind of inter-subjectivity, in which an exchange takes place between the experiencing subject and the environment. As though anticipating Leopold Bloom, Simmel had proposed that it was the street rather than the home or the community that produced subjectivity within the individual.

One is also aware of many negative consequences concomitant with the effects of the metropolis, which demand the engagement of the individual who is addressed as a type, a representative of a 'market segment.' One must note the illusory character of these effects and the engagement they infer, from publicity and their spectacle to the pervasiveness of connective technologies that suggest personal command over one's life and relations. In response to the metropolis of the present, Sennett's use of Simmel is centred not so much on redressing the effects

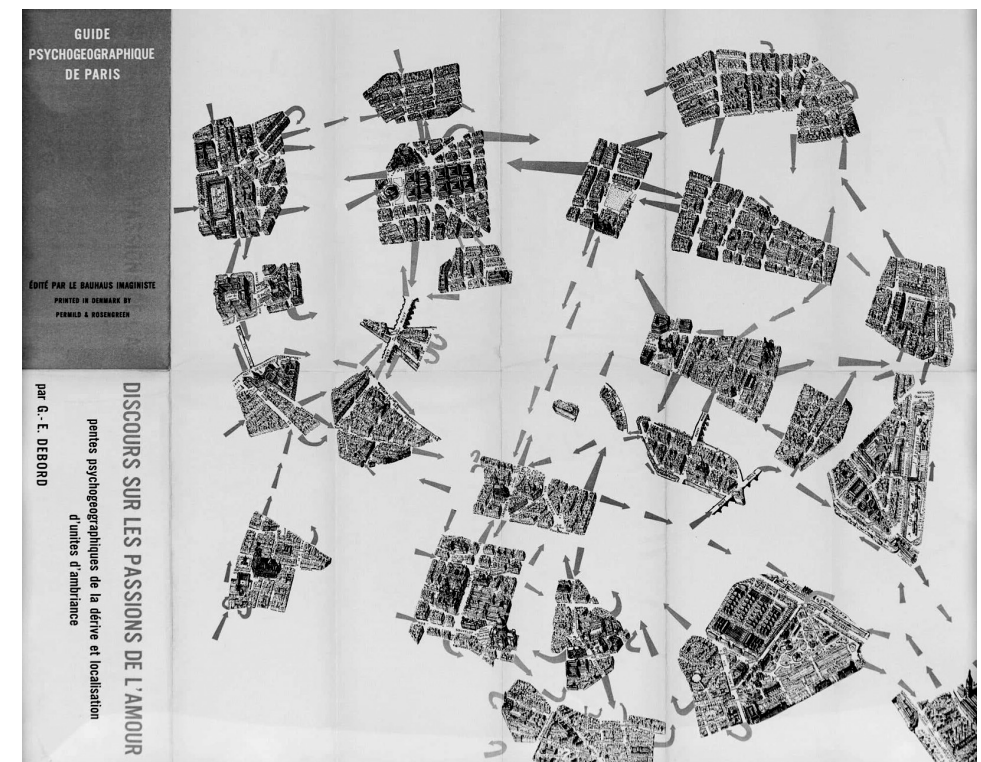
of its *phantasmagoria* but on the desirability of human engagement with others in the street; on seeing others and being seen by others, as individuals appearing in public, or, in his teacher Hannah Arendt's words, in the space of appearance.⁵⁸

Sennett appears to be concerned with notions of value that emerge despite the oppressive narratives of the metropolis, and with efforts that can be made to generate situations in which awareness of people, contact between them and their potential interaction can occur. In such situations, interiority and its associated freedoms are produced, as is consciousness of a self among others, all of whom appear to each other. This view is valuable to an argument concerning the architect's part in contributing to the stimulation of interiority and subjectivities that neoliberalism's—or authoritarian regimes'—coercive and anaesthetising condition of interior deny. That denial comes through the systemisation of urbanised environments to steer behaviour towards predictable patterns, performances, preferences and outcomes, currently reinforced by and its concentration on individual desires through omnipresent 'smart' technology.⁵⁹

It is therefore a more personal interaction with the environment and others that is the key to producing resistant forms of subjectivity, through interiority. Again, this interiority is not the 'quality of interior' offered in discourses that give privilege to the characteristics of the domestic realm and its protections afforded to the individual. In fact, the interior bound to the family or the small familiar community—what is described as the domestic interior—typically does not sustain this kind of freedom; indeed, it characteristically suppresses it. Familial and spatial intimacy, and other structures and strictures of the domestic interior construct a condition of interior through prescribed codes of behaviour to which an individual is subject. The private, domestic interior as a refuge for the private self is also invaded and shaped by this condition of interior. This condition has been historically associated with the constructions of norms and mores of behaviour and relations in societies; and in our time in the West, at least since the conclusion of the Second World War, with shaping behaviour and patterns of consumption. This is, at least, the experience germane to the United States, and the creation of a 'Consumers' Republic,'⁶⁰ whose effects have rippled out far beyond its territorial boundaries: first, to Europe, and then, as a complex of strategies embraced worldwide.

The domestic interior is a distortion. The nineteenth-century European novel produced evidence that the proper interior, rather than serving a role of reassuring the individual of their independence from the world as they retreated into domesticity, was a realm of the imagination and revelation; of allusion, illusion, and in some notable instances, a realm of fantasy and excess, as with Joris-Karl Huysmans's fictional creation, the character Des Esseintes in his novel *À Rebours* (1884).⁶¹ The book's protagonist is at a self-imposed remove from the world, creating his own world with its own codes: the interior represents a constantly unfolding attempt at self-realisation that produces both an extreme and exclusive condition of interior, and a perverse subjectivity.

In public, or 'in the street,' as opposed to the domestic interior, one can think, act and move among others as oneself, maintaining a sense of self, while experiencing, simultaneously, inwardness and freedom. This interiority and its



freedoms can resist the subjugation of that condition of interior produced by the settings of urbanisation, which include the apparently protected retreat of the domestic interior. The kinds of freedom produced by interiority reside in the possibilities for inwardness and reflection that are produced by the environment. The creation of reflective distance as a reaction to the exaggerated stimuli of the metropolis is central to the work of writers and photographers who have observed, recast and reinterpreted the city in forms that are significant to them, following their deliberate but subjective attentions. In his *Arcades Project* (1927–1940), Walter Benjamin interpreted the *interbellum* metropolis of Paris through his inquiry into its creation in nineteenth-century modernity, manifest in the scenes, artefacts and fictions of its neglected arcades, or *passages*.⁶² The dreamy quality that arose from reflecting upon the arcades' displays of detritus of the past and its fictions generated another story about culture, an interpretation that enabled a reconfiguration of the city's fantasies and preoccupations. Guy Debord reconfigured the same city on the basis of *montages* of fragments of experience, or *unités d'ambiance*, in his 'Guide psychogéographique de Paris' (1957).⁶³ The writer Iain Sinclair has described London through the device of walking, reconfiguring the city through subjective readings of its scenes and streets in books such as *Lights Out for the Territory* (1997), and *The Last London* (2017).⁶⁴ The writer and filmmaker Patrick Keiller, who, through his protagonist 'Robinson', contemplating "the problem of London,"⁶⁵ calls this mode of

→ 1.10

1.10
Lithograph from Guy Debord, *Guide psychogéographique de Paris. Discours sur les passions de l'amour*, 1957.

re-configuration “radical subjectivity,”⁶⁶ a process through which the city assumes features that are meaningful for those individuals who interpret them. This mode is particularly important, as the experiencing subject describes the environment not only as it is seen but has it has been the recipient of other interpretations, other fictions, other lives that have preceded those of the experiencing subject. In the case of Keiller’s Robinson, it is stories of writers, activists, and artists who have lived, written, and spoken of the city that accompany his experience of the city. He carries previous interpretations and histories with him. The radical subjectivity is a matter of resisting the environment’s determinations on behaviour and performance and replacing them with one’s own readings, interpretations, fictions. It is to see the city as more as concerted arrangement of forms whose purpose is organisation and management, and as a repository of narratives, of the lives of others.⁶⁷ In such interpretations, the city does not appear as something other than itself, but as itself, as a bearer of myriad embedded narratives and histories which the individual makes their own, rendering them significant.

The ‘psycho-geographic’ is also the domain of topographic photographers who attend to the world as it manifests itself or appears at a significant moment which, through the making of an image, re-presents that moment of perception of the world.⁶⁸ The American photographer Stephen Shore discovered that: “the camera was the technical means of showing what the world looks like at a moment of heightened awareness. It is that awareness, of really looking at the everyday world with clear and focused attention, that I’m interested in.”⁶⁹ In Shore’s work, the photograph becomes the register of an instance through which the world reveals itself, and which produces perceptions of profound interiority in the photographer and viewer, revelations of the real. In contemplation of these subjective interpretations, itineraries, and images, the city—presently metropolitan, global and neoliberal, that either ignores or monetises *locale*—is shown to be a locus for highly charged readings and associations which it prompts through its varied and interdependent manifestations: topographies, architectures, interiors, and the lives of others. Possibilities for individual reflection and interiority abound within the apparently rigid agendas set by the city and its environments. The interiority and subjectivities the city produces within its citizens suggests possibilities for resistance to its shaping of individual and mass experience within its condition of interior.

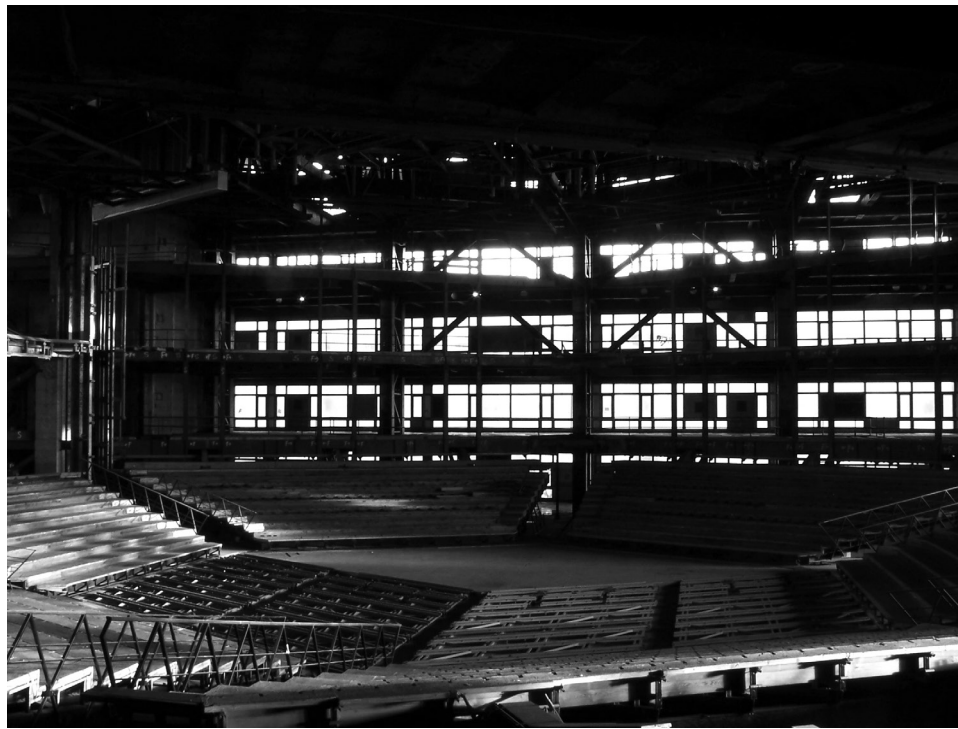
1.6 The public interior and subjectivities

That resistance, in my view, can play out in the public interior, which is simultaneously a space of artifice dedicated to its own narratives, and, due to its uses of allusion, a space that stimulates interiority within the individual and possibilities for reinterpretation. The public interior is a space that is, first, interpreted as being public regardless of its ownership. It is a space that, although involved in shaping and determining behaviour of subjects through its displays, is also vulnerable to ‘misuse’ and misinterpretation precisely because of its deployment of illusion, and allusion. The public interior can be taken as a space that is other than an instrument

or a kind of scaffold for coercive spectacle. Rather, it can become—as it has been, historically—a stage⁷⁰ for people, upon which they can appear,⁷¹ move, act, associate, and become conscious of themselves and their place in the world as individuals, as selves, as others, as selves among other selves, together and distinct, in public. In such an interior, people—as individuals, among other individuals—can wrest pleasures from spaces that are different from the expectations of performance through which many of these spaces are designed. The subject can, through that indifference and interiority described by Simmel, enjoy the freedoms of their anonymity and association; they can read and interpret allusions and representations through which they might occupy other imaginative realms, unbound by power relations; they can occupy real environments that evoke ideas and themes that at once reinforce experience of the present, reconcile the present with the past, and excite their imaginations.

In previous research, presented as a series of lectures and then a book,⁷² I examined the emblematic large-scale and public interiors, largely in Western Europe and North America, describing them as artefacts of material culture, which manifested ideas both prevalent and propositional within that culture, using an interpretive method, rather than following the usual path of a typological survey. It was possible, therefore, to look at public interiors through attributes that could and did appear across different programmes and types, through thematic characteristics and references that were available to their designers. Some of these themes were allusive, such as the Garden, the Palace, and the Ruin, without any diminution of their utility or performance; others were more utilitarian, or instrumental, such as the Shed, the Machine, and the Network. It transpired that allusive imagery was common across building and interior types, and, as one exemplar would be found to share several themes or narratives, it would also be found to share those same characteristics with interiors of entirely different uses or types. The interior could indeed allude to the garden, the ruin, the shed; a library would share narratives and characteristics with a museum, a train station and a market. Within the experiencing subject, the relations between these various interiors would constitute a legible language, to which they could respond. The public interiors that emerged in Paris in the period of Louis Napoléon III and Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, drew several types of functions and spaces together in recognisable and reiterated formats, from the library to the market, the museum, the train station, the *grand magasin*, and the exhibition hall, that evoked garden, ruin, shed, and machine all at once. As the metropolis developed this repertory of interrelated types, these allusions multiplied, and the sympathies that arose between them were reinforced. By the end of the nineteenth century, a complete family of significant appearances had been consolidated, conditioning and framing a representative Parisian subject, one who was also open to fantasy.

My view is that the definition of public interior is necessarily broad. It is a condition of interior in which people are particularly conscious of their gathering, of each other, and their capacity to feel ‘free’. In each instance, the experiencing subject is asked to take up the narrative or essential characteristics of that interior and allow themselves to evaluate and interpret their environment. Some of the public



interiors I have noted were devised specifically as spaces of appearance, interaction and intersubjectivity,⁷³ in which those who habituated them could imagine and live out some kind of individual and social freedom. Exemplary in my view, in that they could be taken as models for reinterpretation, were Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens (1650s-1859), in which people from different parts of society could meet, while walking and partaking of entertainments, frequently in disguise. The site served as a model for Cedric Price's Fun Palace project (1960-1964) and its encouragement for users to command the space to suit their own desires: an early system of responsive programming through cybernetics, devised by Gordon Pask, was an attempt towards a live survey of these desires.

Returning to Paris as the pre-eminent nineteenth-century metropolis, the spaces of the *grands magasins*, such as Au Bon Marché or Galeries Lafayette, were 'palaces' in which people—women in particular—of different social classes, from shop-girls to bourgeois ladies who attended the *Opéra*, could be in contact for collective and individual pleasures:⁷⁴ not only the entertainments drew people together, but the prices of all goods were shown, lending the privately-owned interior the status of being both public and democratic, granting agency to those within. One might say that this agency was false, bound up with the fantasies of self-realisation through consumption; but the *grand magasin* also fuelled ideas of self-determination, and personal interpretations of one's surroundings and one's power within them.

1.11
Kollektiv der Bauakademie der DDR um Heinz
Graffunder, Palast der Republik, Berlin, 1976.
Great hall during demolition, 1998.

Something different happens with the suggestion of an interior being broken, when a suggestion of the ruin or an actual ruined state charges the interior. The possibility of reinterpretation or misinterpretation followed the uses accompanying the decommissioning of the Palast der Republik in Berlin (1976; 1998-2006),⁷⁵ which hosted a wide range of cultural events in its abandoned spaces. Such events occurred in the building throughout the DDR-era, yet these events were staged as indexes of the freedoms granted by the regime, the same regime that monitored its citizens, as it also did within the building. The post-DDR Palast was effectively a ruin, which suggested the dissolution of that surveillance and the enabling of new, unwatched freedoms of misuse and play. Similarly, the spaces of Lacaton and Vassal's renovation of Palais de Tokyo (2001) in Paris, were offered as ruins amongst which people might play as they contemplated new art and each other in the act of engaging with propositional cultural artefacts.

This play around culture, and the freedoms that public took as their own, was both recognised and promoted by the Swedish curator and museum director Pontus Hultén, who saw that cultural spaces should be for those people who make culture through their gathering and participation within them, and their interaction with artists.⁷⁶ This 'experiment' concerning cultural public interiors was first realised at the Moderna Museet (1960-1973), and its exhibitions that involved the public.⁷⁷ He was central to evolving the idea of the public making culture in moving Moderna Museet in Stockholm to the Kulturhuset (1976), a building designed by Peter Celsing, where people could read, and watch, and talk and listen, as if they owned the entire building, which was designed as a stack of balconies overlooking a new district of the city centre. In 1973, Hultén was appointed director of the Museum of Modern Art of France, and fundamental in the shaping of the brief and goals of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris (1977), designed by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers as a set of stacked fields open to public gathering, learning, living and culture-making connected to the city. At ground floor level, the building was open, proposing itself as a public living room; involvement in the workings of its manifest machinery was both collective and personal. The building, its collections, and all of Paris could be one's own, reinforcing the *flânerie* that had become associated with the metropolis since its nineteenth-century transformations.

I am interested in those situations proposed by architects that encourage the 'wrong kinds of uses', the possibilities for misinterpretation that stimulate 'radical subjectivities.' This, as an objective, seems to be at the heart of the work of Lina Bo Bardi, in several key projects. The street level public space under MASP, or the Museum of Art São Paulo, serves as a giant shelter for human life and action, which in Bo Bardi's drawings and in its realisation is variously imagined and used for anything from art installations to circuses to concerts to demonstrations to exhibitions.⁷⁸ The agency of the citizen is paramount, but critically, this agency is proposed as open and varied. One can imagine the shaping of subjectivities through this space to be liberating, detached from conventional definition. Suspended over this space, the gallery of pictures similarly undoes the conventions that apply to picture galleries. Columns and walls are absent, and pictures are hung on glass sheets like standing figures, with the pictures, almost all portraits, facing the viewer as they



1.12
Piano + Rogers. Centre Georges Pompidou,
Paris, 1977.

enter the space. The arrangement is reminiscent of the display within the Galerie de Paléontologie et d'Anatomie comparée, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, designed by Ferdinand Dutert, whose legion of skeletons march towards the entering viewer.⁷⁹ One sees and interprets the crowd of portraits as a public, one drawn from different historical periods, facing an ever-contemporary public drawn from different walks of life, subject to the evolving conditions of the metropolis.

Bo Bardi's SESC—Fábrica Pompeia (1978–86), also in São Paulo,⁸⁰ converted a complex of factories into a cultural centre, with exhibition spaces, library, workshop spaces, restaurant, theatre, a sports centre, changing rooms, unassigned spaces, a boardwalk-cum-beach, and 'streets.' In the heart of a working-class neighbourhood, the factory's power was subverted, its contents evacuated to enable local people to read, relax, meet, be together and make culture in its interiors, streets, boardwalks, pools, cafés and sports halls. Its idea was that the doors to the factory had opened to its former workers, and the working class of the whole city, undermining the factory's function, its regime of work and power-relations, and its 'meaning.' The architect was central to the centre's curation as a complex for people and their imaginations, but this was not just an act of emptying the complex of its ghosts: the main production hall was 'furnished' as a giant home, complete with open hearth, and its floor was broken up with the insertion of a shallow serpentine pond, rendering the factory useless forever. The pond was a provocation for all sorts of ludic adventures. Again, play was central to collective and individual subjectivities, independent of the dominant narratives of the city.

The themes of play, of misuse, misinterpretation, appropriation, and emancipation are common to these projects, and together suggest that the social and personal aspects associated with play are set in resistance to the planned, urbanised environment's pressures on its subjects to conform to its systems and perform in predictable ways. Georg Simmel's 'blasé' individual, whose subjectivity is created by the city through turning inward, is both an accommodating and recalcitrant figure, conforming and rebelling, albeit quietly, all at once. This figure's ludic subjectivity is open to suggestion, to allusion, to artifice, to interpretation or reinterpretation, making the reconfiguration of the city in their image, as Guy Debord proposed in his *carte psycho-géographique*, a desirable consummation of the subject's relationship to the city. In the case of Debord, or Keiller's Robinson, the city remains unchanged; its readings, and the freedoms attendant upon them, reside within the individual.

I wish to turn to an urban project that worked quite consciously with subjective readings and interpretations of its users and publics; a complex built in Montréal in the 1960s—the city's new multi-level downtown core—whose reception, though very much dependent upon publicity and political will, was charged by its engagement with its subjects, its communication through imagery to those subjects as they had been recently formed, and its relations to narratives around the city's image, into which projections within the city's past and those upon its future were merged. The project was tied to the city's infrastructure, forming the centre of that infrastructure based on a principle of congestion,⁸¹ yet the various readings the project cultivated are what bound it to the city's topography and its image of itself.

1.7 'Une ville intérieure'⁸²

This chapter was introduced with two scenes. One was drawn from an instance of the establishment of a colonial settlement, which bore within its form and image the future of a whole continent, suggesting the processes that would subjugate a vast and unknown hinterland. The other was one of many scenes from childhood,⁸³ which inspired a sequence of research projects concerning the transformation of the American West, its representation, its processes of urbanisation, the effects of those processes, the sets of representations that reinforced and legitimated the urban project, the ideas embedded in suburbs within the programme of urbanisation, and the spaces—especially those public interiors—that emerged in the realisation of the urban idea that fused suburb and downtown core, achieving the Cerdà-inspired notion of complete *urbanización*, and the forging of a new kind of subject, at ease in a diffuse city and its spaces.⁸⁴

That first scene occurred in a suburb of Montréal, in 1964, in front of a tract house adjacent to infrastructures of different orders of scale: road, motorway, railway, and international airport. These spread out into the territory and beyond and converged in the centre of the urban core. That centre was new, the subject of a master plan and a construction project that began in 1955 and was completed from 1962 to 1966, designed by Ieoh Ming Pei and his associate Henry N Cobb with the planner Vincent Ponte. Centred on the Canadian National Railways' Central Station—the company commissioned the notorious William Zeckendorf to develop the project, and Pei was his 'in-house' architect.⁸⁵ Its most recognisable component was Place Ville-Marie, built into an escarpment that separated the historical centre below with the commercial centre above, and on the higher plateau, gathered four office buildings—including a cruciform tower evoking both those of Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse and the curtain walls of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's American skyscraper—around a plaza covering four storeys of underground accommodation and infrastructures for loading, car parking and pedestrians, connecting to the station, that opened to a view along the north-south axis of avenue McGill-Collège, to Mont-Royal, a modest topographical figure that featured a naturalistic park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.

The Ville-Marie Master Plan (1955) reappraised the performance of the two-part city centre and demonstrated a deep understanding of the site's local, urban and regional significance.⁸⁶ Prominent among its recommendations was the complete reworking of the inner-city roadway infrastructure for cars and trucks. Already at the centre of suburban, regional and transcontinental railway networks, the site was to become the hub of a series of linked networks for rail, motorways, public transit and pedestrians. The structure was to be an integrated system that would order and serve the urban form at several levels underground, and at ground level, reinforcing its relationship with significant topographical features and urban figures such as Mont-Royal and the north-south axis of McGill College Avenue. Critical to all of this would be a representative public interior that was closely tied to and profoundly dependent on its connections to new urban transportation infrastructures.

The elements anticipated and generated by the Plan constituted a complete and systematic overhaul of the city and its downtown, with the success of each component of the project again being contingent on that of the next. The plan as realised consisted of a core of three contiguous urban blocks—Place Ville-Marie, the existing Central Station, Queen Elizabeth Hotel and offices for the Canadian National Railways, and Place Bonaventure, supplemented by the Métro Bonaventure station⁸⁷—all at once connected to the city's downtown streets, its underground infrastructure and mass transit system, its inner suburbs and its regional suburbs. The public interiors of the project were therefore the representative spaces for an urban subject of the 'new kind', who typically lived and shopped in suburbs outside the centre, conditioned by the representations and experiences of post-war consumer society. Typically, they travelled to work downtown by train and by automobile, in the former instance directly into the project, in the latter directly through an elevated spur of the new elevated motorway network connecting the project to the region, along with them, those on regional buses.

These commuters—60,000 daily, largely from dormitory suburbs—disembarked directly into a new multi-level downtown core and extensive public interior that offered spatial arrangements and relationships that may have seemed completely new to the city but were familiar to the image-world of suburbia, whose representative public interior was the shopping mall. Deposited into the interior, people moved through pedestrian concourses that represented a variety of episodes of an urban public interior, each of which bore specific material and spatial attributes attached to those of the city. Their appearances were abstract yet drawn from European and American precedents that had been radically reworked: there were resonances with European *passages* in the promenades of Place Ville-Marie;⁸⁸ with ancient Roman ruins in Métro Bonaventure (completed 1966, attached to the Ville-Marie project and of central importance to the interior pedestrian network);⁸⁹ with the temple at Karnak and medieval ruins at Place Bonaventure.⁹⁰

The two major ends of the Ville-Marie project—Place Ville-Marie and Place Bonaventure—had quite different atmospheres. Place Ville-Marie, to the north of Central Station, was both the site of greatest congestion and the representational centre of the whole development. The interior promenade—*Galérie des boutiques*—directly below its plaza seemed spacious despite its low and long proportions that encouraged horizontal movement. The façades of its shop fronts, backlit sans serif lettering within the fascia unifying all units, were similarly low, stopping just short of the ceiling, that space illuminated to make the whole interior feel voluminous. At important crossings, signage was suspended from the ceiling, guiding people to destinations, connections and exits in the manner of an airport terminal. Daylight entered the promenade through four courtyards set into the square above.⁹¹ The appearance of the promenade worked within and developed a typology of the late Modernist public interior that had emerged as a consequence of the design of Victor Gruen's Southdale Centre.⁹² The imagery of this interior reflected tendencies that arose in the diffuse urban territories of North America, which were echoed in the development of Montréal and its *banlieues* in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s. The public interiors of Place Ville Marie—which included the banking hall of the resident Royal Bank of



Canada—were new yet familiar, relatives of the scenes of public life bound to the diffuse city. Its spaces bound the appearances of environments of consumption to those of corporate labour,⁹³ and suggested an easy familiarity between the visual language of the corporate office lobby, the airport terminal, and that of the shopping mall. The *Galerie des Boutiques* resembled the public interior that its users recognised, albeit subject to much tighter visual and material control than its suburban counterparts. This management of the interior, made explicit in a standards document prepared by the architects on behalf of the project's development office, brought it even closer to the corporate lobby in both appearance and character.⁹⁴ The spaces shaped its subjects, mirrored the new environments of its subjects, and became the dream-worlds for those subjects, who were caught in its allusions and illusions.⁹⁵

The shaping of subjects and subjectivities according to an idea of urban life was part of the project's nature. In the case of Place Ville-Marie, the emulation of New York, and Rockefeller Plaza in particular, ran through its imagery: a perfect fragment of the city, almost autonomous, with buildings of coordinated appearances gathered around a plaza, in which citizens would come together to be entertained. The plaza was intended to be representative and civic in character, but also a place with which people might connect with at annual events. It was accordingly specially programmed for civic events throughout the year.⁹⁶ The architects hoped that this would become a genuine civic and political space, and on occasion it did indeed become the scene of political rallies and, notably, political protest.⁹⁷ But in those events, the plaza's reality was distant from the benign corporate dream of the Rockefeller Centre and the civility of its portion of Fifth Avenue. It transpired that this dream of shaping subjectivities, like those of other cities that wished to be like Paris, was not transferrable.



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To the south of Central Station, Place Bonaventure's spatial and material characteristics were quite distinct from those of Place Ville-Marie. Its huge building was a monumental structure, accommodating a mix of functions and facilities⁹⁸ in a deep-plan block with concrete walls designed like battlements.⁹⁹ Its variety of interior episodes followed or led to the specific characteristics of its stack of apparently incongruous contents, consisting of railway lines at the very bottom, shopping concourse and passages, motorway entrance, bus terminal, exhibition and trade halls, merchandise mart, conference centre and rooftop hotel at the top. As one moved up through the structure, one always had the sense of traversing different scenes and realms, concluding in a Japanese roof garden. For Reyner Banham, Montréal was the first 'megacity', and Place Bonaventure a true megastructure.¹⁰⁰ Within it, a visitor had the impression of moving through a kind of ruin set on a rocky landscape. The pedestrian concourse, lined with shops and restaurants, featured stepped floor surfaces that wound through the field of slab-like columns, evoking the coarse landscape of granite upon which the city was built. Spaces like the trade halls above offered the image of the vast halls of an ancient Egyptian temple.¹⁰¹

1.15 ←

This impression of 'travel' across different terrains and even historical periods was consistent with the experience of movement across the project as a whole, reinforced by the design of Métro Bonaventure, which might be considered the third element of the project. The underground public transit system—or Métro—and its stations, was not part of the project proper, although it was anticipated to be central

1.14
Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold,
Sise (ARCOP), Éva Vecsei, project architect,
Place Bonaventure, 1967: Interior of the
Concordia Exhibition Hall.



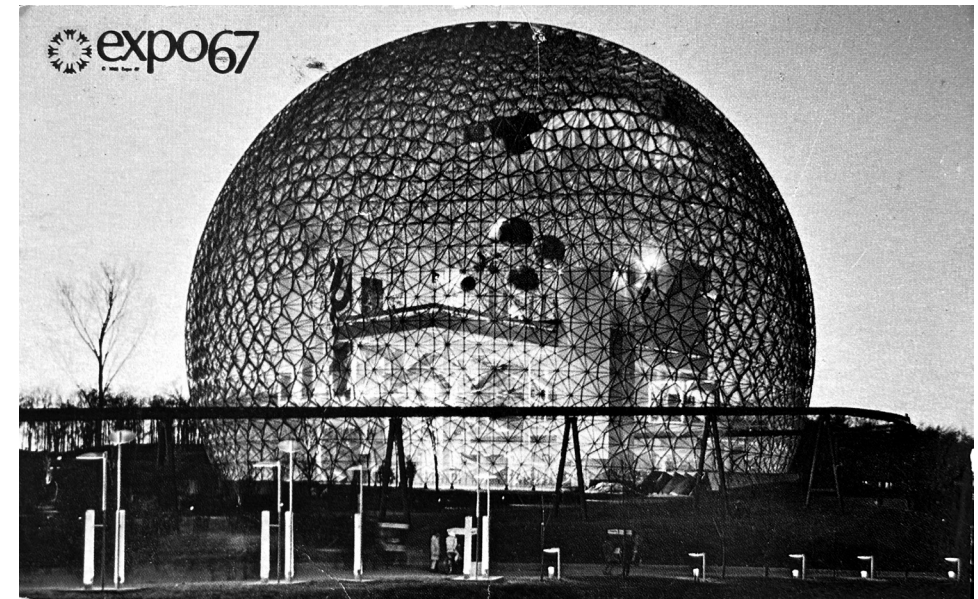
1.15
Victor Prus, Métro Bonaventure,
Montréal, 1966.

to its workings as foreseen in IM Pei's Master Plan. The system was influenced by consultations with engineers of the Métropolitain system in Paris; most evident of this is the design of the passenger cars, that ran on pneumatic tires.¹⁰² This was an instance of francophone Montréal's desire, articulated by its mayor Jean Drapeau, to assume the identity of Paris as it reconstituted itself as a twentieth-century metropolis, as opposed to Zeckendorf and Pei's orientation towards New York.¹⁰³ In a similar allowance for fantasy, each Métro station had its own identity, derived from the varied cultural reference points of their designers.¹⁰⁴ Bonaventure station, designed by Victor Prus, a Hungarian emigré, was apparently modelled on the Baths of Caracalla, its vaulted spaces creating a singular public interior. The subterranean interior was associated with a distant past and its ruins, and the Piranesian imagery of the vaulted and domed spaces and the bridges and passerelles that crossed them allowed commuters—the Métro's subjects—to imagine that they were figures in a phantasy, occupying the underbelly of a great structure, a *carcere dell'invenzione*. Prus's view was that the spaces of the Métro should suggest, in materiality and expression, those of the street.¹⁰⁵ This view found itself embedded in the strategy for materialisation of the whole system, which appeared to be inspired by the city's distinct topography. It was in effect a reinterpretation of the city's geology and its major feature, the granite shield which dominated the entire landscape.¹⁰⁶

The interiors of Métro Bonaventure and the topography of the stations in the rest of the network constituted episodes that provided a measure of stability—suggesting connections to other places and other times, including geological time—that contrasted with the interiors of a 'present future' that prevailed in Place Ville-Marie. The latter's imagery, which placed its subjects within a condition of interior consistent with notions of consumption, efficiency and performance, was the more dominant, and would reinforce both people's image of themselves as urban subjects and the city's idea of itself as a metropolis of the twentieth century and the future. In the *Exposition universelle, expo67*, 'Terre des Hommes/Man and his World' (1967), two artificial islands were built in the St Lawrence River. Montréal—itsself an island in that river—was re-imagined as a set of exceptional structures displayed within a set of overlapping infrastructural networks. Some scenes were futuristic, others were suggestive of other places.¹⁰⁷ The subject could imagine themselves as citizen of one place and many others, and as living in one time and the past, and the future, all at once: a subjectivity in which the imagination is given permission to entertain other realities.¹⁰⁸

1.8 A situated subjectivity

The imagined urban subject in Montréal, as addressed in the city's new multi-level downtown core, the Métro, and expo67, was a citizen of a future-oriented present who would embrace modernity, the city's diffuse urbanism, new spaces of collective gathering, a continuous interior, a technologised environment figured and traversed by infrastructures of various types and scales, and worldwide communications media.¹⁰⁹ The subject was situated in a condition of interior that was both real



and responsive to new economic circumstances, and fictional, in the sense that it was shaped by a narrative, directed towards a certain protagonist within the city's population, likely white, middle-class, and at the time, English-speaking, that reinforced the story of their daily life. The subject—an urban subject, a subject of urbanisation—was suddenly confronted with a dramatically new environmental situation, not unlike that which was faced by the citizens of Paris or Barcelona when their own cities were profoundly altered to work as systems indifferent to place, space, language, or time (they made their own time).¹¹⁰

The perceptions of the child sitting on a gravelled clearing in front of the tract house—surrounded by traces of infrastructures on the ground and in the air, poised within the accelerated time and compressed distances of the 'global village,'¹¹¹ conscious of the future, the here and now and deep time past—were aligned with those of the condition of Montréal's urban subject, whose experience and identity had been formed by the dramatic changes imposed on the territorial environment. Those changes saw the transformation of a world for its indigenous dwellers into a wilderness, then a hinterland, then an urbanised territory, and finally, an interior. The non-indigenous subject had been moulded to be a creature of that condition and its imperatives. The logic of this condition, because of the subject's immersion in it, would be transparent, unavailable, despite or because of its appearances. It would be the appearances of this condition that could provide the key to the subject's understanding, and freedoms. This same subject gained a measure of freedom by both interpreting that same condition for what it was—a territory-wide idea and ideology manifest—and by misinterpreting that environment, imagining a clearing as an archaeological site, the present as the past, the present, and the future simultaneously; the here as both here and many elsewhere.

1.1 TWO SCENES

[1] Sections of this text were developed from previously published material: Mark Pimlott, 'Interiority and the Conditions of Interior', in Paramita Atmodiwirjo, Yandi Andri Yatro, eds., *Interiority*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Universitas Indonesia: Depok, 2018): 5–20, Mark Pimlott, 'Montréal: the Ville intérieure as prototype for the continuous interior', in Pamela Johnston, ed., *Underground Cities: New Frontiers in Urban Living* (Lund Humphries, 2020) 22–41

[2] Catherine Maumi, *Thomas Jefferson et le projet du Nouveau Monde* (Paris: Éditions de la Villette, 2007)

[3] Rudolf Anthes, *Tutankhamun Treasures/Trésors de Toutankhamon* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1964)

[4] André Lortie, ed., *The 60s: Montréal Thinks Big* (Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004)

[5] Mark Pimlott, 'Montréal: The Ville Intérieure as Prototype for the Continuous Interior', in Pamela Johnston, Nancy F Lin, eds., *Underground Cities: New Interiors in Urban Living* (London: Lund Humphries, 2020): 24–43

1.2 TERRITORIES, INTERIORS, SUBJECTIVITIES

[6] The form of the environment shapes subjectivities in ways distinct from the circumstances of the family that affect psychology, or the neurological structures that become manifest in personality. See Mark Solms, *The Hidden Spring: A Journey to the Source of Consciousness* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 2021)

[7] Benoît Jalon, Umberto Napolitano, *Paris Haussmann: A Model's Relevance* (Zürich: Park Books, 2017)

[8] Joan Busquets, *Barcelona: The Urban Evolution of a Compact City* (Rovereto: Nicolodi, 2005)

[9] Robert Fishman, 'From the Radiant City to Vichy: Le Corbusier's Plans and Politics, 1928–1942', in Russell Walden, ed., *The Open Hand: Essays on Le Corbusier* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1977): 244–284

[10] Richard Anderson, ed., *Metropolis-architecture and Selected Essays: Ludwig Hilberseimer* (New York: GSAPP Books, 2012)

[11] Andrea Branzi, *Weak and Diffuse Modernity: The World of Projects at the Beginning of the 21st Century* (Milano: Skira, 2006)

1.3 ORIGIN MYTHS AND OPERATIVE FICTIONS

[12] Patrick Keiller, *The View from the Train: Cities and Other Landscapes* (London: Verso, 2013); Richard Wentworth, *Making Do and Getting By* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015)

[13] Noted, yet not within the scope of this dissertation, the extensive exploration of interiority and subjectivities in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

[14] Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976)

[15] The 2 km long colonnade of the *cardo maximus* in the settlement of Apamea, the exaggerated scale of theatres, such as in Bosra (both now in Syria) and temples in Baalbek (now Lebanon) are representative.

[16] Jan Pieper, *Pienza: Il Progetto di una visione umanistica del mondo* (Stuttgart/London: Edition Axel Menges, 2000)

[17] Leonardo Benevolo (1968), trans. Judith Landry, 'Urban changes in the sixteenth century', in *The Architecture of the Renaissance*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978): 481–573; Michael Dennis, 'The Uffizi: Museum as Urban Design', in *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal*, no. 16 (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1980): 62–71

[18] Thomas More (1516), *Utopia* (London: Penguin, 2003)

[19] Leonardo Benevolo (1968), op. cit.: 538

[20] This variety is described at length by Benevolo, op. cit.

[21] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2011)

[22] Benevolo, op. cit.

[23] Benevolo, op. cit.

[24] Leonardo Benevolo (1968), 'Court classicism and bourgeois classicism in the growth of the modern city', in Leonard Benevolo, trans. Judith Landry, *The Architecture of the Renaissance*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978): 994–999

[25] Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978): 12

[26] Catherine Maumi, *Thomas Jefferson et le projet du Nouveau Monde* (Paris: Éditions de la Villette, 2007); J C Fitzpatrick, ed., 'Land Ordinance of 1785. May 20, 1785', in *Journals of the Continental Congress*, vol. XXVIII, 375 ff. on <http://historicaltextarchive.com/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=218>

[27] Benevolo, ibid.

[28] Benevolo, ibid.

[29] Dee Brown, *The American West* (New York: Simon & Schuster/Touchstone, 1995)

[30] I have researched and written extensively on this subject; see Mark Pimlott, *Without and Within: Essays on Territory and the Interior* (Rotterdam: Episode publishers, 2007)

[31] Pimlott, op. cit. Yosemite Valley was noted for its exceptional beauty, and thought of as a paradise, evidence of the Garden of Eden on Earth (and in America). Frederick Law Olmstead, manager of the adjacent Mariposa goldmines in the 1860s, campaigned for its protection; it was to be designated the first national park. Photographers associated with the Great Surveys (mining, railway, military) of the period, such as Carleton Watkins, made images that were shown in eastern cities, which would drive investment in, for example, the transcontinental railroad and associated land speculation. The images of Watkins and others effectively advertised the West as Eden, and apparently justified the extant notion of Manifest Destiny, giving it a greater dimension—America as 'God's country'—were held in the American imagination, legitimating the project of territorialisation, and ultimately, through Olmsted's own practice as urban planner, the project of urbanisation, manifest in the many projects that used Edenic imagery, such as in New York's Central Park.

[32] Manifest Destiny was a set of principles advocating for the cause of white American/European settlers to determine the fate of the entire continental interior, assuming the righteousness of the American cause. Coined by the journalist John O'Sullivan (1845), it became popular with (Democrat) politicians in making arguments for American expansionism.

[33] Manfredo Tafuri, Francesco dal Co (1976), trans. Robert Erich Wolf, *Modern Architecture vol 1* (London, Milano: Faber & Faber/Electa, 1986): 211–216

[34] Pimlott, op. cit. The thesis of the essays in *Without and Within* was that the American approach to territorialisation and urbanisation, along with its repertory of representative effects, ultimately yielded public interior typologies—the mall as exemplar—that came with managerial approaches, producing what I called the 'continuous interior.' See also Mark Pimlott, 'The Continuous Interior: Infrastructure for Publicity and Control,' in *Harvard Design Magazine. What About the Inside?*, no. 29, Fall/Winter 2008/09: 75–86

[35] Diana Periton, 'Urban Life' in Vittoria di Palma, Diana Periton, Marina Lathouri, eds., *The Intimate Metropolis* (London: Routledge, 2009): 9–40

1.4 URBANISATION AND THE CONDITION OF INTERIOR

[36] See Joan Busquets, *Barcelona: The Urban Evolution of a Compact City* (Rovereto: Nicolodi, 2005); Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2011); Ross Exo Adams, *Circulation and Urbanization* (London: Sage, 2019)

[37] Marshall Berman (1982), *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983)

[38] Mark Pimlott, 'The Shed', and 'The Machine', in *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2016): 148–187; 188–239

[39] Benoît Jalon, Umberto Napolitano, *Paris Haussmann: A Model's Relevance* (Zürich: Park Books, 2017)

[40] Edmund Texier's *Tableau de Paris* (1852), a cross-section of a typical Haussmannian *immeuble*, with its occupants in their place and ways of living. The capacity of the *immeuble* to contain people from different social classes, incomes, and habits, yet bind them into one stone 'garment' that aligned with all adjacent properties of nearly identical adornment, was taken up by the publisher of the English translation of George Perec, *Life: A User's Manual*, used for the cover, as a preview of the many overlapping human narratives within the apartment building in which the scenes of the 'novel' unfold. Georges Perec (1978), trans. David Bellos, *Life: A User's Manual* (London: Harvill Press, 1988)

[41] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977); Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilisation* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 1998)

[42] The store was moved to rue de Sèvres in 1869, designed by Louis-Charles Boileau, following Jean-Alexandre Laplanche, and expanded to designs by Gustave Eiffel (1879).

[43] Christoph Grunenberg, 'Wonderland: Spectacles of Display from the Bon Marché to Prada', in Christoph Grunenberg, Max Hollein, eds., *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002): 16–37

[44] T J Clark (1986), *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999)

[45] Joachim Schlör (1991), trans. Pierre Gottfried Imhof and Dafydd Rees Roberts, *Nights in the Big City* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998); Susan Buck-Morss (1992), 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered' in *October 62*, Autumn 1992: 3–41

[46] Ritchie Robertson, *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness 1680–1790* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2020)

[47] Benevolo, op. cit.: 1027

[48] Adams, op. cit.

[49] Archizoom (Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello, and Massimo Morozzi), 'Città, catena di montaggio del sociale. Ideologia e teoria della metropoli', in *Casabella* 350–51, July–August 1970: 50

[50] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2011)

[51] Peter Sloterdijk (2005), trans. Wieland Hoban, *In the World Interior of Capital* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013)

1.5 INTERIORITY AND SUBJECTIVITIES

[52] Within the discipline of interior architecture, the term 'interiority' is used to describe tendencies towards the atmosphere and effects of the interior. This finds its articulation in much discourse and in literature concerning the interior, such as Charles Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity* (London: Routledge, 2007); Lois Weinthal, ed., *Toward a New Interior: An Anthology of Interior Design Theory* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012). The journals *IDEA*, from 1996 (Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology) and *Interiority* from 2018 (Depok: Universitas Indonesia) are notable. However, I have kept to the meaning ascribed to interiority as it applies to mental states, 'the quality of being interior or inward.' This was discussed in Richard Sennett's notable lecture 'Interiors and Interiority', at Harvard Graduate School of Design, 22/04/2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVPJQhfjK0>, accessed 2024/05/21

[53] Oxford English Dictionary

[54] This is not unlike the position of Charles Baudelaire's *flâneur*, aloof from others and the surrounding scenery and effects, can ruminate on the measure of things. I am advocating for a heightened degree of consciousness, that of the observer who can at once experience

wonder and that detachment that is necessary for analysis and interpretation. This kind of consciousness is best attached to the topographic photographer, or the essayist. Charles Baudelaire (1863), trans. P E Charvet, *The Painter of Modern Life [Le Peintre de la vie moderne]* (London: Penguin Books, 2010)

[55] A series of documentaries made by Adam Curtis describe the ideology attached to late-stage *laissez-faire* capitalism, asset stripping, and neoliberalism, notably, 'The Mayfair Set' (1999), 'The Century of the Self' (2002), and 'All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace' (2011).

[56] Georg Simmel (1903), 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in Richard Sennett, ed., *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969): 47–60

[57] James Joyce (1922), *Ulysses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022)

[58] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (second edition) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958)

[59] Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the Frontier of Power* (London: Profile Books, 2019)

[60] Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers Republic: The Politics of Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003); Lizabeth Cohen, 'Is There an Urban History of Consumption?', in *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 29, no. 2, January 2003

[61] Joris-Karl Huysmans (1884), trans. Robert Baldick, *Against Nature* (London: Penguin Classics, 1973). Des Esseintes, the main character, is a dandy: bored, self-indulgent, and cruel. The house he makes for himself, and constantly reworks and refurbishes, reflects his ever-shifting preoccupations and tastes. Interiors are decorated with strange colours, surfaces, patterns and effects; very rare books supply intellectual stimulus; plants that evoke states of mind and body (such as exotic flowers that stink like death) provide sensual amusement; and metaphors for his own indolence and decadence abound, including a tortoise whose shell has been encrusted with jewels that moves across the floor slowly as entertainment (and so burdened, soon dies).

[62] Howard Eiland, Kevin McLaughlin (translation of Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, ed., Rolf Tiedemann, 1982) *The Arcades Project: Walter Benjamin* (Cambridge MA/London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999); Susan Buck-Morss (1989), *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991)

[63] Guy Debord, Bauhaus Imaginiste, eds., *Guide psychogéographique de Paris: discours sur les passions de l'amour* (Copenhagen: Permind & Rosengreen, 1957)

[64] Iain Sinclair, *Lights Out for the Territory* (London: Granta Books, 1997); Iain Sinclair, *The Last London* (London: Oneworld, 2017)

[65] Patrick Keiller, *London* (UK: BFI Production/Koninck Studios, 1994)

[66] Patrick Keiller, *The View from the Trains: Cities and Other Landscapes* (London: Verso, 2014)

[67] Mark Pimlott, 'Thoughts while walking in a lane bound by wire fences, next to a rail line, behind houses and their gardens, in a suburb out of west London, with views of the countryside', Nigel Prince, Gavin Wade, eds., *In the Midst of Things* (London: August Media, 2000): 68–71; Mark Pimlott (1997), *1965: A stage, Streets, World, Kinderszenen*. A series of films shot in London, Paris, and Kyiv, Todd Gallery, London, 1998.

[68] Stephen Shore, *Biological Landscape: The Photography of Stephen Shore 1969–79*, International Centre of Photography, New York, 11 May–9 September 2007; *American Beauty: The Work of Stephen Shore* (DVD, 2006)

1.6 THE PUBLIC INTERIOR AND SUBJECTIVITIES

[69] Stephen Shore (1972), *American Surfaces* (London: Phaidon, 2008); Stephen Shore (1982) *Uncommon Places* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004); Stephen Shore, *Modern Instances: The Craft of Photography. A Memoir*. (London: MACK, 2022)

[70] Sebastiano Serlio (1545), 'Scena Satirica', 'Scena Comica', 'Scena Tragica', in Sebastiano Serlio, *Regole generali di architettura*, libro II

[71] Hannah Arendt, op.cit.; George Baird (1988), 'The space of appearance', in Detlef Mertens, ed., *Metropolitan Mutations: The Architecture of Emerging Public Spaces* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1989): 135–152

[72] Mark Pimlott (2016), *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2016)

[73] This was a specific aim of Joan Littlewood, Cedric Price and Gordon Pask in their development of provision in the Fun Palace (1960–1964). Cedric Price (London: Architectural Association, 1984): 56–61; Cedric Price, Hans Ulrich Obrist, ed., *Re: CP* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2003); Stanley Mathews, *From Agit-Prop to Free Space: The Architecture of Cedric Price* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007). The necessity of intersubjective experience in the city was central to the artist Dan Graham's designs for mirror-glass pavilions, reflecting on the mechanics of power in glass office buildings. These will be discussed in chapter 6 of this dissertation, 'The necessity of interpretation'.

[74] Emile Zola (1883), trans. Brian Nelson, *The Ladies' Paradise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

[75] Andreas Ulrich, *Palast der Republik: Ein Rückblick/A Retrospective* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2006)

[76] Christoph Grawe, *People's Palaces: Architecture, Culture and Democracy in Post-war Western Europe* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura, 2014)

[77] Yann Pavie, 'Towards a Museum of the Future: Interview with Pontus Hultén', in *Opus International*, nos. 24/25, 1971: 56–65

[78] Lina Bo Bardi, Aldo van Eyck, *Museu de Arte de São Paulo/São Paulo Art Museum* (Lisboa: Editorial Blau Lda, 1996)

[79] Mark Pimlott, 'The Ruin', in *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2016): 122, 124

[80] Lina Bo Bardi, *SESC-Fábrica da Pompeia/SESC-Pompeia Factory* (Lisboa: Editorial Blau Lda, 1996)

[81] Vincent Ponte (1967), 'Man, Buildings, New Dimensions for Downtown', Skyscraper Management, December 1967: 11–19; 36; Vincent Ponte (1971), 'Montreal's multi-level city centre', in *Traffic Engineering World Conference*, 1971/09/19–24: 20–25; 78

1.7 UNE 'VILLE INTÉRIEURE'

[82] The description of the project for Place Ville-Marie that follows in this section is largely drawn from a previous research project beginning in 2011, some of which is summarised in Mark Pimlott, 'Montréal: the Ville intérieure as Prototype for the Continuous Interior', in Pamela Johnston, ed., *Underground Cities: New Frontiers in Urban Living* (Lund Humphries, 2020): 22–41

[83] Mark Pimlott, *In Passing: Mark Pimlott Photographs* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2010)

[84] Mark Pimlott, *Without and Within: Essays on Territory and the Interior* (Rotterdam: Episode publishers, 2007)

[85] Zeckendorf and Pei had built up considerable experience in renewal of the 'heart of the city', developing several 'urban renewal' projects in the United States, notably the Mile High Center in Denver, Colorado (1956) and Washington Square East in Philadelphia (1960), that worked with the scale of the historical fabric while reordering automobile traffic and the public realm. Webb & Knapp (Canada) Ltd was the development company that employed Pei and his associates, first, as 'in-house' architects and planners. See William Zeckendorf, *Zeckendorf: The autobiography of the man who played a real-life game of Monopoly and won the largest real-estate empire in history* (New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, 1970)

[86] André Lortie, 'Montreal 1960: the singularity of a metropolitan archetype', in André Lortie, ed., *The 60s: Montréal Thinks Big* (Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004): 75–115. The plan notably incorporates key structural elements of Jacques Gréber's urban plan of 1953, in the spirit of the City Beautiful movement, wherein the axis of Avenue McGill–Collège, revealing Mont-Royal,

reminds citizens of the city's 'contract with nature': a key element of Olmsted-inspired urban design. Later projects by Pei's office reinforced this connection: their MACE plan (1966) proposed development of avenue McGill–Collège, concluding with two towers framing the view of Mont-Royal; See Roger Newman, 'Montreal may replace Toronto as Headquarters City, Planner Predicts', *The Globe & Mail*, Report on Business, Toronto, 21 July, 1967. Vincent Ponte would carry on with this work in his own report, prepared over twenty years later: Vincent Ponte, 'McGill College Avenue', unpublished manuscript, 1986

[87] Place Ville-Marie (IM Pei, with Henry N Cobb and Vincent Ponte, 1962–66), the existing Central Station (John Campbell Merrett, 1942), Queen Elizabeth Hotel and offices for the Canadian National Railways (George Drummond, 1958; 1961), and Place Bonaventure (Affleck Desbarats Dimakopoulos Lebensold Sise, 1967)

[88] Imagery of the passages informed the design of the below-plaza level 'Galerie des Boutiques'. Interview between Mark Pimlott and Henry N Cobb, at the offices of Pei Cobb Freed, New York, 23 February 2011

[89] Victor Prus, 'Metro Architecture', in *Architectural Design*, vol. 37, July 1967

[90] André Corboz, 'Place Bonaventure, Kraak de l'import-export', in *Archithese* 10, 1974: 34–40

[91] After an extensive renovation in the late 1980s, these spaces were filled with food courts and roofed over; the promenade's architectural features completely changed to resemble a conventional mall; the uniform signage system replaced with demands of the 'free market'. The Place above was converted to a 'park' with raised beds, lawns and trees, designed by the project's original executive architects, Affleck Desbarats Dimakopoulos Lebensold & Sise.

[92] Victor Gruen's Southdale Center in Medina, Minnesota (1956), in the suburban environs of Minneapolis, was the first indoor shopping mall and established what would become the most influential building type of the latter half of the twentieth century, and still potent today in its deployment in shopping developments, airports, museums, etc.

[93] For a more extensive discussion of this, see Mark Pimlott, *Without and Within: Essays on Territory and the Interior* (Rotterdam: Episode, 2007)

[94] Webb & Knapp (Canada) Ltd. (1960), *Building Standards Place Ville-Marie Shopping Promenade*, 24 pp. Pei Cobb Freed archives, New York. The design was a template, adopted as a standard in other developments in Montréal, such as Moretti and Nervi's Place Victoria, and by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in his own designs for underground shopping promenades at Montréal's Westmount Square (1968), Toronto-Dominion Centre, Toronto (1969) and his proposal for Mansion House at no. 1 Poultry, London (1969). See Jack Self, ed., *Mies in London* (London: Real Foundation, 2017)

[95] In Luc Bourdon's film, *La Mémoire des anges* (National Film Board of Canada, 2018), made from excerpts of films from the 1950s and 1960s in the National Film Board of Canada archive, a clip from *Caroline* (Clément Perron, Georges Dufaux, 1964) shows the main character at once entranced, distracted, and indifferent to window displays in the interior of the Galerie des Boutiques, in a blasé state as described by Georg Simmel.

[96] The square at Place Ville-Marie was intended to operate as a civic space, but it was realised that this could not happen spontaneously; rather, it was programmed for different events throughout the year, with the engagement of local groups, so that it would be embraced as a civic space. The programming was planned by the architects within the development company framework, and notably the work of a key publicist within the team, Nelly McLean. Webb & Knapp (Canada) Ltd (1959), *Place Ville-Marie: A Programme of Activities on the Mall and Plaza*. Pamphlet, 16pp. Pei Cobb Freed archives.

[97] Derek Drummond, 'In Praise of Modernist Civic Spaces in Canadian Cities', in *Policy Options*, February 2004: 53–58. In one, an effigy of Donald Gordon, President of the Canadian National Railway was burnt because of his view of the 'meagre' capabilities of French-speaking executives; in another, a massive rally was held for Canadian

unity before a referendum on Québec's separation, won narrowly by the nationalists, which led to accusations of English and Jewish manipulations, of which the rally was representative. Place Ville-Marie had notably been built with American and British funding. See also, Mark Pimlott, 'Place Ville Marie Montreal: hope and reality', in *Lobby* (London: Bartlett School of Architecture, July 2015)

[98] Raymond T Affleck, in 'Celebration of the Mixmaster', in *Modulus 5* (University of Virginia 1968): 62–70

[99] Kenneth Frampton, 'Place Bonaventure, Montreal', in *Architectural Design*, January, 1968: 33–42

[100] Reyner Banham, 'Megacity Montreal', in *Megastructures: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976): 104–129

[101] Eva Vescei, project architect of Place Bonaventure, interview with Mark Pimlott, 11 July 2011, at the rooftop garden of Place Bonaventure, Montréal. See Olga Gueft, 'Castle in the sky: Hotel Bonaventure', in *Interiors*, October, 1967: 102–117

[102] Victor Prus, 'Place Bonaventure Metro Station, Montreal' *The Canadian Architect* August 1967: 45–48; 'Station de Métro Bonaventure' *Le Devoir* 24 June 1964; Victor Prus, 'Metro Architecture', in *Architectural Design* (London), vol. XXXVII (July 1967); 'Bonaventure subway station, Montreal', *Canadian Architect* vol. 12, no. 8, August 1967: 45–48; Guy R Legault, 'Le Métro de Montréal', in *Architecture Canada* vol. 43, no. 8 (August, 1966): 44–48

[103] Mark Pimlott interview with Henry N Cobb, offices of Pei Cobb Freed, New York, 23 February 2011.

[104] 'Le Métro de Montréal', in *Architecture-Bâtiment-Construction* (September, 1966): 24–35. In the 1960s, Montréal benefitted from a new and diverse group of architects, as the profession was no longer the exclusive domain of local English-speaking architects, or those from Toronto or New York, who had dominated the profession previously. The cultural revolution in Québec (*la révolution tranquille*) of the late 1950s introduced a new generation of French-speaking architects getting major work; and the exodus of various European architects to the city, notably from Hungary, following the failed 1956 uprising, gave the architectural scene a much more cosmopolitan character, which found itself articulated in the city's sudden outburst of modernisation in the 1960s.

[105] Victor Prus, 'Reflections on the subterranean architecture of subway systems' in *Canadian Architect*, vol. 12, no. 2, February 1967: 35–36

[106] Norman Slater, 'Métro: Standardisation of Floor Material', 1964/09/01, Archive STM, Montréal; Pierre Bourgeau, 'Architecture of the Montréal Métro' 29pp. Archive STM, Montréal

[107] S M Staples, 'Transportation network at expo67' in *Architecture Canada*, vol. 43, no. 8, August 1966: 33–34

[108] This experience was common to expo67, reinforced by its quasi-urban layout, experimental architecture (R Buckminster Fuller, Frei Otto among others) and experimental cinema. Reyner Banham commented on the exhibition's particularly enthusiastic reception by children. Banham, op. cit.

1.8 A SITUATED SUBJECTIVITY

[109] Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967): "You are changing. Your family is changing. Your job is changing. Your education, your neighbourhood, your government, your relation to "the others" are changing. Dramatically!"

[110] Diana Periton, 'Urban Life', in Vittoria di Palma, Diana Periton, Marina Lathouri, eds., *The Intimate Metropolis* (London: Routledge, 2009): 9–40

[111] McLuhan, op. cit.

2 Images, appearances, utterances



2.1 A photograph of nothing happening

A black and white photograph of a fenced-off pathway crossing a lawn contains few features of interest to assess. The pictured scene is empty, and yet seems to await some event, either an arrival or a departure, either anticipating some event, or having witnessed an event. Yet no trace of any event can be seen.

A wooden fence defines the foreground of the image. A broad opening in the fence accommodates the footpath of hexagonal pre-cast paviments. The lawn, which appears to be maintained, rises uphill and away into the depth of the picture. At the top of the lawn and the very top edge of the photograph, there is a sliver of landscape, whose stones and hedges appear to be fenced off or set apart by a few widely spaced wooden stakes set into the ground. Adjacent to the path and to the left of the picture, a squat square section galvanised steel pole sticks up out of the grass, about waist height, with a hooded top protecting a button or a key. Next to it, a taller pole with a smoked glass globe lamp mounted on it is also set close to the path, sticking out of the ground. Although it is also rather short, it reaches the top of the picture frame. Further along the path, to the left of the image, a spindly galvanised steel pole, also waist height, is stuck in the ground. The three posts cast slender shadows along the grassy slope. On either side of the path lie patches of snow. On the upper side, there is just a trace, while on the lower side, the snow seems to have been shovelled or swept aside to form a small pile. The wooden fence in the foreground is made of square posts driven into the ground and stiles affixed to their sides and tops, somewhat artificially. Nothing else 'happens'.

Each element of the photograph is familiar, ordinary, ubiquitous. There are no rough aspects within the image or any of its features, yet the whole scene suggests 'the rustic', set in a place that would like to seem rugged, 'like the country'. Each element of the scene has been managed, either designed or mass-produced. Its rustic aspect presents itself as tamed. The scene, like the photograph, is composed rather than the result of those long-established patterns of use that are typical of the countryside. The scene is completely domesticated, and each element of it is tamed: the path is not worn into the grass, but paved with bricks, protecting it; their hexagonal shapes, suggestive of the beehive, can be laid easily by an unskilled labourer. The grass lawn has been mown to maintain an acceptable length, perhaps cut just before the onset of winter. The fencing in front of the stones at the top of the slope delineates either the hinterland or an adjacent property. The posts along the path and at the top of the scene can be driven into the ground by anyone with a mallet; the lamppost was probably ordered from a catalogue, its smoked glass sphere preferred to clear glass because it produces less glare when the light is on at night. The lamp looks efficient and modern, but not too modern. The post with the hooded top is probably meant to be there for security, its key for switching on the lamp, which someone does, most likely a worker from the local authority. The fence is also an item sourced from a catalogue of useful things for suburban milieux.¹ It *looks* like a fence that one might find in the countryside, where the posts and stiles, hewn from trees and cut to shape prevent farm animals from wandering across property. The agrarian feel of this fence was likely to have been the source of its appeal for whoever

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purchased it. It is a muted, suburban version of its rustic forbear, projecting an aura of safety without achieving it, with practical advantages for maintenance and any liability issues that might arise through misuse or damage. Within the fence, a pair of posts form an opening for a gate. One of the posts has two pairs of galvanised steel hinges fixed to it, but there is no gate, having either been removed or never ordered, as it probably had been deemed unnecessary. No cows are likely to wander through here, it is a border over which transgression is permitted.

The photograph, admittedly a selected view excised from broader circumstances, shows a constructed scene. The outward appearances of its components conform to ideas of what the functions of those components are, and how those same appearances can contribute to the communication of their functions through allusion and representation. In its fragmentary totality, each individual artefact is a piece of communication. The contributions they make to this communication are inconsistent, but work together, regardless. The image of the 'countryside' fence conflicts with that of the 'modern' lamp. But together, these two images come together in a productive way. The fence is not too rustic, the modern lamp, diminutive as it is, is not too aggressive. Along with the pathway of precast hexagonal paviours, all the components combine to communicate homeliness and safety through their individual appearances, the images they project.

2.2 Images

In considering the conditions in which one is situated, of which the scene depicted in the photograph *Flims CH1989* is but one example of all the representative scenes in the constructed world, what is the place and significance of the image in the operation, the workings of those conditions, the appearances of those conditions? The image is not an innocent 'picture' but an *artefact* that is constructed, and thereby connected, in a 'difficult' way, to language, and the ideas contained within language and ideas concerning beginnings, places, other places, others. How does the image affect the constructed environment and readings and interpretations of and responses to that environment and its architecture thereafter? What role does the image play in the imagining, proposing, mediation and actualisation of architecture, or, in short, its appearances? How does architecture appear, how does it make its appearance, what means and media does it deploy to communicate? Its means of communication are through space, material, and relations, and appearances both actual and mediated must be regarded as abundant; yet this communication is, as an utterance, always incomplete, contingent, and as insufficient as language itself. How might one inquire into its appearance and its form? How might this be useful for considering the potential for architecture's significance and openness to those who use it or are affected by it?

What is an image? One might think first of a picture, something that is looked at or meant to be looked at, something with an appearance. If one thinks of those countless images that one encounters every day, one will be aware that some seem to be almost accidental, casual, and others very consciously composed, and

between these two extremes, gradations of composition, staging, and construction. It follows that the image is not merely a surface, but both veil and intermediary to something more substantial. The image may be the outward surface of something that is significant.

The urbanised environment is informed by and inundated with images, from those that are banal, such as described in the photograph *Flims CH1989*, to the overwhelming elaborations of publicity-oriented spectacle.² The concern of this chapter is not with the range of images one is exposed to, but the fact of their presence: the image as condition, the image as construct, the image as appearance. Then, the nature of appearances, their mystery; the aspect of representation in appearance; the appearance as utterance or fragment of speech and idea. Finally, utterances as artefacts, or artefacts as utterances; and the constructed environment as one of utterances among utterances.

2.2.1 Image as condition

If infrastructure can hold images, as in the banal instance of the paraphernalia arranged around a pathway and the pathway itself in the photograph that is described in the opening to this chapter, buildings and interiors can also be bearers of images within their forms. The image can be muted or common, but it is inevitably a consequence of some kind of design. The image is integral to the artefact, regardless of its scale. The artefact communicates something through that image to a user, passerby, or consumer that can be recognised, interpreted, and read. That reading need not be literal: the image held within the artefact may just be a suggestion, an intimation. The presence of the image is particularly marked in the interior. In the domestic interior, images are held within objects that are likely to be connected to personal tastes and aspirations drawn from the public world, and where the welcoming of artefacts is contingent on their communication of intangible qualities to their hosts. In the public interior, images are held within the forms of architecture and the accoutrements of publicity, suggesting atmospheres, phantasmagoria, experiences of elsewhere, modes of freedom of movement, association and access.³

The introductory essay for the section 'Image' in the volume *Architectural Positions*⁴, offered as a reader for students of architecture at Delft University of Technology, rightly refers to the image in modernity, its omnipresence, and its ubiquity. If one considers the urbanised environment, artefacts such as buildings do not share the same imperatives as consumer objects or images from mass publicity. The communicative agency of buildings is comparatively muted, becoming exaggerated or intensified in the interior, in which users are often treated as captive subjects. The more the space is oriented towards spectacle and consumption, the more intense the communication imperative of its imagery becomes. Airports, for example, have over the last twenty years become overlain with familiar high street imagery to enhance their revenue.⁵

The work of architecture as artefact—building, interior, urban fragment—is habitually measured by its fulfilment of functions and the enabling of relationships that ensure its correct operation, which are brought into being through construction.

Construction is the primary medium through which the artefact communicates its desired relationships. This limited measure posits architecture as an instrument, and as such, part of a system of instruments. However, architecture is more than an instrument: it is a construct, certainly; yet it is one that is, by the definition of architecture itself, conscious of its means and its artifice. Architecture represents its operative ideas as it appears in the world, and it does so through its construction. From its beginnings and to the present, architecture has been involved in representation. The architectural artefact communicates to its many users—those directly involved in its purpose, those in contact with it, those affected by it, those it wishes to be viewed by—through its appearances and those appearances that surround it, both manifest and mediated: its physical, cultural and mediated contexts.

The image is not just a picture, nor a reproduction in some printed or digital or broadcast medium, it is the outward appearance of a thing—I use thing in the broadest sense of the word—it is the expression of the thing, it is the outward vestige of the idea of the thing. I am interested in how imagery finds itself in things: this is a central aspect of material culture. Material culture refers to the ideas and knowledge of culture(s) that become embedded in things that are made and among which people live their lives.

The image means something, it articulates something one is supposed to understand. It can be profoundly significant. It can be moving. The image communicates something: ideas about the world. I wish to describe images as *significant* manifestations. Images are connected to the world of things, the world of appearances, the world of collective and individualised knowledge. Images are embedded in interiors, their decoration, the objects within them, in buildings, and cities, and held within images themselves, paintings and photographs and pictures reproduced in a magazine or published for endless views online. The image is in and is the outward appearance of the thing, the expression of the thing, and the outward vestige of the idea of the thing.

The image is everywhere, in everything that is made. Since artefacts coexist with and depend upon other artefacts, so do the images and suggestions associated with them. Images in things exist among other images in things, are situated amidst those other things and hence related to those other them, even if accidentally. As the artefact is furthermore a product of intention and design, in which its use or understanding is dependent upon its legibility, it exists within and is an aspect of language and culture, and of material culture.

This, by extension, has implications for the consideration of architecture and its appearances, as well as its appearance in the world. A building is a designed and constructed artefact. Architecture, as a complex set of actions, is conscious of its processes of design, construction and appearance and relations to other buildings, spaces and infrastructures. Architecture is also a cultural artefact and a product of language, whose outward appearances situated amidst other appearances, whose image or complexes of images and imagery are obliged to be communicative. The image is central, therefore, for architecture, and understandings of architecture's articulation of its ideas.

2.2.2 Image as construct

The image of the artefact is but the outward surface of ideas that have contributed to its presence. That image is a construct, one that is consciously managed to affect the user's response, such as an invitation to use, or, as in the case of the photograph that introduced this chapter, reassurances about the nature and safety of a specific environment.

When the image stands alone, such as in print advertising, it can assume the form of a pure sign, exciting responses connected to desire, such as consumption, which satisfy the purposes of the producers of the image. Sometimes, an object can be made into such a sign, a vessel for the effective communication of ideas through its reproduced or mediated image, which has been constructed to render the boundary between object and consumer as slight as possible. The legibility and interpretability of that image depends upon its relation to other images known within a particular culture. The image 'speaks', in other words, to culturally specific groups of viewers, 'educated' in the image's visual language and its context. This leads to looking at reproduced images and images inscribed in artefacts as a matter of reading and interpreting their appearances as constructs, as signifiers of ideas or indices of other phenomena, and as aspects of knowledge.

The first view of methodology pertaining to deciphering the reproduced or mass-produced images connected with advertising was offered by Roland Barthes, in his essay 'Rhetoric of the Image' (1962),⁶ in which he indicated how relations between appearances and the desired message—in this case, signifier and signified—could be analysed or de-coded. This mass-produced imagery⁷ that large groups in a specific culture are familiar with are different from 'unique' images, for which other orders of attention and methodologies are required. One of the objects selected by Barthes for analysis and demonstration was a mass-produced, or mass-distributed image, central to an advertising campaign for Italian food products made and sold by the brand Panzani. In such imagery, communication and coercion are central. The image is intended for a group that will recognise it, and themselves, and will follow suggestions of the image, as they identify with its content and its message. A publicity campaign's reproduced image typically appears in a variety of contexts, sites, and media. Its ubiquity is part of its way of becoming familiar, a part of the environment, accepted and even welcomed by the viewer for which it is intended: for those who can recognise it, or want to recognise it, and want to identify with it. The image, in these settings, is legible. It becomes a sign. The sign becomes a presence in its settings, and then can be met, and read. Within the image are those signifiers that constitute its detail, drawn from a cultural agreements or conventions. These are offered in the advertising image as though residing on a plane of meaning or significance that is stored in cultural norms of behaviour and in artefacts that reside within a specific material culture. These signifiers carry connotations and infer aspects of shared knowledge and experience. It is important to note that these signifiers are arbitrary, that their connection to what is signified is fluid, and contingent on cultural agreement, such as that exists in language.

Barthes writes of the viewer's or reader's or interpreter's reliance on different kinds of knowledge embedded in the image—practical, national, cultural,

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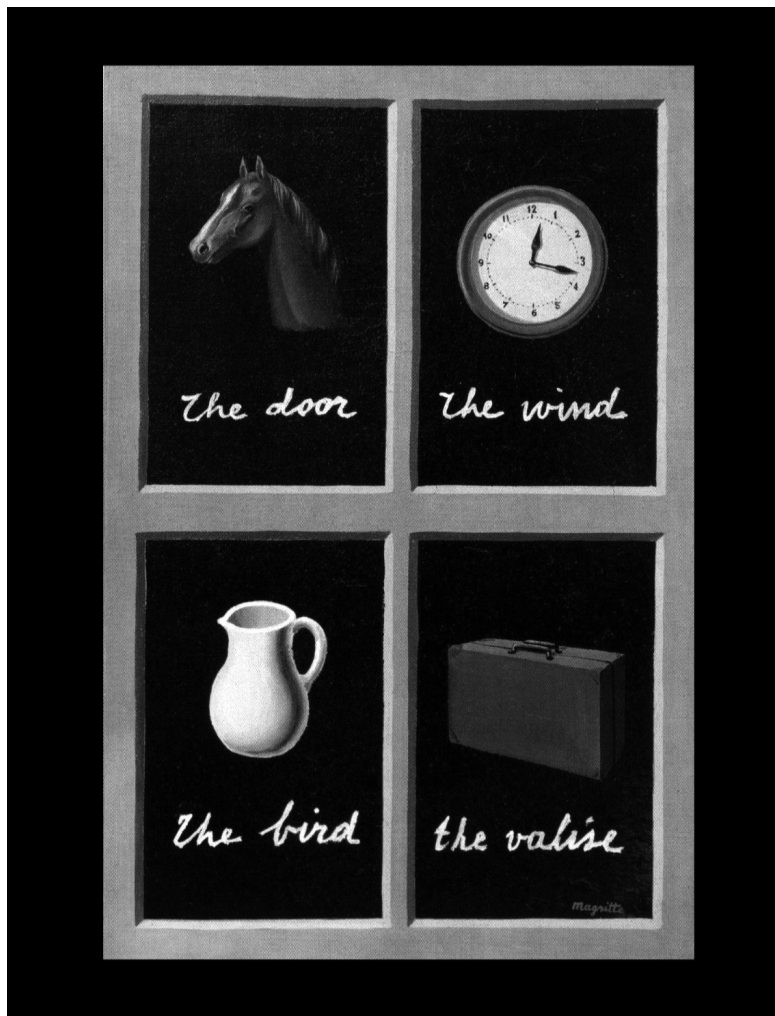


2.02
Advertisement for Panzani
alimentary items, 1960s.

aesthetic—that can be read by a large variety of people, with variations of degrees of legibility and accessibility due to the experience or knowledge of the individual viewing subject, and the culture in which the subject is embedded, where their subjectivity is formed. In the case of the Panzani advertising image, there are linguistic messages contained in the name of the brand and elements in its visual field that indicate that it is or refers to being Italian, which Barthes calls its ‘Italianicity’. There are denoted messages within the visible components of the image that connect those components to lived, seen, or imagined experience that conform to the viewer’s idea of reality, and connoted messages, or meanings within the image, in which visual elements suggest culturally understood characteristics. The connoted messages are designed to work on the viewer, opening the image for decoding by its large number of viewers to affect a degree of association between the image and its viewers as individuals and as a collective, affected together. In advertising, this is how an audience and a market is cultivated. The image reinforces the viewer’s worldview or sense of themselves within its field of connotations to stimulate identification. The connotations of the image are suggestive, multivalent. The relation between the outward appearance of the constituent parts of the image and that which they connote are not consistently straightforward, however; they communicate more to viewers that have more material cultural knowledge.

Barthes’s analysis derives from semiology, the science of the study of signs, a discipline first developed by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), concerning the workings of language, and the question of how meaning is ascribed and constructed within its essential elements.⁸ Further discussion of this will come in chapter 4, ‘The complexity of experience’. In semiology, one embarks on processes of analysis that are attached to language, to signs and signifiers, and therefore to ‘reading’, and interpretation. This is not straightforward, as there is no direct relation between the sign and signified. It is only through convention that ‘direct’ correlations between a sign and that which it signifies exist. Signs are arbitrary, and inconsistent between languages.

This is a problem of language; it is also a problem of representation. The two are bound. The painting *La Clef des songes* [*The Key to Dreams*] by René Magritte (1927) demonstrates the unreliable and arbitrary relation between image and idea, between signifier and signified. In the painting, a representation of a window with four black panes, each pane accommodates an image with a word under it, in white script, in English. The words ‘describing’ the images to which they are captions are largely ‘wrong’. ‘The door’ captions a painted horse’s head; ‘the wind’ accompanies a painted clock; ‘the bird’ lies under a jug; ‘the valise’ describes a valise. One is correct, but they may all be correct. The word does not attach itself to its image; the image does not necessarily attach itself to its word. Magritte’s mother-tongue is French. There may be a problem of a misunderstanding, or of translation, but this is not so. Language assigns names to things arbitrarily. The relation between word and image, or word to any *thing*, is arbitrary. In Genesis, Adam is given the role of naming the animals, pinning names on living things that only knows themselves as themselves. The act of attaching a name to a thing, a signifier to a signified, is arbitrary, and culturally specific.



The British writer, critic and artist John Berger, in his television series and book *Ways of Seeing* (1972) used this painting for the cover of the book, introduced with these words:

“Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak.

“But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.

“The Surrealist painter Magritte commented on this always-present gap between words and seeing in a painting called *The Key to Dreams*.

“The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe.”⁹

Given the arbitrary nature of the sign, can semiology or the study of signs be useful in looking at architecture and the imagery it literally constructs? Architecture proposed as a system of signs or signification is seen as early as Vitruvius, whose potential was certainly recognised by Alberti.¹⁰ The architecture of ancient Rome was reconstituted as a system of signification that could be adapted and fitted to all manners of expression. The systematisation of the ancient orders was reinforced by Sebastiano Serlio, by Andrea Palladio, whose *I Quattro Libri di Architettura* were a kind of code book (as well as promotion for his own practice) and reiterated elsewhere. In the case of Britain, Inigo Jones introduced Palladio, while Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* offered a set of repeatable codes and patterns, while William Chambers, whose understanding of those codified and systematised forms also inferred their connections to ‘original’ models.¹¹ In modernity, this codified image of architecture became the basis of the education of architects for the emerging bureaucratic state: in the case of post-revolutionary France, Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand's *Leçons sur l'architecture*, given at the Ecole Royale Polytechnique at the beginning of the nineteenth century, provided patterns for the organisation of building and systematisation of its appearances, all of which were to eventually, through their influence on architects via publications, reinforce the state's programme of regulation and bureaucratic process manifest in its institutions and their expressions.¹²

In the case of many of those architects featured in the ‘image’ section of *Architectural Positions*, one sees the evidence of methodologies of analysis and design specific to the image, and the language of signs and signification within artefacts. Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour worked in collaboration with the photographer Stephen Shore to look at and analyse American suburbia as one might analyse an advertising image, or any other manifestation of material culture.¹³ In the large-scale photographs of tract-houses and their interiors made by Shore for ‘Signs of Life: Symbols in the American City’ at the Smithsonian Museum, Washington, in 1975, voice balloons emerge from pieces of furniture, as though expressing their desire of what they want to be, which is bound up in their image, through allusion and association.¹⁴ The voices similarly emerge from the house itself and the features of its front yard, alluding to dreams and associations, each a signifier imperfectly yet adequately connected to what it signifies. It goes without saying that these outward appearances are weak, representative of the banality of suburbia. However, the signs are strong, at once legible for the homeowners, their neighbours, and projections of aspiration. Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour responded to this order of the sign, extending their work in their Las Vegas studio, seeing this imagery as connected to ambitions particular to American popular culture.¹⁵ Those desires were amplified by media-driven expectation, effectively programmed by advertising agencies in agreement with the US government, financial institutions, the automobile industry, the consumer goods industry and real estate developers in the years immediately following the conclusion of the Second World War, as a means of stabilising society. Yet, the signs of such desires tended to be dismissed as trivial ‘low’ culture.¹⁶

Venturi and Scott Brown's studies of the ‘language’ of Main Street, Route 66 and the Las Vegas Strip, and its building typologies oriented toward the ‘public realm’

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defined by the automobile, took them directly into considerations of the building as sign, as communicator, as image intended for reading and consumption.¹⁷ This became central to their practice thereafter, but even in Venturi and Scott Brown's early work, and before their partnership, the proposition of architecture as image oriented towards reading was very important. A competition proposal for the NFL Hall of Fame in the form of an illuminated scoreboard (or roadside billboard): the Bill-Ding-Board.¹⁸ Sometimes, the imagery was more erudite, recalling, to an audience perhaps incapable of deciphering its signs, the architecture of Italy, to which Venturi had a profound connection.

The image, constructed and embedded in the appearance of architecture consciously proposed as a system of signs, also abides in buildings, building complexes, and urban spaces in which no such system is even contemplated. The architectural project is a construct, its outward appearance the consequence of complex determinations and myriad human interactions. To come into being, it must exist as an idea and an image, or many kinds of images, in advance of its realisation. To thrive in occupation and use, the project must frequently rely upon different forms of appearance, achieved through images. The project must establish itself within patterns of acceptance and habituation that allow it to become part of the city. The project therefore also exists in mediated form, in which images, either anticipating the project's realisation or following its completion, become part of its presence in the public imagination. One has become accustomed to manipulated or computer-generated imagery in the propaganda surrounding the 'selling' of contemporary architecture,¹⁹ yet I will return to a project discussed in chapter 1, 'Territories, interiors, subjectivities': the project for the centre of the 1960s multi-level core of downtown Montréal, to illustrate how other types of images are integral to architecture as realised, amplifying its presence. A study of this project's appearance—its image—required a method that dealt with the many layers of its image, its appearance to its users, and those who would be affected by it.

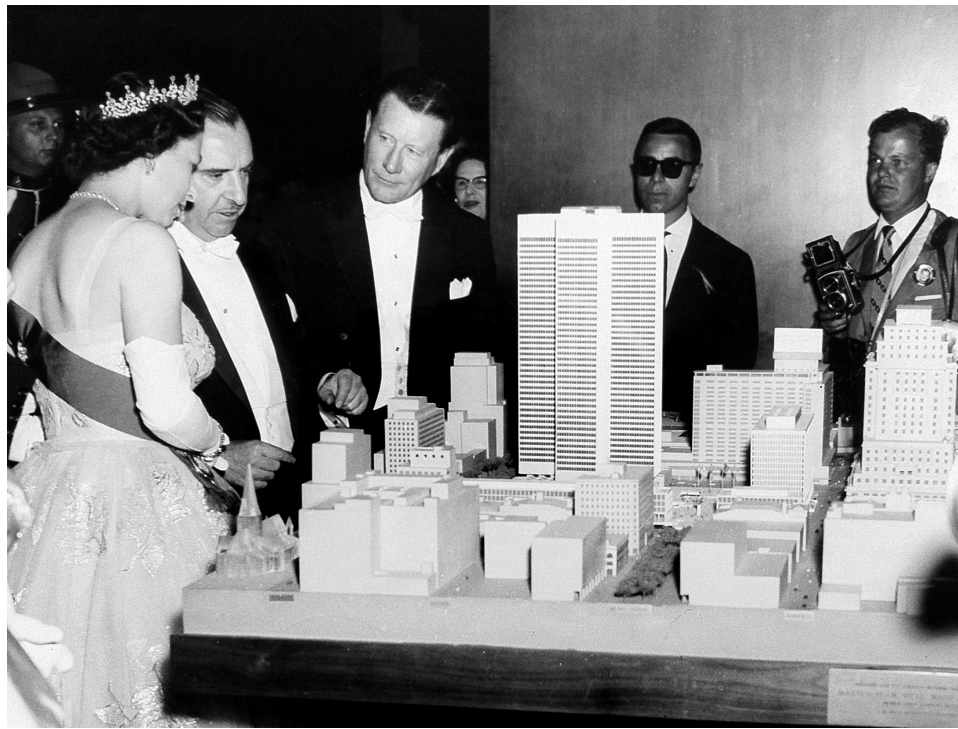
The Ville-Marie project expressed, on one hand, that North American condition of interior and its total environment that unified the scenes of work, dwelling, leisure and consumption. On the other hand, and paradoxically, this same project seemed to express and offer in and through its connectivity to other large-scale urban structures an atmosphere of freedom, transmitted through its diverse appearances, as a building and a plethora of mediated images that had manoeuvred the project into a set of recognisable 'places' of the imagination. In this case, as is common to most large-scale architectural and urban projects, Place Ville-Marie appeared before it was realised: as a series of 'effects' in various guises attached to those branches of media, whether press or publicity, that announced its coming. Thereafter, it appeared as an artefact that had been already anticipated, whose audience had been prepared and introduced; an artefact surrounded by words and images: a work of fictions and realities, articulated within a series of visual and textual languages whose currency was being established. It appeared in subtly different guises in newspaper and magazine articles, promotional literature, business press (propaganda for the project, with the object of attracting tenants), construction press, trade press, popular press and advertising campaigns of various associated



agents,²⁰ which promoted the project, and worked to confirm a view that the city's view of itself was that it was prepared to embrace 'the future' (or at least a version of American corporate Modernism).

Place Ville-Marie's appearance was furthermore conditioned by the cultural setting of its reception. The mediated versions of the project indeed situated it within a variety of contemporary cultural *milieux*: those of the general, anglophone, suburban, commuting, white-collar public; the business world; publicists; city authorities; the intelligentsia; and the francophone public, finding their voice. Typically, one might assume the cultural setting to be coherent, but in this instance, that setting faced discord over its identity,²¹ and disruption, through which the artefact's appearance was further mediated, causing it to disappear, or appear as a symbol of another public. The 'identity' of the architectural artefact was therefore not unitary but contested. It incited different aspects of concern to different viewers, and so 'appeared' differently with respect to specific viewers and publics, commentators and audiences.

Then follows the material fact of the artefact and its appearances, its image. One is obliged to consider the making—the act—and the presence of the artefact, in efforts to understand its appearance. One must observe and document how it is integrated into the quotidian affairs and movements of the city. Development sketches, letters and construction documents acted as indices of intention and instructions for execution. The constructed project was represented in documentary materials such as photographs made for architects' internal use or publication, and so, carefully curated to reinforce an idealised presentation and appearance to prospective clients, city authorities, professional publications and popular media. All these pre-images



and mediated images were central to understanding the appearance of the project, as they indicated the underlying intentions of the various agents and protagonists of the project, either through words or internal discourse surrounding the project, or drawings of the project which are both precise and instrumental.

Interviews were conducted with authors of the project, and those directly connected to them;²² with those involved in extending the project, and those involved in its life and discourse in the years following its construction. Descriptions of the artefact as experienced were studied, as was criticism—interpretive views—both contemporary to the project's realisation, and from later moments. Arguments were studied that had been made for the project twenty years later, and unrealised plans for its extension, or its continuing realisation.²³ The project was studied directly as it appeared and disappeared, its episodes and their affects, as well as its influence upon other parts of the city, through photography. Other aspects of the project such as its interiors were documented as they were modified over time, illustrating the project itself, and aspects of its urban contexts over the course of many years.

This kind of attention to the various forms of appearance of the project illustrated that the artefact's (in this case, the project's) image is one that is carefully constructed by many agents, and constantly revised so that it can appear continuously, in an ever-unfolding present. Attention towards the image of an artefact as imagined, mediated and realised are inevitably interpretative, yet situated within

larger historical moments, within culture, within people's lives and experience. These iterations of the project beyond its physical presence in the city, as a reality open to experience, even iterations of the project in film, in which it represented a greater, alienating, contemporary reality, affected the perception and reception of the project to the point that direct experience was filtered through a haze of image-founded narratives. The project was a vast financial undertaking, involving many urban agents, so such narratives are not unexpected. Nevertheless, one can imagine that a more modest artefact exists at once as both itself and its image: as an object and as an object of desire.²⁴ A total consideration of the artefact's image as a construct offers a way towards looking at architecture as one might look at any other image construct, such as an advertisement, a painting, a photograph, a chair, a suburb, or a roadside hotdog kiosk, situated within time. One is looking at an artefact, which, as a construct, bears an image of itself and its idea.

2.3 Appearances

I am interested in appearances, in the appearances of things among other things, in resemblances and allusions and ideas within appearances. I agree with Oscar Wilde, who said, "It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible."²⁵ Through its difference, or alterity, the image appears in the space of perception, as in the case of the emergence of a figure on the stage from the darkness of the wings. The appearance of such a figure is undeniable. The figure *appears* as a protagonist, a character, that must have some sort of significance. It appears as an other. This is a matter that will be discussed further in both chapter 4, 'The complexity of experience', and chapter 5, 'The matter of attention', but now, it is important to understand how one acknowledges and meets such an appearance.

Hannah Arendt wrote of the space of the public in the man-made world as a space in which people appear to each other as others appear. The space of appearance is that space in which people appear as themselves and to each other in public with no other obligations. This is significant, as it concerns the freedom to exist, the freedom to *be*, to be equal, to be part of a *polis*. In the two versions of his essay 'The Space of Appearance' (1988, 1995), George Baird describes different notions of the public, and the space afforded to the public, in contrasting architectural ideas of the last part of the twentieth century, from CIAM's debates over 'the heart of the city' at Harvard, to Team Ten's rejections of CIAM's rigidity, to critique of Team Ten by advocates of the historical city and the Rational Architecture movement through the ersatz yet plausible 'public realm' fantasy architecture of Disneyland, brought to professional eyes by Charles W Moore.²⁶ Yet Baird helpfully brings the reader back to Arendt's description of this space in *The Human Condition* (1958), that lead both versions of his essay, and which I quote at length again here:

"The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organisation of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its

true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be.

“No matter where you are you will be a *polis*’: these famous words became not merely the watchword of Greek colonisation, they expressed the conviction that action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost any time and anywhere. It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly.

... “To be deprived of it means to be deprived of reality, which, humanly and politically speaking, is the same as appearance. To men the reality of the world is guaranteed by the presence of others, by its appearing to all; “for what appears to all, this we call Being,”²⁷ and whatever lacks the appearance comes and passes away like a dream, intimately and exclusively our own but without reality.”²⁸

Arendt writes of the appearance of people in the *polis*, a place that moves with them, the space of appearance. The notion of *appearing* is centrally important for this entire dissertation, whose premise or advocacy is for empathy, for movement towards the other, and for an attitude wherein the other and their conditions are to be met, so the architect’s work, or more precisely, the work of that work can begin.

Here, in consideration of a world of others, there is also consideration of conditions, of a world of things; of inanimate artefacts that separately and together speak of human intention, projection, memory, imaging and imagination, ideas, conventions, desires, purpose, life. These artefacts are blind, awaiting engagement, recognition, reception, acceptance, use; that gathering in human consciousness. These artefacts are aspects of the past that long to exist in the present.

As I write these words, I appear. To appear is not just a matter of visibility, but presentation, to present an appearance. The appearances I have been alluding to throughout are those of the traces and residue of human action, experience, and thought that reside in artefacts themselves, and in that accumulation of artefacts that constitute the constructed environment and its scenes. This pertains to the ‘appearance’ of the inanimate, which has been given the varied tasks of appearing and performing in that environment. Like people, inanimate artefacts, such as buildings, speak of themselves through their appearances. One can be tender towards them, as they are the residue of the investment of thoughts and ideas, of previous lives.

Is there doubt regarding the agency of the inanimate? The philosopher Jacques Lacan recounted an episode in which he realised that it was indeed possible that they might have the power to “look back”, originating from another’s remark that such an object—in the anecdote, a sardine tin floating in the sea—could be looked at, but could not see him.²⁹ It is an episode that will be expanded upon in chapter 4, ‘The complexity of experience’, but Lacan’s reflection complements the notion that inanimate objects, specifically human artefacts, have some sort of voice, and therefore, agency. That agency is not active, but one tied to the intent, idea, task, ‘speech’ invested in artefacts by their makers. In the simplest interpretation, human artefacts ‘speak’ of their purpose, from the most elevated to the most banal or abject.

As one becomes aware of artefacts in the urbanised environment, one becomes conscious of their appearance, as one might become conscious of the appearance of significant artefacts on a stage.

I propose that architecture is the most elevated purpose for an inanimate artefact, or the purpose that is most conscious of itself. It is also that purpose whose ‘speech’ is most codified, and yet most enigmatic. In the Western, European tradition, one is aware of the codification of architectural conventions of ancient Greece and ancient Rome, in what John Summerson, and Alexander Tsonis and Liane Lefaivre have described as a language of architecture, a Classical language of architecture.³⁰ In classical architecture, this is a language of signs, of things standing in for other, largely forgotten things. Conventionalised to the point of invisibility or transparency, its constituent elements come together in expressions of character, the subtleties that distinguish a law court from a gaol, or a university from a temple to the Muses.

2.3.1 Appearance as mystery

Such subtleties of architectural language are directed towards initiates. They are consistent with codes and passwords. There is always an element of denial in appearance. To get to its essence, one is obliged to negotiate with its intermediaries, its codes, the arbitrariness of its language. The appearance conceals meaning. What appearance offers up is material that is intended to be both read and felt. As it recognises its function of concealment, the appearance takes on the quality of mystery. The blank façade, whether that offered up by Federico Zuccaro in Firenze,³¹ or by Le Corbusier in La Chaux-de-Fonds,³² denies its proper functioning in the city. Its appearance is one of a mask that reveals nothing. It cannot be penetrated. Its look is a blank stare.

If the classical language of architecture is one of signs that are intended to communicate something of idealised tectonics, and ‘character’, what if those signs are taken to be arbitrary (as they are) and used to defy the logic of that language, and deny its reading? What if those signs are used so that they appear as themselves? The sign detached from that which it proposes to signify is then unmoored, autonomous, and potentially illegible. Michelangelo Buonarroti’s designs for the Medici chapel at San Lorenzo and the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Firenze, display a treatment of a freshly re-established language of classical architecture—re-born—that dispenses with the codified inter-relation of its constitutive elements, and treats each of these elements as figures that can be assessed and re-utilised for new compositional means unrelated to their ‘order’.³³

Rem Koolhaas, from the 2014 Biennale di architettura, ‘Monditalia’ (installed in the Corderie dell’Arsenale):

“In the Fall of 2006, I felt a sudden urge to revisit, or visit for the first time, the Italian Renaissance (...). By far the most disturbing space I experienced on this journey the Laurentian Library by Michelangelo. This space was terrifying, almost like a nightmare. Nothing worked. Everything was ‘wrong’. But the sum of its dysfunctions was gripping. It was as if the outside skin of the palace had been stripped off and used to line an inner courtyard—folded, condensed, even crumpled. All proportions

were off in this heavy-handed compression. Its space was blatantly an interior, but strangely it offered the experience of an exterior defined by four different façades through which you could enter four different destinations. Michelangelo takes each architectural element and forces it into new shapes and new relationships—he respects no rules and ridicules the ‘lessons’ architects have applied to their own profession. He breaks down and reimagines the wall, the window and the door in an area no bigger than a living room, dominated by a huge sculpture that pretends to be a staircase. For contemporary artists and architects, the lesson of the Laurentian Library is perhaps that Mannerism is a dish best eaten cold and in small doses.”³⁴

2.06 ←

In the vestibule of *ricetto* of the Biblioteca Laurenziana (1523), all elements of the architecture seem to lead independent lives. The space is square in plan, significantly taller than a cube. As a vestibule for the long library room three metres above, it necessarily accommodates a stair. Yet the stair effectively fills it so completely that the room, some 10,2 metres on each side, seems almost impossible to occupy. One enters the *ricetto* perpendicular to the stair, exaggerating its presence, emphasising its indifference to human concerns. It obeys the order of the very long library chamber that it serves. It is the room’s sole occupant, split into three splayed runs, almost animate. It is otherwise crowded in by the space’s vertiginous walls, 14,5 metres high, which are similarly alive, and wild. Pilasters become free columns constrained by pockets that are niches between panels that have become protruding volumes, themselves occupied by blind aedicules, all rendered in *pietra serena* and white plaster. Three storeys of this giant assembly, independent of order, overwhelm the visitor, who is rendered insignificant. The constituent elements of the room’s architecture stand utterly apart from human engagement, reading, or even interpretation. String courses, entablatures, frames, all bear unique and elaborate profiles, sharp, nested in the manner of *mise en abîme*, autonomous.³⁵ All these elements, normally designed to be well-mannered, to work together, in a synthesis of form, are here signs unleashed from and unburdened by their typical roles.

The library and its *ricetto* are part of the complex of San Lorenzo, designed in large part by Piero Brunelleschi, a most perfect articulation of High Renaissance poise, of its icy perfection, in its same palette of *pietra serena* (dark, unblemished grey) and white plaster. Michelangelo’s Medici Chapel (1521) in San Lorenzo initiates a response to Brunelleschi’s coherent language, as a chorus of variations, intriguing, yet remaining legible. The *ricetto* can be regarded as a chaotic fugue. It is not a background for the erudite pursuits of clerical scholars who wish to study in the library’s reading room. It is almost a rebuke, demonstrating indifference, if not hostility to those it encounters. It overwhelms, diminishes them.

What kinds of signs *are* these? What do they, all together, attempt to say? Are they simply a roar into the indeterminate vastness of time? And if so, then might not all such efforts at making works for posterity share something of that singularity, that pathos, that hubris? The appearances of Michelangelo’s *ricetto* are enigmatic, undecipherable because the sign has become detached from that which it signifies, its arbitrariness exposed; the synthesis of the elements of the signified have been abandoned, and one is left with something monstrous—a manifestation



of *terribilità*³⁶—divorced from the world. It is an extreme case, in which the tools available to the architect—in this case the classical elements—have been used for other purposes: to say something, or, consistent with the œuvre of Michelangelo, to affect a kind of body.

Although the language of classical architecture has been subverted by Michelangelo to say something else, not to do with abstracted construction but pure physical and spatial form, the expressions of the *ricetto* are still in the realm of language, and its speech. It is a kind of speech that eschews convention, that is a transgression, the dialect that strained the synthetic classicism of the Renaissance, common to Mannerism, which succeeded it.³⁷ It is, regardless, an utterance.³⁸

2.3.2 Appearance as utterance

The appearance of artefacts in the man-made world, in the urbanised environment, suggests the legibility and utility of these artefacts, specific to cultures equipped to read, interpret and use them. These artefacts serve many roles, of varying degrees of usefulness and meaning. Even art, useless as it must be, can be useful. Some artefacts bear more significance than others. Artefacts depend on each other for their meanings. They are never on their own, but related to other

artefacts, either contingent or adjacent; or related through forms of resemblance, intimation, allusion. Some are instruments, to be used as such, communicating their roles through their legible and culturally specific identities, in which a clock is a clock, and not 'the wind'. At the beginning of this chapter, such elements are demonstrated to be additionally burdened with localised cultural expectations, clarifying their relation to other artefacts and ideas surrounding those artefacts. Some artefacts bear sets of cultural ideas within their appearances.

Architecture is a very elaborate artefact, in which appearance is bound at once to technology and culture, and forms of 'speech' that derive from local and much wider frames of reference. Altogether, from the most banal through the most sophisticated, artefacts in the man-made environment both constitute that environment and establish its character. Each constituent element of that environment expresses its purpose individually, and in relation with other elements, and by design or accident, with all the elements together—of the ideas of the whole—whether that idea is coherent or not. As images are held in artefacts, those images appear, and in those appearances, the ideas within those artefacts are projected and uttered. The man-made environment is an expressive concatenation of scenes, replete with artefacts that appear, that present themselves, that 'look back', that speak of themselves and the cultures that made them, of their ideas, their lives. Attention to this environment is achieved through attention to its artefacts, their appearances, their relations to each other, their utterances.

2.4 Utterances

How one goes about addressing the accumulation of artefacts—which do not appear all at once but do so over time—is a matter of attention, of 'listening' to their utterances.³⁹ The means by which this listening is carried out is rightly particular to each practice, but as this chapter has been concerned with images and appearances, tools that respond directly to images and appearances of artefacts—things that are man-made and continuous with the constructed environment—are most likely to permit the utterances to be 'heard'. In my own practice, my means of listening—all my life—has been a kind of topographic photography.

"I have often been asked what I am trying to find. My answer comes from the nature of these fabricated appearances themselves, articulations of desires, fantasies, artifice, projections of power: *utterances* laden with ideas, and like all utterances, inadequate, incomplete. This is the nature of representation, which carries within it the impulse towards communicating the real, towards transparency and redemption."⁴⁰

One must imagine a concatenation of various appearances stretching from the present into the past, which have left their mark on the situations one finds in the urbanised environment. A recognition of the presence of representation in architecture and in the entire constructed environment, of the depth of the images which surround us and in which we are implicated, in which the ideas of how to occupy

the surface of the world speak through appearances, for good and bad, and reveal what is common to its myriad utterances. When one looks at something, one looks at complexes of ideas, which are attached to place, identity, time, histories, narratives, fictions, and efforts at a kind of speech about it all. One also looks at the ruins of the past, and the ruins of ideas and lives of which artefacts are their investment.

The architect must acknowledge this aspect of the nature of the constructed environment, as they add to the accumulation of artefacts, the complexity of their relationships, and ultimately, the scenography of ruins that will be addressed by others that follow, continually, endlessly, pushing the present into the past. What they make, as human and as attuned to people as it might be, is inanimate, and will join all the other inanimate artefacts, and following a period of its intended utility or currency, will become, inevitably, a ruin awaiting new uses, misuses, and abuses. Its communicative capacity will be diminished, and may be debased, but it will remain that artefact that conveys its idea and aspects of the culture from which it originates from the moment of its realisation to an ever-unfolding present; and from those futures in which it will appear, it will be both present and past. A plenitude of such artefacts greets the architect along with the people and needs the architect serves, for a limited future, in the present. The architect must accept that the future of their work will be as the future of works—now artefacts—from times past that appear in the present, an utterance that joins all others.

One inhabits and moves within environments of such utterances, just as one lives, listens, speaks, and writes within an environment of language, shared with others. Language, as it is shared within a culture, permits thoughts and ideas to be offered and received, even if its expressions and understandings may be imperfect. This pertains to architecture, which has its own languages, spoken by few. Architecture's communication is imperfect. A gap exists between the ideas it strives to embody and the legibility of what is realised. The utterance, the constructed work, bearing the burden of conveying meaning, is a representation. This gap or shortcoming is to be distinguished from the fate of the work of architecture that proceeds from the moment of its realisation and the fulfilment of its intended purposes. Its integrity, its total expression, filled with the life of those for whom it is made and where it is made, and the world that it is situated in and who it speaks to fades with time. The realised work of architecture is ultimately an artefact subject to the same fate as other artefacts. Its ruins will be looked upon by others in the future. As soon as one recognises that way of things in the world—that there is an idea and an image, an image and an appearance, an appearance and an utterance, all pressed into a presence that appears, that works for a time, that may be inadequate, weak, and ultimately obsolete or invisible—one comes to understand the nature of such appearances, and that the space between idea and presence that is germane to them gives them, as utterances, their authority, their power, their poignancy, and their humanity.

2.1 A PHOTOGRAPH OF NOTHING HAPPENING

[1] There are a wealth of online catalogues for such things, but two that seem fitted to the pretensions of this scene are *Euroquiment* (incorporated 1973, dissolved 2016) for industrial and commercial items of utterly utilitarian character; and *Manufactum*, for household items, including garden, office, kitchen and bathroom accessories, as well as furniture, clothing, and stationery, all of which have a pronounced *bourgeois* aura. <https://www.manufactum.com>

2.2 IMAGES

[2] Guy Debord (1967), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995); Susan Buck-Morss (2000), *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2002)

[3] Mark Pimlott, *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2016)

[4] ‘Image’, in Tom Avermaete, Klaske Havik, Hans Teerds, eds., *Architectural Positions: Architecture, Modernity, and the Public Sphere* (Amsterdam: Sun, 2009): 277–282

[5] Mark Pimlott, ‘The Continuous Interior: Infrastructure for Publicity and Control’, in *Harvard Design Magazine. What about the Inside?*, no. 29, Fall/Winter 2009: 75–86

[6] Roland Barthes (1964), trans. Stephen Heath, ‘The Rhetoric of the Image’, in *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977): 32–51

[7] Walter Benjamin (1935), trans. Harry Zohn, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in Hannah Arendt, ed., *Illuminations* (London: Fontana Press, 1973; 1992): 211–244

[8] Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), trans. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehayé, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959)

[9] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972): 7–8. In *Ways of Seeing*, Berger looked at things, among them the genre of ‘nude’ paintings, and placed these alongside contemporary advertising images from the late 1960s and early 1970s that featured women. ‘The nude’ was habitually described as a genre but highlighted in Kenneth Clarke’s BBC television series *Civilisation* (1969), which Berger found himself obliged to rebuke. These images, nudes and advertising images used the male gaze and projection, fantasies of sexual gratification, and all the implicit and attendant power relations, to sell a variety of products that would satisfy the targeted male consumer. Berger found that these images worked in the same framework as the conventions of representational ‘nude’ painting, and their constructs of power. Berger was concerned with the image as a construct and the public’s subscription to its construct, which was not exclusively male. He saw that this kind of advertising imagery was not the preserve of the commercial art director, but prevalent, and pervasive. It reinforced the structures of power that demeaned and diminished women.

[10] Leon Battista Alberti (c 1450), trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, Robert Tavernor, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1988); Jean-Nicholas-Louis Durand, *Précis des leçons de l’architecture données à l’École Royale Polytechnique* (1802–1805), trans. David Britt, Steven Lindberg, ed., *Précis of the Lessons on Architecture* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2000)

[11] John Summerson (1963), *The Classical Language of Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1966)

[12] Robin Middleton, David Watkin (1980), *Neoclassical and 19th Century Architecture*, vol. 1 (London, Milano: Faber & Faber, Electa, 1987): 28

[13] ‘Precedents of Suburban Symbols’, from Learning from Levittown Studio, Yale, 1970, in David B Brownlee, David G De Long, Kathryn B Hiesinger, *Out of the Ordinary: Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Associates* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001): 46, 71–72

[14] Stephen Shore, ‘Signs of Life: Symbols in the American City’. “One of the things I find fascinating about commissions is that it forces

me to do things I would not normally do on my own. And I find that very useful, and it expands my thinking. “In 1975, the architects Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi commissioned me to take photographs for a bicentennial exhibition they were planning for the Smithsonian called *Signs of Life: Symbols in the American City*. I traveled from Los Angeles to New York and photographed along the way, keeping in mind a list of different kinds of architecture that Scott Brown and Venturi had given me. “Later in this show, you’re gonna see some work I did in the village of Luzzara, in Italy. In a letter that Paul Strand had written when he had photographed in the same village 40 years before I was there, he said, ‘It was very difficult to photograph in Luzzara, because there are no buildings of architectural interest.’” “And I found that phrase very meaningful and fascinating. To Strand, it might mean a building by a fine architect, or a building that was resonant of the builder’s humanity. But, for me, the idea of architectural interest was something else, which is that I was fascinated by cultural forces. But, I can’t photograph a cultural force; I can only photograph things that become visible in the world. And one of the ways they become visible is in architecture. Not just what was built, but how it was transformed over the years. And so, the idea that a town would have buildings of no architectural interest is, for me, inconceivable.” <https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/45/718>, accessed 2024/10/28

[15] Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour (1972), *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1977); Hilar Stadler, Martino Stierli, with Peter Fischli, eds., *Las Vegas Studio: Images from the Archives of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown* (Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2008)

[16] The installation made for the United States Pavilion at expo67 in Montréal by Cambridge Seven Associates featured all sorts of Americana—memorabilia of popular American culture—alongside large-scale images of Hollywood icons and Pop imagery, as well as the Command and Lunar modules of spacecraft from the Apollo programme. The then-Governor of Michigan was appalled by the display, due to its embrace of the banal. “It was pretty on the outside, but full of trivia on the inside. When you go through on the minirail all you see is blown-up pictures of Hollywood actors and actresses. I was bitterly disappointed.” Robert Fulford, *Remember Expo: A Pictorial Record* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1968): 41

[17] Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, *Architecture as Signs and Systems for a Mannerist Time* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004)

[18] ‘A Bill-Ding-Board for the National Football Hall of Fame—1967’, in Alison Sky, Michelle Stone, *Unbuilt America: Forgotten Architecture in the United States from Thomas Jefferson to the Space Age* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976) :274

[19] Jesús Vassallo, *Seamless: Digital Collage and Dirty Realism in Contemporary Architecture* (Zürich: Park Books, 2016); The computer-generated imagery of architectural projects has become a commonplace, tending to the condition of photography. Photography, too, made in collaboration with architects, has also extended itself to incorporate reality and the idealised reality that resides within the architectural project, and occasionally going further to hypothesise unrealisable realities, such as in the work of Philipp Schaerer. The examples of photographer Bas Princen’s collaborations with OFFICE KGDVS and Filip Dujardin and architecten Jan De Vuylder Inge Vinck are representative. Mark Pimlott, ‘Utopian Debris: A Conversation Between Mark Pimlott and Bas Princen’, in Anne Holtrop, Mechthild Stuhlmacher, Mark Pimlott, eds., *Oase 76. Context/Specificity* (Rotterdam: Nai Uitgevers, 2008): 3–18

[20] Various printed media featuring the project as major content. Some: Jan C Rowan (1963), ‘The Story of Place Ville Marie’, in *Progressive Architecture*, vol. 41, no. 2: 74–89; Norbert Schoenauer, Jonas Lehrman (1963), ‘Place Ville Marie’, in *Canadian Architect*, vol. 8, no. 2: 311–324; Peter Blake (1966), ‘Downtown in 3D’, in *Architectural Forum*, vol. 125, no. 2: 33–49; Nelly Maclean, ‘Invitation

to performers regarding Winter Entertainment Series, Place Ville Marie Corporation’, 1968/09/18. Finally, the project appeared in dozens of pamphlets and articles from developers, property agents, newspapers, colour supplements in both English and French press, as well as in advertising promoting tenant shops, boutiques, bars and restaurants that appropriated the project’s ‘glamour’.

[21] The ‘Quiet’ Revolution in Québec, from 1958 through the 1960s, concluding in the political crisis of October 1970, and ultimately realised in the election of the separatist Parti Québécois in 1976. See Michael D Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec’s Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-Nationalism, 1945–1960* (Kingston/Montréal: McGill-Queens’ University Press, 1985)

[22] Interviews with Henry N Cobb 2011/02/23; Eva Vescei, 2011/07/08; Adrian Sheppard, 2011/02/18; Peter Rose, 2011/10/06.

[23] Vincent Ponte, ‘La Connexion’ pamphlet, 1971; Vincent Ponte, ‘McGill College Avenue’, unpublished manuscript, 1986

[24] Adrian Forty (1986), *Objects of Desire: Objects and Society since 1750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992)

2.3 APPEARANCES

[25] Oscar Wilde (1890), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Penguin, 2003)

[26] George Baird, ‘The Space of Appearance’, in Detlef Mertins, ed., *Metropolitan Mutations: The Architecture of Everyday Public Spaces* (RAIC Annual 1) (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company (Canada) Ltd, 1988): 135–152; George Baird, ‘The Space of Appearance’, in George Baird, *The Space of Appearance* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995): 303–347

[27] From Arendt’s text: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1172b36ff

[28] Hannah Arendt (1958), *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 198–199

[29] Norman Bryson, ‘The Gaze in the Expanded Field’, in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality. Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, no. 2 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988): 91

[30] John Summerson (1963), op. cit.; Alexander Tsonis, Liane Lefaivre, *Classical Architecture: The Poetics of Order* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1986)

[31] Federico Zuccherò (c 1720–1740), ‘Facciata rustica del Casino dello Zuccheri’, engraving Ferdinando Ruggieri, BM1897.0113.119, Prints and Drawings Collection, British Museum, London

[32] Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, dit Le Corbusier (1917), Villa Schwob (Maison Turque), La Chaux-de-Fonds. Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris. Photo © FLC/ADAGP

[33] Paolo Portoghesi, ‘La biblioteca Laurenziana’, in Paolo Portoghesi, Bruno Zevi, eds., *Michelangiolo Architetto* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi editoriale, 1964): 209–376

[34] Charlie Koolhaas, ‘Broken Segments of Mannerism: Biblioteca Laurenziana @ The 14th Venice Architectural Exhibition’, *Inebriation: Notes on Architecture, Art, Fashion, Law, Science & Technology*, posted 2014/06/13 https://irenebrination.typepad.com/irenebrination_notes_on_a/2014/06/biblioteca-laurenziana-charlie-koolhaas.html, accessed 2024/12/29

[35] Portoghesi, op. cit.

[36] “Awesomeness or emotional intensity of conception and execution in an artist or a work of art, originally as a quality attributed to Michelangelo by his contemporaries.” Oxford English Dictionary

[37] John Shearman (1967), *Mannerism: Style and Civilization* (London: Penguin Books, 1981)

[38] “A spoken word, statement, or vocal sound.” Oxford English Dictionary

2.4 UTTERANCES

[39] ‘Listening’ and the matter of attention are discussed in depth in the third section of this dissertation, in chapter 5, ‘The matter of attention’, and 6, ‘The necessity of interpretation’.

[40] Mark Pimlott, ‘A World of Others: Pictures of Things’, in Claudia Lynch, Patrick Lynch, eds., *Journal of Civic Architecture*, no. 9 (London: Canalside Press, 2022): 26–37



3.01
Praha CZ 1991.

3.1 A scene A photograph, a view, a scene:¹

→ 3.01

“The horizon is central. Above, the empty sky, a plume of smoke from a chimney stack, central. At one side a wood some paths a slope some cottages made of wood some slightly larger buildings covered with render scattered on the slope, roughly joined by the paths or tracks or roads but very few. More closely, cottages and houses one storey high with some windows and a door, plainer on the cottages than on the houses. All have chimneys with smoke rising out of them caught by the sun’s light and by the wind which carries the smoke over the wooded slope the smoke white and blue and grey over the dark bare wood and bright in the sun. The wood and the houses and the cottages and houses are in shadow dark. The clearings are lighter and the roads are light in the sun. Joining the roads and near the cottages and houses are wooden poles, trees slightly bent without branches or leaves and abruptly ended and so are poles. Between the poles hang single cables, some with another wound around them. On one or two is a single suspended streetlamp pulling the cable taut. The loops of cable hang over the houses and the wood and the sun’s light connects the poles which stand next to the trees of the wood without leaves. The wood is dark and the branches of the trees are dark and the highest branches catch the sun’s light. Under the drifting smoke and the lighted branches and the hanging cables are the dark wood and the cottages and the houses and the people in them. Some people stand on the paths or tracks or roads but far apart from each other. One repairs a small white car. Another stands, on a path in the middle of the land’s slope, looking down the slope. A third is on a path at the bottom of the slope, in a large coat and a bobble hat and rubber boots, the vapour of each breath is caught by the sun’s light. The person looks out to another, the next place.

“Through the centre, a straight avenue with two marked lanes and two lines of rails that lies at the bottom of the wooded slope is flat and long and extends out of sight towards the horizon. Tall metal posts with lights are evenly spaced along both sides of the avenue. Cables are stretched between the posts and over the avenue. Two tram cars connected to each other are on tracks in the centre of the avenue. The tram is coming from the distance perhaps a distant place and going to some other place perhaps distant. There are no other cars or trucks or trams on the avenue. There are pavements along both sides of the avenue for walking without people. To one side of the avenue is the wooded slope with cottages and houses and chimneys and smoke and clearings and paths and tracks and roads and poles and hanging cables and people. To the other side of the avenue is another place.

“To the other side of the avenue of the scene freestanding trees fully catching the sun’s light in a valley with shallow slopes and villas between the trees on lawns with three or four storeys with many windows and large entrances and portals and porticos. The freestanding trees and the villas are all separate from each other and not connected by a wood or paths or cables hanging between poles.

“Some of the villas face the avenue. How the villas relate to each other or to roads or to trees or to the ground is not visible from where the wooded slope the avenue and the valley of villas can be seen. Some of the villas face the avenue

and are evenly spaced. The avenue passes by this place and by the first place and between the two places and they are quite separate from each other and from the road which is also like a place.

“In the distance beyond the villas the horizon of hills dark with the sun behind them and the chimney central with a plume of smoke dark. Against the hills very large apartment buildings or towers which look very small as they are distant and arranged in order evenly spaced and many of them and their forms made clear by the sun’s light. Beyond them and very large and central to where all of this is seen and bound together by the hills and each part being all together and next to each other and seeing each other and looking at each other is the chimney.”²

‘Context’ is a term used frequently, almost casually, in discussions of the architectural project. It is used to refer to a condition in which many things—artefacts, words—surround another thing, an artefact or a word, situating it in their midst. ‘Context’ furthermore suggests that a particular condition or situation has a specific character, which, in physical contexts, includes the appearances of a situation and the materials of that situation, and that the situation in question is a consequence of previous decisions and acts, the evidence of which presents itself to a viewer, a reader, a writer, an artist, or an architect. ‘Context’ infers that the situation had a beginning that one did not or could not witness or know of, followed by an accumulation or accretion of events and effects that reinforced it; a concatenation of discrete decisions and outcomes made over time, determining and consolidating its character. The context may have any character. It could be cogent, or chaotic. It is what it is.

The photograph described above, *Praha CZ 1991*, came to be important for my thinking about the city, its representations, its architecture, and for my subsequent practice as an artist working with architecture. The view, framed and composed as it was, demonstrated that context was not some immutable entity that could not be disturbed, but a complex environment that was constantly subject to change, sometimes violent. The view shows different iterations of the same city, each corresponding to different historical moments, appearing next to each other, compressed into one view. Each iteration represents discrete sets of decisions and acts of the past concerning what the city could be according to distinct ideas and forms that were representative of those ideas. The ideas could have been native to the place, or they could have been borrowed from the experiences and experiments of other places. These ideas regarded how people were to live together and apart; the city’s organisation; or the kind of society that the city desired, at different periods, through its forms, effects, and appearances. The ideas embodied in each iteration of this isolated fragment of the city may have seemed exemplary at the time of each of their realisations. Yet each exemplar was superseded by the next, as the previous had either lost its relevance, currency, or suitability. New iterations did not replace those that preceded them, but were added, and the meetings between what came before and what was new were, in this case, abrupt, even violent. Together, different notions of the form of the city had been allowed to coexist, and in the fragment contained within the photograph,

none of the forms, perhaps save that of the ‘village’, could exist on its own. Each idea of the city was dependent on something greater—an idea or a structure—that held them together.

Concluding the text written in 1995 that re-presented the elements of the view:

“And each part of this place is in this place at the same time in different times or ideas of time at the same time. And in each part of this place there are or may be different ideas about the world about how to be with each other about customs. And in each part it may be thought that the ideas in that place are better or replace or improve on the ideas of the other parts of that place and the parts of that place that came first which is maybe progress. In each part of this place the house may be this and then that and then something else. And the land may be there and then this and then that and then not known. And the group may be these and then others and then not known but known of. The things that are used are useful and then not useful and then things which are useful and not useful and things which have become useless and then things which are useful and not useful and useless and not known and unknown.

“But then all these somehow stay together. The known the unknown the useful the this the that the useless the unknown the known like this like that then unknown. Connected to each other with words and being able to speak to each other even if this cannot actually happen or if it is not possible to know the different worlds different ideas then this connection can be imagined or believed in or invented and this may be necessary.

“This made up handed down invention that is words and language may be necessary in the face of history in the face of greater fictions and plans which are indifferent to each who lives and works in their place and looks out of their place to other places. And their place may be connected to other places by words by hanging cables by avenues by accidents by forgetting by death by birth by nothing.”³

The text, like the photograph, suggests a succession of ideas about the scene that ultimately constitute the city. The place, or the scene, has already been imagined, begun, imagined again, re-thought and re-formed, experienced, or more likely has drawn upon experiences of other places, other scenes in the succession of iterations of ‘itself.’ In the case of this pictured scene, in which each of those iterations is of an entirely different character from the one that must be presumed to have preceded it, the ‘images’ of the city are consequences of collective, political agreement, which assume forms that are familiar, or have been accepted from elsewhere, aspects of material culture that constitute a language of form, offering appearances that can become known, and therefore recognised, read, and interpreted.

It is this language of form that affords communication of ideas, creates worlds, and articulates difference. The forms of the city both embody and represent ideas about the city in ways that are analogous to speech. As in speech, one’s thought is represented in words and phrases, in utterances, situated within and dependent upon language and discourse. In themselves, these utterances are incomplete, or inadequate in relation to their idea. Even names are not enough as representations

of an idea, though the sign provides cover for this inadequacy due to the broad agreement within language that allows it to operate.⁴ Yet among other utterances, in *contexts*, these utterances acquire meaning. What is true of language and meaning pertains to things and meaning. Things exist amongst other things, as utterances exist among other utterances, and acquire legibility—and meaning—through their relations with other things, and through one's having met and experienced those other things.⁵ Things do not exist in the world on their own, they exist in a world of other artefacts and are known through both the specificity of their role or function, and their relations to all other artefacts. Buildings, places, and their arrangements are, similarly, utterances, and representations: they, too, bear intentions, and meanings. They also convey allusions, imagined relations with other ideas, phenomena, artefacts, buildings, and spaces.

3.2 Context

One is familiar with the idea of the meaning of words or expressions being dependent upon their contexts; or of fragments of speech, when isolated, losing their meaning, or being used to construct other meanings; of words that are 'taken out of context'. Context is centrally important to the workings of language. The word itself is derived from the Latin *con + textus* or *weave together*. Context is essential to the determination of intent and meaning. In the constructed environment, this understanding of context—in which meaning is contingent upon relations between things—is essential to one's reading of things, the gathering of things, and the relations between things as they come together to create conditions.⁶ The coherence of conditions, even if they appear to be discordant, chaotic, or inchoate, is dependent upon productive contingencies, and the orientation they provide, that bind people to the environments they are obliged to live in. This can be said to be a matter of orientation, but it is also a matter of the reading and interpretation of their relations as they come together.⁷

In any context, things are situated and related to other things; buildings are legible in their relation to other buildings, whether present and adjacent or those that are remembered or alluded to; places are familiar in their resemblances and recollections of other places. Buildings, cities, topographies—as utterances and as expressions—become familiar and accepted because of their resemblances to and affinities with other buildings, cities and topographies, as parts of a larger set of things that are known. As they appear, those resemblances and attributes that are recognisable as registers of the past and the present, offer themselves to the experiencing subject and *appear*, inviting reading, and interpretation. The manners through which people use, accommodate themselves to and continuously create their conditions within their environments *also appear* and become part of the language through which these environments—contexts—may be recognised. These contexts hold the residue of ideas and lives lived from the present into the past. The people who live in the present *appear* through the ways they live in the ruins of those who have lived before them. These lives, past and present, appear simultaneously; and

one can then imagine a concatenation of appearances, of lives lived in the ruins of lives of previous generations, stretching from the present into the past, each of which have left their mark on the conditions the subject encounters, those in which the work of the architect is situated.⁸

These coexistent attributes of the constructed environment constitute context, which is simultaneously composed of accumulations of physical presences; of cultural/historical circumstances and their histories; and of social and implicitly political circumstances that provide information about how people both engage with and are situated within their environments. Context might be best thought of in the plural, as *contexts*: as many factors and attributes, utterances and things, ideas and appearances, pasts and presents, that make themselves present simultaneously. By thinking of context in the plural, one acknowledges the specific natures within an environment that have been managed, arranged and built; and the specific natures of cultural, historical, social and political conditions—and ideas—that have shaped that environment and how it is used.

3.2.1 Context as mimicry

I wish to make a distinction with this notion of context with that discourse on context which was a commonplace of architectural practice in the aftermath of the emergence of Post-Modern architecture, and in an experience of architectural practice in North America and the United Kingdom in the 1980s and 1990s. In this framework, context meant working in urban settings and with buildings through respecting a policy of extension and invisibility. A correct response to 'context' would be achieved by obeying existing buildings' established cornice lines, materials, and inevitably, the extant architectural manner or style; of stitching new buildings into existing built fabric by following the lines set out by the 'original' so that the new construction could effectively disappear. This principle became central to planning departments' policy and was meant to affect an isolation of the past from the present, which was regarded as unfitting. Intrinsic to this policy was the desire that time should have stopped before the supposedly 'ruinous' arrival of Modernism as a style, attitude, and set of ideas. This presented all manner of difficulties to architects' efforts in adding to the material of the city.⁹

The city, at least one that is not 'instant', is most likely to have a set of conventions of utterances, representations and appearances, a catalogue of spatial and constructed typical forms and typologies that are characteristic: in short, a tradition, that provides a variety of situations and contexts. Each city, except for those altered through catastrophe (both involuntary and voluntary) or instantaneous production, develops gradually—and inconsistently—and conditions within them can be appreciated that become, and remain, their tradition. Of course, that condition can be damaged through various forms of recklessness.¹⁰

Context and the 'contextual' was a regular feature of discourse in architectural practice and education in the 'anglosphere' in the late 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s. It had been prepared by criticism of Modernism emanating from various voices, concerned with the effect on modern planning principles on the existing city, and the growing perception of the paucity of architectural language with respect to

its pre-Modernist past.¹¹ In North America, appraisals of architecture and urbanism began to advocate for the value of existing long-established neighbourhoods, areas of extant social cohesion, ‘historic’ buildings, and a renewal of interest in pre-Modernist architecture. These appraisals acknowledged the ‘messy vitality’ and heterogeneity of the urban condition, quite often a result of the non-hierarchical basis of American planning, encouraged by the township system of Thomas Jefferson’s Land Ordinance (1785). Without reiterating histories of the preservation movement, the resistance to ‘urban renewal’,¹² or post-modern architecture, working with context was characterised as working with what was there to preserve—or conserve—the character of a street façade, as opposed to the ecology of uses of a neighbourhood, a consideration of surfaces that came to be embedded in detailed planning policy, replacing the strategic planning policy that had preceded it. In the United Kingdom, the three Thatcher governments (1979, 1983, 1987–1990) closed metropolitan planning departments tasked with urban and regional planning strategy, leaving only local authority planners the possibility of intervening in the permission processes through limitations on floor area ratios, bartering with developers over improvements to the public realm and affordable housing provisions (known as Section 601 agreements), and aesthetic judgements, the latter manifest in directives that would stimulate the architect to respect brickwork, string courses, cornice lines, and elaborations of (predominantly classical) detail. It was desired that new architecture inserted into existing conditions was supposed to extend those conditions, do no harm, be discreet, and if possible, disappear entirely, except if the same planners advocated for something new, or more precisely, iconic. The sad and cynical legacy of this order of planning is to be found in urban developments throughout the Anglo-sphere that see advocacy for existing urban contexts limited to the preservation of building façades, with completely new, and very often very large-scale constructions behind them, with no relation to their purposes whatsoever.

3.3 The work of the architect, contextualised

It is important, apart from acknowledging the issue of context, to come to understand context. This requires deep and sustained work, and the recognition that one’s understanding will be inevitably subjective, interpretive, and fragmentary. The difficulties of understanding (coupled with what one understands) should stir humility on the part of the architect, whose efforts will inevitably encounter historical and cultural circumstances that have formed the environment, and events and movements from the past that have shaped both the past and the present. The architect will be obliged to acknowledge how the scenes they encounter have been and are presently used, how they accommodate and determine the actions of people using them, how they are interpreted and transformed by those using them, and the specific social and political circumstances that surround and inform those uses. The architect must acknowledge the cultural, historical, social and political contexts that inform the environmental conditions they encounter. The architect must engage with these contexts because their work will become part of those contexts,

transforming them, changing them, irrevocably. Architecture interferes with—and hopefully, augments—the significance that environments acquire through their use in time. The architect can modify the nature of those environments, either by reinforcing their essential nature, illuminating a nature that was previously obscure, or by destroying them.

This idea of valuing the existing constructed environment as a valuable ‘text’, has a long pedigree. It was certainly taken to a high-minded level in Leon Battista Alberti’s studies, measures, and writings on the ruins of Roman architecture, and the subsequent ideas concerning architecture and the city he carefully developed and elaborated, which are at the core of the Renaissance and the recovery of a language and syntax of architecture.¹³ It is also at the heart of Romanticism from the late eighteenth century, when the world that was known was being overwhelmed by early industrialisation, and the motifs of the exotic and of the ruin became representative;¹⁴ it can be seen in the critique of CIAM’s scientific modernism and its effects on environments within postwar reconstruction, made by Alison and Peter Smithson,¹⁵ and most pointedly, and contrastingly, from Ernesto Rogers, whose essay, ‘The Problem of Building in Pre-existing Environmental Conditions’ (1957), stressed the cultural as well as historical value of urban environments in advance of the ‘improvements’ of modern architectural interventions.¹⁶ These environments meant something, as ensembles, as the syntax of the city’s language.

Similarly, one is obliged to make a case for working closely with the specific nature—environments, streets, buildings, effects—of existing conditions, of contexts. The city, at least one that is not ‘instant’,¹⁷ is most likely to embody a set of conventions of utterances, representations and appearances, a catalogue of characteristic spatial and constructed typical forms that emerge from epistemological positions—from cultural, ideological and political world views—that come from language and ‘tradition’. When I say that acts of architecture should relate to their contexts, I do not call for the mimicry of the constituent elements of what exists, but for engagement with those contexts’ constantly evolving languages, through whose utterances the past and the present *appear*. In the conditions that develop in the specific nature of each context, change occurs constantly through processes of addition and subtraction, elaborated by the many lives of its inhabitants and visitors, and the effects of their occupation and interpretations. These lives and their effects are constantly in flux, as is the constructed material of the city.

3.4 Tradition

Those London planning authorities who had spoken of context as something to be extended, with the hope that new architecture might disappear, held a similar attitude in relation to tradition: namely, that tradition was something commonly agreed upon, and considered to be immutable. It may be the case that change occurred in the past, but those days had thankfully ended some time towards the end of the nineteenth century. Of course, this view was a matter of political expediency.¹⁸ Within its strictures, nothing should disrupt what was regarded as the canon of the

environment of accumulated significant constructions and every effort was made to reinforce that canon, preferably by imitation. However, neither tradition nor canons work this way. Change and disruption are abiding characteristics of both, which undergo constant modification.

One might look at the making of language similarly. In the case of English, one observes a continuous accommodation of modifications in meaning through habitual native usage; the stretching of use by ‘displaced’ colonial speakers; the invention of non-native speakers;¹⁹ generational change; and the acceptance and incorporation of words from other languages, either adapting them through a kind of assimilation, in which foreign words are given English identities; or the taking of phrases in their original language in their entirety, wherein they occupy the English language not as intruders, but as adjuncts to the language, and thereafter as extensions and enrichments to it.

In taking the constructed environment of the city as one of gathered utterances, which all together form a material culture, how might the architect address something such as a city, and make additions to it that might be similarly accommodated, thus extending the language of that city? How might the architect propose an artefact such as a building within a context so that even as it alters that context, it both remains itself and changes? I borrow first a fragment of poetry and then follow with an argument constructed by the poet T S Eliot directed to poets, that are, in my view, useful in answering these questions.

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.*

...
*Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.*²⁰

This fragment of the poem ‘Burnt Norton’ by T S Eliot describes the condition of time, and the presence of all times within it. This is the realm in which one acts, both as a subject and as an artist. For my purposes, one should take the artist—the poet, in Eliot’s meaning—to be the architect. In his essay ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’ (1919), Eliot writes of the tradition of literature—poetry in particular—and the individual artist’s relation to that tradition, and obligation to it. Eliot’s idea of the artistic tradition would strike the traditionalist as radical, in the sense that tradition, in his understanding, is constantly and profoundly altered by the true work of art. Eliot provokes a question that is relevant to the architect, as much as it is to the poet: how should one address that which is, that which has gone before, and that which will continue after one has gone?²¹

In poetry, tradition concerns all that might be defined as the *canon* of works that define not only that discipline, but linguistic culture itself. I have written that the city has developed in accordance with its own ‘tradition’ and the visible and experiential aspect of its own culture, and its observance and emulation of the

evident cultures of other cities. The city has its canon; architecture, too, despite efforts to understand its relation to power built on exploitation and violence, has its own canon. Architecture is native to the city, at once bound to its foundation and culture, and representative of the city’s idea of itself through time. Architecture is, furthermore, a discipline with its own history, its own culture, and, like poetry, a *métier* that should be profoundly known by its practitioners, so that its realisations—its utterances—take their place among those constructed forms of the city, rendering them, their situations, and the city itself visible as manifestations of ideas about the world, and living in the world.

Eliot does not refer to tradition within poetry as a fixed form that must be imitated. Rather, he describes it as something that must be engaged with, and come to be known, and worked at, so that it may be ‘found’, and then transformed, with the intervention of the *act* of poetry, the true work of art. In Eliot’s view, the true work of art both adds to and changes all that has gone before it, the whole tradition, which it both reinforces and profoundly alters.

“The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the addition of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervision of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art towards the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order [...] will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.”²²

And here, one is reminded of the traditions that architects are engaged with; there are the traditions or cultures of the environment, *contexts*; and the traditions of the specific medium through which architects act: the traditions of architecture, the culture of architecture. If the new work of the poetic art is a matter of addressing all of poetry and changing poetry, then the new work of architecture must address all of architecture. It is obliged to extend and change architecture; to address and change context; to address and change the past as it is present and thereby understand that architecture’s addition to that context alters its tradition, its identity. The work does not erase that tradition but renews that tradition and renders it present. And in this, one rediscovers the meaning of the Renaissance.²³

For Eliot, the poet must have an acute sense of the presence of the past within the present, and the present as a past in a future time. It is a view with which I concur. He continues:

“... the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past’s awareness of itself cannot show.

“Someone said: ‘The dead writers are remote from us because we know so much more than they did.’ Precisely, and they are that which we know.”²⁴

The architect, in this order of perception of the value of past, present, and future, and the situation of the gesture and act of architecture, amidst all the other acts in all other times, must relinquish personal identification in the making of the work, the projection of personality that frequently resides within the impulse of the architect as author. Eliot writes, concerning the role of personality, and the development of consciousness and authorship upon the work of poetry, pertinent to the work of the architect in making architecture, as set in time and within the context of the city and the canon:

“What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career.

“What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.”²⁵

“[...] for my meaning is that the poet has, not a ‘personality’ to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality.”²⁶

If one follows Eliot’s position, which I regard as instructive, it is important for the architect to understand that their work at hand is not about either self-expression, projection, or adherence to their pre-established manner, method, or ‘style’, but the preparation of an utterance within the context of all other utterances, and the making of architecture that is situated within and in relation to all other constructions. Eliot elaborates on further implications of the surrendering of personality of the poet, which can be taken to be, in the case of this argument, the architect:

“Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to escape from these things.”²⁷

Eliot concludes his essay with these sentences:

“The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.”²⁸

In making work that is situated in its conditions—its contexts—the architect, similarly, must suspend their impulse to projection, the expression of their personality,

the imprint of their authorship, their ambition to be singular, their desire for novelty and spectacle, so that instead, their work is added to the ongoing collective work of constructing a multivalent text—a context—and in so doing, accepting that their work will inevitably alter that context, enrich it, render it visible. In some cases, that visibility will contrast with its previous invisibility through ubiquity. The worst possible outcome would be that the new work damages all that has gone before it; better is that the new work recognises, reinforces and refreshes that which exists; the best case is that the new work alters that which exists, respecting it yet renewing it entirely, so that past, and present, and possible futures are all visible, and present.

3.5 Three paradigms

Within the tradition that develops in each urbanised environment and its specific culture, change occurs constantly through processes of addition and subtraction. Change occurs, too, through the lives of its inhabitants and visitors, and the effects of their occupation and interpretations of its buildings and spaces, often improvisatory in approach, yielding a parallel and complementary aspect of material culture.²⁹ I consider three differing approaches to existing contexts to be paradigmatic. The first is the most conventional, in that it extends and alters well-established forms of the city and the street, yet does so in ways that suggest, embodied in its utterance, different possibilities for reading the present and the future. This is Diener & Diener’s building in Hochstrasse, Basel, completed in 1988. The second approach concerns the interpretation of an existing condition that contains completely different successive proposals for a possible present and adds to this condition by both embracing its inconsistencies and proposing an improvisational present and future, working with the ideas of its forms. This is Tony Fretton’s Lisson Gallery, in Bell Street, London, completed in 1991. The third involves a large-scale reading of the urban situation to create new appreciations of possible presents, and future freedoms that may emerge from subjects’ elevated consciousness of their conditions. This is Álvaro Siza Vieira’s Leça de Palmeira swimming pool in Matosinhos, completed in 1961, with additional works in 1993.

3.5.1 Diener und Diener, office building, Hochstrasse, Basel

What at first appears to be a conservative approach to the insertion of new architecture into established urban environments can be found in the work of the Basel-based practice of Roger Diener of Diener & Diener, for whom the building is a house, following the German-language description of a building, *Haus*, which suggests not a domestic building, but one of a scale that can be imagined as one element in a gathering of many elements. This approach does not only concern appearances in the urban scene, or the material that is particular or typical of a city, but the patterns of building, which extend the language, if you will, that a city has developed over time, its own material and building culture. This does not lead to the construction of copies, or reconstructions of the traditional city that would constitute fictions, but the possibility of new words inserted into an already established



vocabulary, or new utterances appearing among the other utterances within the same language that add to it, modify its conventions, extend them, change them, and become part of the language.³⁰

In Basel, the architects designed an office building in a nineteenth-century street of apartment blocks, adjacent to the rail yards of the main train station. Its concrete façade establishes a regular order of windows in a 'grid', obeying both the logic of buildings that require regular distributions of daylight in their interiors, the possibility of internal partitioning, and the repetitive patterns of windows of the neighbourhood's apartment and office buildings. This orientation, as well as the concrete façade—neither render nor stone—distinguishes the building from its neighbours while agreeing to the general rule established by them, one of a certain decorum and straightforwardness, and its retention of the predominant building height. The building is at the end of an urban block, with a party wall to an adjacent late-nineteenth-century apartment building; its long façade addresses the street following its conventions. The exposed end façade, however, is addressed to this same street in its length, looking along it, perpendicularly. As a result, the building block adjusts its form to the contrasting demands placed upon it, turning two ways

to meet three different conditions. The back of the building faces the rail yard. The block designed by Diener & Diener appears to follow a series of concessions, which take the form of assaults to the integrity of an ideal whole, in cutbacks and chamfers to the block, which aid its twisting from its natural position in the street to another position that accommodates a visual termination of the bridging street perpendicular to it, and the void of the railway lines immediately next to it. It thereby fits its circumstances, and it is purposefully awkward in them. In making accommodations to address those circumstances' various aspects, it twists itself out of shape and into shape again, its corner partly cut and chamfered and blinded. This makes the building appear to be animate, to have its own will. It becomes strange in relation to its normative 'ideal', and through its alterity, its neighbours become more visible as distinct characters, not just as regular, continuous urban fabric, but individual characters sharing familial resemblances. Despite the new building's contortions, it becomes part of the 'speech' of the whole, of the gathering of utterances, and subtly charges that speech.

3.5.2 Tony Fretton, Lisson Gallery, London 1991

The extension of an earlier building around the corner, with its own entrance, on a ragged street off the Edgware Road in west London, the building's setting is a collection of remnants, ruins and beginnings, of voids, and of buildings at different scales, all pointing to different ideas and fates of the city. Bell Street, in which the building stands, was, in the early 1990s, lined on one side of the street with an uneven group of very small buildings, fragments of terrace housing, empty sites, mid-size buildings, and in the background a tall building on a plinth in the Edgware Road clad in painted metal panels. On the other side was a similarly uneven group, as well as a fine school building, designed by the architect Leonard Manasseh, with a pyramidal roof, a curtain wall façade that ran along one side of a schoolyard, behind and enclosed by a brick wall onto the street topped by a chain-link fence.

An oblique view of the new building in the street—a gallery of contemporary art—sandwiched between a low shop at the corner of Bell Street and Lisson Street and a three-storey terrace house (the terrace demolished at some previous time) shows this context, as does another oblique view from the opposite direction, full of people at Bell Street's weekly market of abject objects. The first was pictured by an architectural photographer, Lorenzo Elbaz, the latter by Chris Steele-Perkins, a documentary photographer with the Magnum agency. Steele-Perkins also made photographs of the building from the school's yard, with children playing, as well as photographs through the window of the ground floor gallery from the street. The inference of these photographs was that the building was bound to where it was, and the quotidian life of that place.

The environment is not consistent but characterised by jarring adjacencies, not unusual in those parts of London that have escaped care. The street's form was a consequence of changing notions of utility and value, each notion given free reign, as the street was, at some point in its history, not deemed significant enough to be held together, but rather, left as a repository for various starts, experiments, and accidents. The new building, a contemporary art gallery, was wedged into this

3.02 ←



3.03
Tony Fretton Architects, Lisson Gallery,
London, 1990–1991.

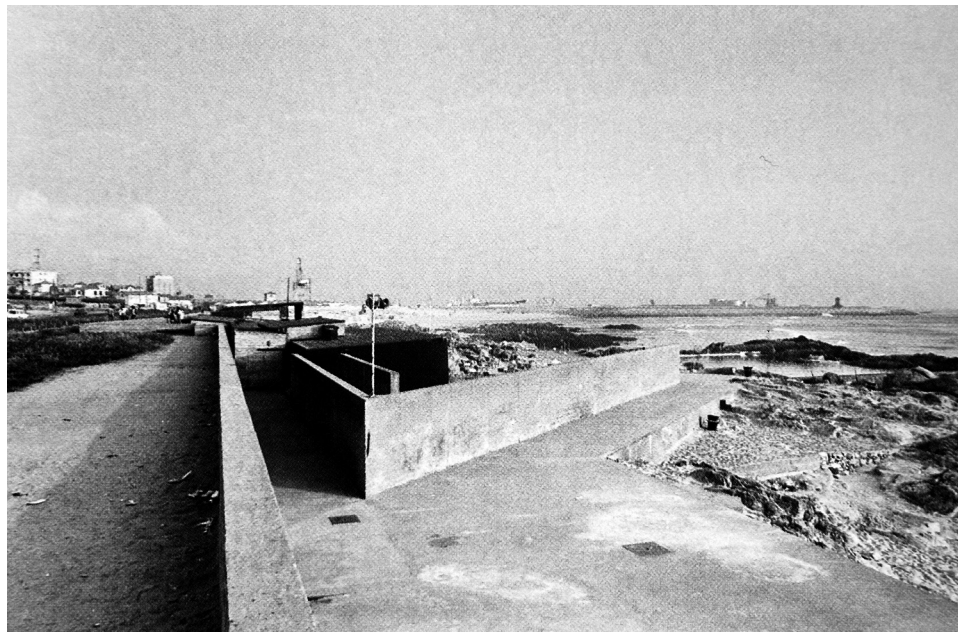


haphazard scenography of unmaking and making, its hollow interior purposefully situated opposite the void of the schoolyard. The galleries are arranged like a stack of shelves³¹ in the market, so that one can almost touch the first floor; inside the ground floor gallery, set slightly below the street, one can effectively lean on the pavement where people walk and objects for sale are displayed; and above, on the first floor, the gallery is completely open to the playground of the school, as though it is extension.³² The new building is wider and taller than its immediate neighbours, rendering it monumental. The lower two floors are completely glazed, and the empty interiors of the galleries within, only seven metres deep, are fully visible. Above them is one floor with a blank façade punctured by one opening, a shuttered window. Above that, a kind of attic of steel panels, with another, flat, window. The façade suggests figuration within the inherited language of Modernism, which it shares with the school—a design with some pedigree—and the rather banal office tower that looms over the whole street. From the outside, the building projects a desire to be part of the action as well as part of the scenery. From the inside, the spaces project themselves as part of their surroundings, either connected to the pavement, or joining the children across the street in play.³³ The building is chosen as a paradigm because of its engagement with an unresolved environment in apparently constant flux, doing so in two guises: first, as something ordinary and literally accessible, and second, as a significant element that would likely remain so regardless of the street's future.

3.5.3 Álvaro Siza Vieira, Swimming pool, Leça da Palmeira, Matosinhos 1961; 1993

The third paradigm is represented by a building by Álvaro Siza Vieira, in whose practice one can find the most elegant unfolding of possibilities of context. The Piscinas das Marés or ocean swimming pool at Leça de Palmeira, Matosinhos, near

3.04
Tony Fretton Architects, Lisson Gallery,
London, 1990–1991.



3.05 ←

Porto, is built on the Atlantic coast. It is situated on the coastal road connecting the town to Porto and is composed of a building for dressing rooms and a few facilities, and a set of pools set among the rocks that meet the sea. The ensemble is low and built onto its retaining wall and so almost invisible from the road. Getting out of a car or bus, one finds a trench separating the pavement from a flat roof of copper with standing seams, turned dark brown with exposure to the sun, and then descends from the pavement of the road into this trench, which, open to the sky, separates one from the world of roads and buildings. One then doubles back and turns towards the mute face of the building, appearing like a concrete shed built over dark wooden screens. The openings offer access to the dark spaces of changing rooms, split into two. The changing rooms are lined with shoulder-height, black-stained wooden partitions, and a dark void above, all depriving one of light. Yet over the top of the partitions, there is the promise of the sea, which one can hear. One emerges from the darkness into another space, a corridor open to the sky, from which the sea is hidden but heard. This leads towards a concrete and blackened timber portal covering the 'end' of the corridor, and from there, an opening where one arrives to find oneself completely exposed to a landscape composed of rocks and plains and pools of water that appear to merge with the sea.³⁴ One enters this vast space and then wades in the pools situated among the rocks and others at play, and finally swims in that pool that appears to meet the sea directly, with a few rocks forming an intermediate horizon. And as one moves back and dries oneself off or sits down for a drink, one finds the shelter of a diagonally oriented concrete wall, where one appreciates the wall's warmth. Looking out to the sea, that wall seems to embrace

the whole site. In the distance, to the left, the form of a quay for oil tankers appears, holding the sea and defining the space to the south. It and the diagonal wall seem to be paired.³⁵ These two arms, one close and at hand, the other, distant and at sea, appear to embrace all the swimmers, who, with this perceived gesture, come to represent all the people. One sees and appreciates, for better or worse, the world one lives in, one simultaneously harsh and comforting, set in the beauty and ferocity of the world. One feels simultaneously small, big, empowered, and helpless, vulnerable, and human. The pool is proposed as a paradigm for the consideration of context in the way that it reveals it, beyond a gathering of artefacts, in its rendering of a complete image of constructed reality, of the occupation, enjoyment, domination, and spoliation of the natural world.

3.6 Working in context

I have introduced context as a complex assembly of ideas 'uttered' and realised in the built environment over time. Consequently, contexts are not necessarily consistent or coherent. I have described context in the built environment as the gathering of artefacts and the relations between them, interwoven as the word itself suggests. I have used the workings of language and the culture of poetry to assert that like words, their adjacencies and the production of meaning, artefacts (including buildings) acquire their meaning through their relations to other artefacts, and, as these artefacts are representations of intent, idea, and purpose, a gathering of representations or utterances come to 'speak' to and of each other. Those relations create a kind of order, even if it may tend towards messy vitality.³⁶ Whatever the circumstances that present themselves to the architect, the obligation of the architect is to meet this condition, address it, and add to it. The architect must accept that this context, like all contexts, is neither static nor immutable. Adding to this environment will change it, whether that addition cleaves to its patterns and appearances, or introduces difference. It is necessary, in all instances, to read and interpret contexts, to acknowledge their languages. To act within them, the architect must know their own discipline and the obligations and responsibilities of that discipline profoundly. The understanding of how to approach what has gone before may benefit from understandings of the life and lives that have gone before, of the utterances embedded in buildings and topographies and relations that are encountered.

As a model to the architect confronted with the problem of adding to the environments they meet, I have drawn upon the import of T S Eliot's understanding of tradition and its constant revision by the introduction of new, true works of art, making an analogy between the obligations of the poet and those of the architect in relation to the built environment. Finally, three cases of addresses to existing contexts that I consider paradigmatic have been described. In each, the context has demanded differing approaches, none of which involve mimicry, but all of which address their contexts as ways towards contemplating the problem of the city and the urbanised environment itself, at varying scales and intensities. The first, in Diener & Diener's Hochstrasse building, involved a meeting with a prevailing decorum or

These three exemplars are not dry, formal exercises in considerations of context, but rather, works towards the engagement of those whose lives are shaped by them, who are enabled to see their worlds more acutely, and live in them more fully. Such perceptions are means towards revealing one's place in the world, and those small freedoms that come from knowing what the constructed world is made of and where one stands as it grows and changes, heaves and spreads.³⁷

- [1] The 'view' is also the term used by the nineteenth-century topographical photographer Timothy O'Sullivan for the photographs he made of the American continental interior with a large plate camera. The term at once specifies the viewing subject, and the determination of what is contained within the photographic image, a determination that is selective and excludes aspects of the environment, rendering the view a scene.
- [2] Mark Pimlott, 'A scene', in Mark Pimlott, Greg Hilty, Tony Fretton, *Studiolo* (London: Todd Gallery, 1996): unpaginated
- [3] Pimlott, *ibid*.
- [4] Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), trans. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959). The sign and signified and the notion of the incompleteness of representation are also discussed in chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis.

[5] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972): “We never look at just one thing: we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.”: 9

[6] Neil Cummings, ‘Reading Things: The Alibi of Use’, in Neil Cummings, ed., *Reading Things* (London: Chance Books, 1999): 12–29

[7] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1960)

[8] This presented itself to me with great force in repeated visits to Venice, where the constructions of buildings, evident in stones and bricks whose assemblies one can plainly see, speak of real people and real lives: people who have built the houses, and people who have lived in them, generation succeeding generation. One can count back from the present through successive generations into the past and the imagined moments of the constructions of these buildings and their environments. From my age, in 2024, one could count back to lives lived in 1958, and then, in 1892; then, 1826; 1760; 1694; 1628; 1562; 1496; 1430; 1364, and so on; and it is these times and lives of which the stones of Venice speak.

[10] In the case of Rotterdam, the architects MVRDV have argued, in promoting their Markthal (2014), that in a context of unrelated iconic structures, a-contextuality, or forced heterogeneity can be considered a context. This recasting of context tends to reinforce the city's self-generated publicity identity, legitimating the extreme and questionable policy of urban redevelopment that has promoted 'icons' in an environment profoundly marked and compromised by infrastructures and the imperatives of post-war planning over any kind of consolidation of the urban fabric. See Mark Pimlott, 'Towards a public interior: the Rotterdam Markthal by MVRDV, a critical reflection', unpublished lecture manuscript, 2015/01/19. The fate of extensions to the Boijmans-van Beuningen Museum by architects Henket, and Robbrecht en Daem, facing demolition in favour of a plan that gives priority to the museum as a visitor attraction, is consistent with this *anti*-contextualism. See Sereh Mandias, 'Waarom gaan de plannen voor Boijmans niet radicaal uit van het bestaande museum?', in *Vers Beton* 2024/10/16, <https://www.versbeton.nl/2024/10/16/waarom-gaan-de-plannen-voor-boijmans-niet-radicaal-uit-van-het-bestaande-museum>, accessed 2024/11/16

[12] *Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977); Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour (1972), *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1977); Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977)

[12] Mark Pimlott, 'Jeanne d'Architecture', or Phyllis Lambert and the Love of Architecture', in Christoph Grafe, David de Bruijn, Job Floris, Gus Tielen, Madeleine Maaskant, eds., *Oase 83: Commissioning Architecture* (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2010): 57–72. Phyllis Lambert's orchestration of resistance to urban renewal in Montréal's rue Jeanne-Mance, her saving of the Shaughnessy neighbourhood, and acquisition of the Shaughnessy mansion (now incorporated into the Canadian Centre for Architecture), were emblematic of a push-back on policies that were seen as central to re-framing of urban centres across North America in the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

[13] Leon Battista Alberti (c1450), trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, Robert Traveron, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1988). See also, John Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1966); Alexander Tsonis, Liane Lefaivre, *Classical Architecture: The Poetics of Order* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1986)

[15] Max Risselada, Dirk van den Heuvel, eds., *Team 10 1953–81: In Search of a Utopia of the Present* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2005); Alison and Peter Smithson, *The Charged Void: Architecture* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2001)

[17] The 'Instant City' (1969–1970) proposed by Archigram, which would arrive by air and then unfold like a high-technology pneumatic circus, was just as much an erasure of existing urban contexts as the CIAM or Team Ten urban plans they decried. See Warren Chalk, Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton, Ron Herron, David Greene, Michael Webb, *Archigram—The Book* (London: Circa Press, 2018)

[18] Anecdotal, but characteristic of the author's conversations held with City of Westminster planners about significant projects in London's West End in the late 1980s and late 1990s. Their politics were consistent with Thatcherite conservatism.

[20] T S Eliot (1944), *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001)

[21] T S Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *The Egoist*, Sep-

tember and December 1919: 54–55, 72–73. This text was central to teaching in the postgraduate programme in Visual Arts at Goldsmiths' College, University of London, under the leadership of Jon Thompson, Nick de Ville, Gerard Hemsworth, and Jean Fisher, at the time of my studies there between 1990 and 1992. They replaced the poet of Eliot's text with the artist, and it seemed appropriate to similarly substitute the poet for the architect for the purpose of this argument.

[22] Eliot, op. cit.: 55
[23] Alberti, op. cit.
[24] Eliot, ibid.: 55
[25] Eliot, ibid.: 55
[26] ibid.: 72
[27] ibid.: 73
[28] ibid.: 73

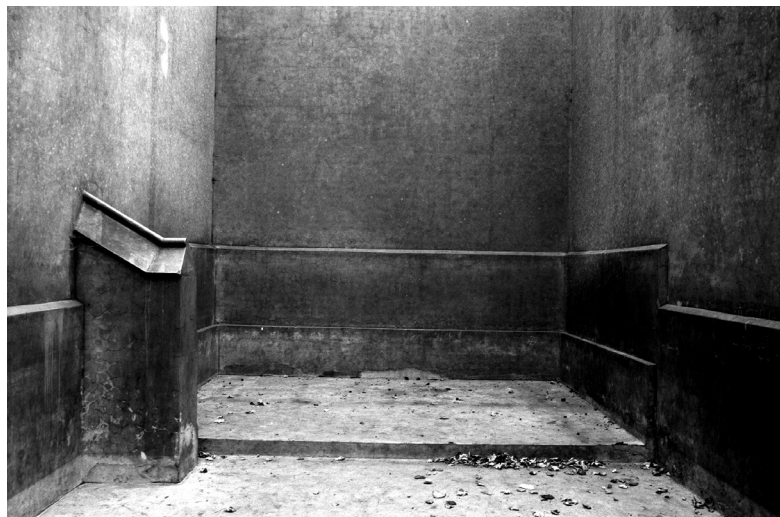
3.5 THREE PARADIGMS

[29] Richard Wentworth, Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Making Do and Getting By* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015)
[30] Martin Steinmann, ‘Notes on the Architecture of Diener & Diener’, in Roger Diener, Martin Steinmann, *Das Haus und die Stadt/The House and the City* (Luzern: Edition Architekturgalerie Luzern, 1995): 8–28
[31] Tony Fretton, ‘Tony Fretton’, in Rosamund Diamond, Wilfried Wang, eds., *Reality and Project: Armstrong Associates, Pierre D’Avoine, Tony Fretton, Tim Ronalds* (London: 9H Publications, 1990): 44
[32] Tony Fretton, ‘Lisson Gallery (2)’, in *A EIOU: Articles, Essays, Interviews and Out-Takes* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2018): 20–24
[33] Fretton, op. cit.: “The building is completed by the world around it. In return it intimates public and personal space by appealing to the rudiments of social behaviour.”: 24
[34] Pierluigi Nicolin, ed., *Álvaro Siza: Professione poetica. Quaderni di Lotus* (Milano: Electa, 1986); Kenneth Frampton, Álvaro Siza, *Álvaro Siza Vieira: A Pool by the Sea: In Conversation with Kenneth Frampton* (Barcelona: Actar, 2022); Álvaro Siza Vieira, *Imagining the Evident* (Lisboa: Monade, 2022); Tony Fretton (1994), ‘Siza and Távora’, in Tony Fretton, *A EIOU: Articles, Essays, Interviews and Out-Takes* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2018): 33–43; Paulo Martins Barata, ‘Leça Swimming Pool’, in Luiz Trigueiros, ed., *Álvaro Siza 1954–1976* (Lisboa: Editorial Blau, 1997): 78–91
[35] In 1989, Tony Fretton and I visited Siza’s pool while conducting research for a project we were setting for our students at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London. As was often the case on such outings, we discussed our observations. How we arrived at seeing the quay and the concrete wall as being an embracing pair, I don’t know, but I have appreciated Tony Fretton’s reading of this as reiterated in numerous lectures. I both credit him with this perception and share it.
[36] The jazz musician Thelonius Monk had a habit of tipping all the pictures in his house askew, and when Mrs. Monk told him not to do it, he told her that he was creating “another kind of order.” Anecdote provided by Tony Fretton.
[37] Orson Welles, dir., *The Magnificent Ambersons* (USA: KRO, 1942): “George Amberson-Minafer walked home through the strange streets of what seemed to be a strange city. For the town was growing... changing... It was heaving up in the middle, incredibly; it was spreading, incredibly. And as it heaved and spread, it befouled itself and darkened its skies.”

EXPERIENCE

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4 The complexity of experience: phenomenology, material culture, representation



4.01.1-2
London GB 1995 (Eton I);
London GB 1995 (Eton II).

4.1 Two photographs

→4.01

There are two photographs, each depicting a shallow space, frontally, bound by three walls. The two photographs appear to be pictures of the same space, as the photographs are very nearly identical, sharing the same overall form and the same particularities. There are, however, some differences between the two photographs. The surfaces that enclose their respective spaces show different signs of weathering, despite being relatively smooth, the walls and ground apparently made of some cementitious render marked by rain and soot. Both photographs appear to have been made at the same time of year; fallen leaves lie gathered at a step in the foreground of each. It may be that the photographs are not those of one space, but of two different spaces, made at a similar moment in time, one of apparently the Double of the other. One searches for differences in the two photographs to determine if this is so. But apart from nuances such as the weathering of their surfaces and the patterns of leaves on the floors—minor discrepancies reminiscent of those hunted for in children's books' puzzles—their elements are shared and identical: a very shallow ledge along the wall, a small step on the floor, an outcrop emerging from the wall on the right-hand side—an architectural feature, a buttress—typical of structures from the gothic period or a later neo-gothic iteration with a particular character, a style deployed to recall a more distant, authentic time. A buttress is meant to aid in the support of a much larger structure, yet this is not visible in either photograph. The buttresses appear to lack the requisite materiality of a structural element and seem instead to play the part of looking like a structural element, which adds to the aura of artificiality of each space and the photographs that depict them. The spaces suggest that they are scenes, or scenery; evocations of either an idea, or some other space which may be an 'model' or an 'original' to which they refer.

The spaces fill the visual field of each image. They are closed scenes without outlook, almost interior in character, within which one could imagine being enveloped. One might imagine those ineffable aspects of experience that contribute to what it is like to be there, from those that play on senses of sound, smell, or touch felt through contact with the spaces' surfaces, sensations of temperature and humidity, their acoustic resonances. Then, there are the reminders and associations that the spaces may conjure up through their specific atmospheres. They may incite memories of other such encounters, and may even be made, consciously, to call forth associations with other places, other events, other social situations.

The two photographs reveal characteristics that need to be addressed, concerning the bringing about of their appearance, or appearances, that unfold as soon as they are subject to scrutiny. If these photographs indeed depict two spaces, why are they nearly identical? If there is more than one space, could there be more still, iterations of a larger series of such spaces, elsewhere? And why this specific form? Where is the space that these may be reiterations of, the 'original' that these might be 'copies' of? What is one looking at? The various elaborations of these spaces and their repetition suggest experience that is both specific and repeated, ritualised, not tied to any one place, but to spaces and activities that are practiced

beyond these two spaces. Despite their atmospheres, and those singular aspects of their forms, their repetition suggests and confirms that there is something generic, even ubiquitous, about them.

The depicted spaces are in fact both re-enactments and representations of a model, a 'real' space, a corner of Eton College, in Windsor, England, that is used for a highly specialised and ritualised activity: the playing of 'Fives', a ball-game with rules; the pursuit of public-school boys, originating at Eton, and thereafter in public schools through much of England. It is an image that binds a specific variety of play to that site of origin, its myth, and all that it means to a public-school boy dreaming of becoming a 'player' in British (and more specifically, English) society. Eton provides England's (male) elite, who overwhelmingly dominate British political and institutional life. The image of Eton built into the Fives courts of public schools across the country is an incentive for schoolboys to aspire to that power (which they are unlikely to achieve, because they are *not* Etonians). The Fives court, well above the experience of atmosphere, is an artefact of material culture. Its form, reproduced in the manner of a rarefied commodity, a thing, a fragment, and an environment that carries meaning. It communicates its meaning through its image, a representation bound to an original, which, through play, fantasy, and cultural consciousness, approaches some kind of reality. Its meaning and utility are enhanced by its context: the paraphernalia and behavioural obligations of the English public school.

The use of these images and their subjects serves to illustrate the complexity of addressing the experience of artefacts in their environments-as-constructs, which is at once a matter for all the senses as they affect consciousness, and how those senses, necessarily including the privileged visual sense, contribute to a more detailed reading of the constructed environment and its artefacts, beyond their effects.

4.2 Phenomenology, problematics, and propositions

I wish to address the matter of experience as it might more fully inform the architect, towards the appreciation of the world of things. It is acknowledged that 'experience' can be a rather vague notion as one sets it to work in readings, descriptions, and interpretations of architecture and its situations, in architectural thinking, and in motivations to design. Literature in architectural theory has tended to align 'experience' with those concerns native to phenomenology: atmospheres, materiality, light, relations to the human body, and, by extension, to the authority of the ineffable, and notions of authentic facture. Interpretations of the writing of Martin Heidegger in the work of Christian Norberg-Schulz¹ gave priority to the specificity of place, of local and tacit knowledge that unified both making and experience. The pedagogue OF Bollnow wrote of measure, natural human conditions, 'shelteredness', and authenticity.² Gaston Bachelard³ has written of atmospheres and memory,⁴ as have the architects Juhani Pallasmaa and Peter Zumthor.⁵ Alberto Pérez-Gómez has written of attunement to environments, including the dimension of language.⁶ It is, of course, necessary to embrace the *feeling* of things, the ways that physical structures exert influence upon one's body, one's senses. This is due as much to

effects—surfaces' reception of light, smell, colour,⁷ and spatial characteristics—as it is to do with haptic experience:⁸ the connections felt between the body and the ground,⁹ the specificity of materials, and their textures.¹⁰ All of these create affective atmospheres. One can imagine an architecture that is made to affect 'atmospheres', whose primary concerns are these effects upon the body, the psyche, and all aspects of perception; affecting consciousness through a complete experience of the senses: the aesthetic. This phenomenological approach to architecture posits that the experience of architecture is tied to primary sensations and those associations that stem from them, such as memory. In the writing of Christian Norberg-Schulz, this opens the door to invocations of deep history, of native knowledge, common sense, autochthony, and authenticity. Implicit are variously the qualities of immutability, or timelessness. With these comes the notion of a society—discrete, coherent, entire—in which there is agreement, in which the political is idealised.

In describing an experience of architecture, the inadequacy of atmosphere as measure is clear through what is missing from it: namely, the central role played by language in the making of things, as articulated in material culture, and the heterogeneous and decentred nature of modern society, which renders notions of common sense or immutability of very narrow application. In the phenomenological turn, the experience of architecture is reliant upon the perception of phenomena, those experiences available to the senses, which one is necessarily and by inference naturally attuned to, concerning physical, spatial, tactile, visual, haptic, olfactory and aural characteristics. Implicit, again, are notions of veracity or innocence in relation to such experiences. Yet, among these senses is the visual. Of the senses that perceive, the visual is the most inscribed in culture and language, the sense in which what is seen is not only a cue to memory, but the subject of analysis and interpretation.

I do not deny the potency of the phenomenological lens in its access to experiences of architecture, but propose that it cannot either describe or motivate the making of architecture enough. Architecture is situated within culture and language, the subject of and contributor to conditions, and, by the nature of that situatedness, political. When it comes to considerations of architecture that will contribute to the beginnings of its making, I believe that broader approaches are necessary, those that recognise that architecture is situated in its conditions: in history, in 'place', in culture, in language, in ideas, and in material culture. An experience of architecture within this broader field of considerations is bound to be more layered and complex, demanding attention to its conditions, relations, and appearances, and what lies within them.

In chapter two, 'Images, appearances, utterances', the 'lack' within both image and language opened gaps of ambiguity, uncertainty, and doubt, that necessitated interpretation, beyond the reading of signs and the acknowledgement of signification. Chapter three, 'Contexts', highlighted the relations between architecture and its culture, as well as its conditions, which created both experience and meaning. In this chapter, I will turn to that aspect of experience that I believe to be essential to accessing its complexity, that which pertains to *looking*, to attention to appearances, to allusion, artifice, and especially, representation, and an appreciation of the presence of representation.

Representation, first, as the bringing forth of that, or who, or which is missing through the image or object; and second, as the manifestation of an idea, the additional value ascribed to and inscribed in that object, and the architectural element in particular. This will have significance in the discussion, later in this chapter, of Gottfried Semper's 'Caraïb Hut', extending Kenneth Frampton's analysis,¹¹ in which weaving and writing are drawn together,¹² and extrapolating that writing into the other constitutive elements of the 'primitive hut's' construction or assembly. It is important, if not essential, to acknowledge the presence of representation, to encounter it, to welcome its potential access to the real and the idea, in order to be conscious of the investments of others who have lived before, in whose ruins one lives now. What appears to the eye in the human-made world are constructs. Representation, scorned as a residue of classical thought and its confusion with verisimilitude remains valuable in the acts of looking because of its power to engage the viewer in its constructions. Acknowledging representation and its presence—for example, in everyday objects, or in architecture, which is laden with narrative intent even in its most reductive realisations—involves more than describing, as put forward by Maurice Merleau-Ponty;¹³ it necessitates analysis and interpretation in order to get to what it is, to get to the real.

I propose that it is essential for the architect, in preparation for the acts of architecture, to look deeply into the appearances of things, environments, and architecture, beyond their phenomenological effects and the purported essentiality or truth of those effects, and beyond feelings. In doing so, other—essential—feelings will take hold, that come with an encounter with the real. I do not denigrate the compelling qualities of architecture that is proposed or operates through particular attention to the senses, fulfilling the phenomenological paradigm. One can look, for example, at the studio and house that Luis Barragán designed for himself in Mexico City in 1949,¹⁴ and be aware that such a design was also bound to a value system that quietly articulated itself through its physical manifestation, speaking of luxury and religious austerity, of simplicity, and sophistication. And, unlike the 'specific objects' and architecture made by the Minimal artist Donald Judd in Manhattan and Marfa,¹⁵ in which a rejection of referentiality was essential to his artistic programme, architecture cannot be reduced to the making of beautiful sets. Architecture is in the world, in the midst of lives lived, imagined, pictured, and uttered. It is impossible to realise an architecture of essences in the sense that Edmund Husserl imagined, as he thought of phenomenology as complete sensorial consciousness.¹⁶ This is something pertaining exclusively to the experiencing self, who imagines a condition of centrality. It is, however, possible to imagine an architecture that is profoundly responsive—attuned—to its situation, its specificities, and its contingencies, and in those contingencies, other experiences and the experiences of others.

Societies are composed of others, speaking other languages, coming from other places and other societies, with other experiences, and other perceptions. Beyond both idealistic and delusional notions of universal, commonly shared experience, one must seek to describe the experience of architecture and its situations as constructs, assembled from a variety of forms of understanding, readings, and interpretations. Objects, environments, and architecture emerge from the meetings

of cultures, languages, and experiences, acquiring currency and meanings through exchanges within and across them. These meanings also change and are in flux; currency can expire. The 'timelessness' implied in the phenomenological paradigm is a concept, a fiction. One enters that world, amid that flux, in the languages and cultures, that have gone before one exists,¹⁷ and have produced, or constructed, the environments in which one finds oneself situated. The things that have gone before, produced by others, constitute the material culture of an environment. Material culture, as both a concept and a discipline, suggests that artefacts—things and environments—are products of ideas, whose significance is embedded within the contests and complexities of language and culture, and manifest in the appearances of those artefacts. As things are among other things, the artefact's 'messages' are communicated within the field of all other messages within a particular cultural sphere, their currency rendered even more complex given the heterogeneity of voices within that sphere and interferences across cultural spheres.

Within the architectural education *milieu* I have encountered since the mid-1980s,¹⁸ discourses of phenomenology and material culture have tended to be held apart, with material culture and language often cast in opposition to what is characterised as the actuality and authenticity of sensorial experience, imagining this experience to be unmediated. On the contrary, the two are interwoven, but the presence of language, and by extension, representation, complicates the experience of the senses precisely because it is cultural. In addition, material culture as essential to the thinking and making of architecture has tended to be neglected or repudiated by those who consider architecture to be an articulation of either artistic-subjective, scientific-rational, or market driven forces. This is again, a consequence of its perceived alliance with language and representation, casting it as suspect when compared to the validity of an architecture of (phenomenological) experience, an architecture of technical or economic performance, or an architecture generated by data and flows.¹⁹

Material culture finds itself bound by its associations with language and conventions of appearances, with surfaces, signs, and the slippery nature of all of these: problems that are pertinent to representation. I propose, however, that representation offers a means of reconciling the space between phenomenology and material culture. I propose that acknowledgement of the presence of representation in the constructed environment—in things, in buildings, in their gathering, in the spaces between them, in their relations—integrated by readings of the effects of phenomena and interpretations of things as effects of material culture, allows for a more complete meeting with that environment and its figures. I propose, furthermore, that the embrace of representation, or more precisely the embrace of the presence of representation in attention to the constructed environment and architecture, might lead to the real in ways that phenomenological readings cannot access. To aid this, in previous chapters, I have written of territories, interiors, and the making of subjectivities through both instrumental and fictive means; I have written of images and their language, of utterances and fictions, and the gap between word and idea; I have written of contexts, of that which has gone or has been built before and its influence upon what follows. Here, I will write again of things amongst other things—including images among other images, spaces among other spaces,

buildings among other buildings, architecture among other architecture—and will invoke other disciplines of artistic production to illustrate the complexity of that afforded to the experiencing subject, that may inform the making of an architecture of experience beyond the sensorial.

My scepticism concerning the purported authority of phenomenological readings of architecture or exclusively phenomenological approaches to the making of architecture derives from the episteme's embedded pretence to purity, authenticity, memory, and autochthony; the narrowness of its considerations of situatedness, and its implicit distancing from the contaminations of language. In the context of teaching architectural design, one regularly encounters project proposals that look for something true, in their expression of interest in architecture that 'responds to the body and its movement,' or aspire to exclusively explore haptic qualities, or light, or atmosphere. The widely held notion is that such projects will be free of those burdensome obligations that architecture typically—and tediously—accommodates. This is typical of the novice, who is looking to find their own way, believing or insisting that this should be independent of the paths established by previous practices, which are rejected as outmoded. It is also germane to the pretence of the author as genius, for whom no rules apply to their practices save their own, achieved through their personal discovery of universal or elemental truths, to be found, inevitably, in the realm of the senses. When allowances for influences outside their own intuitive processing of fundamental experience are made, these are inexorably rooted in vernacular traditions—cultured, yet untainted—or the reassuring, solipsistic terrain of personal experience, especially memory. This is not to deny the compelling quality that architecture apparently made from these premises frequently exhibits, but rather to question the very notion of its appeal to the senses, and most importantly to the mind and its ways of translating its *sense* of experience to its *feeling*, and the mind's structures of meaning.²⁰ It would seem that this architecture might be diminished by its withdrawal from an acceptance of its situatedness beyond the sites of the body or an authentic locality characterised as *place*.

Looking at art that is associated with a phenomenological paradigm, however, might indicate more complex ways in which architecture might approach the matter of situatedness. When thinking of art that directly appeals to the body and perception through artefacts tending to the condition of architecture, the work of the artist Richard Serra comes to mind.²¹ The purpose of considering Serra's sculpture here is to both acknowledge those aspects that are directed to sensory perception of the works, including and beyond vision and their affects; and to note their relation to their circumstances and conditions that enhance, inform, or interfere with their perception. More precisely, this might be described as 'the work of the work.'²² One's perception of Serra's sculpture, often described as 'site-specific', is contingent upon the sculpture's relation to the space of its visibility, its situation, its context. The work is dependent upon and intertwined with the situation, and its situatedness is as much about the work itself as it is about its condition.

Serra's work is frequently characterised as architectural, due to its scale, its invitation for engagement of and occupation by the human body, its all-too-evident materiality—usually hot-rolled or forged steel—and its play with mass. The 'verb

list' made by the artist in 1967 attests to the acts of making, bound in fact: "to roll, to crease, to fold, to store, to bend, to shorten, to twist, to dapple..."²³ This is consistent with the qualities of an encounter with Serra's work, whether it is sculpture or drawing. The works present themselves as things with material characteristics: dark, heavy, present. Early sculptures were made of thick rubber sheets, left to hang on the wall or lean on the floor; these were supplanted by materials such as molten lead slung into corners of rooms, or lead sheet and tubes, propped up against walls, soft, yielding to their weight.²⁴ Later, steel plates were propped against walls or other steel plates. The constituent elements of these works were gathered to form structures in which each part depended on the other for support.²⁵ As the scale of the pieces increased, they alternated between free-standing assemblies, or simpler arrangements in which very heavy pieces of steel would rely on the features of the space in which they were set for support, whether this was a white-walled art gallery or a public space outdoors. This dependency gave the structures the dual impression of defying gravity at the same time as being utterly bound to it. Being near the work led to an exaggerated sense of its materiality, mass, and presence. One was also aware of the relation of the work to the space in which it was situated; the work was very often made in direct 'dialogue' with that space and was dependent upon the characteristics of the space that bore the work, contributing to its form, arrangement, and reading.²⁶ The work was *situated*, and one might, beyond being in thrall to its quasi-architectural form, consider the situation of the work as essential to its existence. The 'site-specificity' of the work was not merely a matter of call and response to a condition as it offered itself, but a profound integration of object and condition.²⁷

Serra's sculpture, in its tending to the condition of architecture, is not merely the result of a series of operations on material, scale, space, mass, and other to the experiencing subject, but on the conditions within which the work is situated: engaged, present, and visible (in the broadest use of the term). This is instructive, and useful for the making of architecture that offers itself as exemplar of the phenomenological turn, extending its performance and relevance. This is a point I wish to stress: that situatedness, contingency, and engagement, all of which contribute significance to the visibility or the appearance of the work, is necessary for the work of architecture that sees itself within the phenomenological paradigm.

Like Serra's situated work of art, a work of architecture must have the capacity to appeal to the senses, from the visual to the aural, from the olfactory to the haptic, and yet be in the world, consequentially.²⁸ One can imagine architecture made in this way, following the stimulations of the senses, just as one remembers experiences of architecture that are so vital,²⁹ so affected by that architecture's expression and atmosphere,³⁰ that one's whole being, mind and body alike, are altered. Such experiences are often contained within the interiors of buildings, which are their treasures. An Inca temple at Machu Picchu, the hall of the Diwan-E-Khas at Fatehpur Sikri, the Izumo Taisha shrine, the Taj Mahal—exemplars used in lectures³¹ and elements of the rolling photo-album that is the website of the architect Valerio Olgiati³²—are all exemplars of such primal, 'as experienced' architecture of the senses, of the variety that Olgiati would characterise, however, as 'non-referential', and which he and a whole contemporary grouping of architects would espouse.

*"We live in a non-referential world. Therefore, architecture must be non-referential. Non-referentiality is the only way to conceive buildings that make sense in a world in which simple attributions of meaning no longer exist."*³³

The notion of a world "in which simple attributions of meaning no longer exist" misses the point that such a non-referential, idea-driven architecture directed toward experience is in fact reliant on the storehouse of accumulated imagery of past architecture, which it references. 'Non-referential' in this case suggests that the experience of architecture is direct, visceral, mysterious; that its complexities arise from feelings,³⁴ memory, and association; and that intellection, reading, interpretation and drawing of meaning from this is either impossible, or its pursuit is futile.

This is reminiscent of the discourse that surrounded Minimal Art in the 1960s, as represented by the writing, criticism, and practice of Donald Judd, who strived for a non-representational, non-referential, non-European art of 'specific objects' that were only about themselves and the physical (or phenomenological) conditions of their visibility.³⁵ It was an objective not necessarily entirely shared with other protagonists of Minimal Art, whose work was clearly in and of the world. This is evident in the work of Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, John McCracken, and Robert Morris, among others;³⁶ and was recognised as such in the piece 'Homes for America' (1966) by the artist Dan Graham, a mock science-cum-real estate spread for *Arts* magazine that aligned the mass-produced tract housing of East Coast suburbia with the iterative strategies germane to Minimal Art practices.³⁷ Both were products reflective of and bound to the cultural and economic imperatives of the time.

The specificity of these artists' installations in relation to the environments in which they were shown often demonstrated a contingent dependency on those same environments. This was not only a matter of spatial arrangements, as could be seen in the work of Judd,³⁸ Morris, and Andre, but in the acknowledgment of the space for the work constituting an infrastructure. In the case of Dan Flavin, whose work was dependent on the art space's supply of electricity, its switching off meant the disappearance of the work.³⁹ The question of the space of the visibility of the work of art, as infrastructure, and furthermore as infrastructure with attendant values, became the basis of many conceptual artists' practices that followed, such as those of Dan Graham, and Michael Asher, for whom these environments became the focus points of sustained institutional critique.

I have drawn attention to the work of artists such as Serra and Judd, who divested their work of representation and referentiality, to posit that even very reductive practices demanding direct engagement of the viewer—what the critic Michael Fried bemoaned as 'theatricality'—ceded to the situation or condition of the works' visibility, and ultimately acknowledged the significances of those conditions, giving works their 'situatedness'.⁴⁰

There were artists, most notably James Turrell, who removed the detail of perceived conditions entirely to create 'environments' for testing the limits of pure visual perception detached from any form of reference, attached only to the

physiological realities of the body. In pursuit of ever-grander settings, Turrell came to develop his own elaborate, ritualistic, and quasi-architectural infrastructures, ultimately turning to archetypes of spatial sequences. Non-referentiality turned out to be hard work. I therefore wish to return to architecture within the phenomenological paradigm not to negate the legitimacy or interest of its effects or affects, but to note its reliance on imagery, and inevitably, representation. Such architecture, like most architecture, depends upon resemblance, deeply inscribed patterns, such as type, and, in short, referentiality.

4.2.1 A case in point

I am quite aware that the admission of referentiality is not equivalent to the embrace of references in the making of a work of architecture. Referentiality can be a consequence of architectural thinking and acting, drawing upon the culture of architecture and its ways of becoming, which has a history and theory that is re-enacted in the thinking and making of the work. I turn to an exemplar of the phenomenological paradigm in architecture, and a work designed by Peter Zumthor, the Bruder-Klaus-Feldkapelle, in Mechernich-Wachendorf (2007), which I will use to illustrate another aspect of an architecture that is invested with qualities beyond its material, scale, space, and mass, that are referential, if inadvertently so.

The chapel stands alone in arable fields, and is dedicated to St Nicholas of Flüe, designed for local people "for silence, meditation and prayer",⁴¹ and appears on a slight ridge as a tall unevenly five-sided monolith of concrete, resembling rammed earth. It is the only building to be seen, and its primitive material suggests that it might be the *first* building. The surfaces of four of its five sides are pitted by evenly spaced holes, registers of the building process. The narrowest side is not; here, a triangular door of galvanised steel is planted on its surface. All the surfaces show the process through which it was made, the day work creating distinct, horizontal bands. It is a reduced, nuanced, and enigmatic form. As such a volume, it recalls the large-scale solid steel blocks of Richard Serra, though its mass is less obdurate. Its material suggests, paradoxically, a lightness, manifested in its colour, and the visibility of its process of construction. One can, in looking at the surfaces of the monolith, imagine the acts of building them up day by day, of inserting some sort of rod in its surfaces, whose marks are reminiscent of the remnants of the process of the construction of medieval towers in Italian towns, though this reference—which appears to my eyes—may well be unintentional. Richard Serra's monoliths, such as *Weight and Measure* (1992), installed in Tate Britain's Duveen Galleries,⁴² show the processes of their making, yet they seem bound to heavy industry, and so, almost inhuman. Zumthor's chapel, in contrast, is visibly made by a few people, in a simple way.

The triangular door on the chapel's narrowest end opens to reveal a triangular, inky black void. The opening bears resemblance (which the architect may also have inadvertently incorporated) to the funereal designs of Etienne-Louis Boullée, his architecture of shadows.⁴³ One then enters the interior of the chapel that is dark, and at first indeterminate in dimension. The sides of the dark space are continuous, almost that of a cave or some primitive shelter. The unified surface undulates and rises, leaning in as in the manner of a *tipi*,⁴⁴ its height difficult to



4.02
Peter Zumthor, Bruder-Klaus-Kapelle,
Mechernich-Wachendorf, 2007.

determine. It is rough, ridged, corrugated, striated, an imprint or register of some other structure that is now absent. It is studded with points of light, the counterparts of those black holes punctuating the surface of the monolith without. The interior is quite disconnected from the *gestalt* of the exterior. It is completely different; it has another identity.⁴⁵ Its walls seem to mark some event, something significant that has happened here. Objects sprout from the floor on spindly pedestals, each with their own tasks: to hold candles, to support a small, sculpted bust.⁴⁶ One seeks orientation, and so one looks down to the floor, which looks and feels as though a pooled, hardened, formerly molten material (it is lead); its surface is mottled, washing up to the edge of the undulating wall. It is as though the floor has been poured, a sense that puddles of water enhance; and so, one looks up, above and beyond the surface that envelops the space. The folds of leaning, continuous surface terminate at the sky in a teardrop-shaped aperture, which seems to prevent the surface from falling in on itself.

→ 4.02

The interior surface is cast; its form bears traces of that which was removed, an image, if you will, of that which was removed. In this case, timber rods arranged to form an eccentric cone, in the manner of the *tipi*, were burnt away in the process of construction, leaving the image of that structure, and its resemblances to its progenitor, a gathering of trees for shelter. That very type of indigenous structure has been thought of as being at the origins of architecture, both as imagined by Vitruvius, and as a given narrative and form within Viollet-le-Duc's reimaginings of 'the first building', made by saplings drawn toward each other and tied together, then enclosed by packed mud.⁴⁷ Like the resemblance to medieval Italian towers, this may again be an unpremeditated reference, but the 'image' contained within the chapel's interior draws experience into areas other than sensual or sensorial stimulation. One's experience has been excited by the act of looking; by mysteries, by resemblances; by the discernment of associations, and by the processes of interpretation. This is key. The phenomenological perception, and its description, has slipped into another mode, one of interpretation, of reading traces and resemblances, and images of other artefacts, both realised and projected, due to the education or the culture of the eye.

Whether interpretation is welcome or not, one is presented with the possibility that architecture has the power to infer other realities, that it is both fact and fiction, at once reality and something else. It is material to be deciphered. To do so, one must rely on the perception of the senses in full, acknowledging the implications of allowing the sense of vision—in its fullest—to be involved.

4.3 Ways of perceiving

If one is to speak of phenomenology, the experience of the senses, it is necessary to speak of perception. The consideration of perception is particularly important for both the experience and the making of architecture. This becomes immediately clear when one consults the definition of the word *perception* in the Oxford English Dictionary, and its two meanings: one scientific, the other, colloquial.

noun [*mass noun*]

1/ the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses: awareness of something through the senses: *psychology & zoology* the neurophysiological processes, including memory, by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli.

2/ the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted: the English word is derived from the Latin *percipere*, meaning, 'seize, understand.'

If one is to speak of human experience—there is ever-growing understanding of consciousness in the human mind as well as those of animals—perception concerns the awareness of external stimuli—something—through the senses. It is thus a matter of concern for psychology and neuroscience.⁴⁸ Consciousness, the object of human perception, is not the same as feeling, which can be a sensation threatening or disturbing the body's homeostasis; or a consequence of reactions to the images through which the mind's intelligence is constructed.⁴⁹ It is this store of images through which the mind works that I wish to consider. For even the responses one might expect in encounters with certain effects—atmospheres, for example—are tied to these stores of images, as memory and knowledge: experience derived from experience.

Perception, as one uses the word more commonly, refers to notions of position, and points of view, and the problem of interpretation and understanding. The two definitions—one scientific and concerned with effects and responses; the other colloquial and concerned with language and its effects—may seem at first to be far apart, even antagonistic. One seems to be tied to the senses, physiological in nature, almost pure, the other interfered with by interpretation and its systems. I will argue that the two should be integrated when it comes to the accommodation of perception in the thinking, making and experience of architecture. To reiterate, I wish to find some reconciliation between the two, and their representative *epistemes* in architecture, namely, phenomenology and material culture.

But now, I will continue with perception and the senses. These are of course, sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell, and body orientation. All have their capacities, all connect the human being to the world, practically (for survival), meaningfully, and aesthetically: *aesthetikos* meaning 'of sense perception'.⁵⁰ The term aesthetics itself was devised by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, whose *Aesthetica* (1750) described a new science, at first concerning the emotional power of verse.⁵¹ One understands anaesthetics, in contrast, as something designed to cancel out sensory perception in aid of specific medical interventions, the term arising from those effects experienced by individuals who suffered over-stimulation from the sensory demands of the nineteenth-century metropolis.⁵²

The senses are shown to work in isolation and together, in partnership, such as sight and hearing,⁵³ or smell and taste, or the sense of touch with vision and body orientation. All of these have strong connections to memory.⁵⁴ One might think of the body as being a *passive receptor* of outside stimuli, within whom previous experience becomes embedded, and so, remembered, but this is inadequate. The American psychologist James J Gibson⁵⁵ sees the senses as being 'aggressive',

operating as perceptive systems that actively seek out different types of information from the environment, acting in various compounded systems—the visual system, the taste-smell system, the basic-orienting system, the haptic system—without intervening intellectual processes.⁵⁶

In Western thought, vision has tended to dominate the realm of the senses. The pre-eminence of the visual among all the senses has of course affected the imagining and making of architecture since the Renaissance. The development of perspective created an entire regime of visual organisation that has marked Western painting and architecture, reinforcing the notion of Man as centre and master of experience, and meaning.⁵⁷ The value of the non-visual, and more specifically, the haptic senses has preoccupied architects for some time, with regard to a change in understanding of the brain's (and the mind's) construction of consciousness through the senses and its own physiology, and the effects of these on considerations of architecture.⁵⁸ The architect Richard Neutra wrote of the sensing body, a complete nervous system that is traumatised by ill-conceived design.⁵⁹ In *Body, Memory and Architecture*, Kent Bloomer and the architect Charles Moore wrote of the need for a joyous, haptic architecture that furthermore engaged all the senses.⁶⁰ And closer to the present, and most pertinent to this argument, the architect Juhani Pallasmaa, in his book *The Eyes of the Skin* (1996), wished all of the senses to be attended to, as a counterpoint to "the dominance of vision, and the suppression of other senses in the way that architecture is taught, conceived and critiqued, and the consequent disappearance of sensory and sensual qualities from architecture."⁶¹

One lauds these efforts, and one can imagine them as situated in the cultural circumstances of their time. Neutra, writing in 1954 in the United States, was looking for a scientific basis for the making of architecture; Bloomer and Moore, again in the United States, were responding to a perceived rejection of historical referentiality to an all-senses approach, that would connect architectural form and meaning to body-centred experiences, representative of post-modernism; in Finland, Pallasmaa was, among other things, resisting the regimes of visuality (and linguistic deconstruction) that came with post-modern critique.⁶²

A diminution of the sense of vision as being but one of the senses, an accumulation of physiological responses, furthermore 'corrupted' by culture and language, and the problems associated with the gaze⁶³ has led, in my view, to the fiction of a 'pure' architecture that can distance itself and escape its contamination by sophisticated regimes of visuality that are embedded, cultural, and linguistic. This fiction prioritises memory and false memory, and pretends to conditions of pre-linguistic, arcadian *ur*-experience, mythical autochthony, and universality; the 'blood and soil' variety of authenticity; and an architecture of fetishised surfaces and mystic atmospheres, which, for all its 'reality', is paradoxically distanced from the world. This strain of thinking about phenomenology in architecture, attached to Norberg-Schulz's interpretations of Heidegger, seems to edit out the reality of a *complete* sensory experience (as argued for by Pallasmaa),⁶⁴ one that reflects the knowledge that is culturally and linguistically embedded within the sense of vision.

I wish to make a case for vision, vision beyond its role as a delivery system for visual affect. I want to make a case for it as a complex sense, in which the viewer is challenged and stimulated; and that the experiencing subject, in allowing vision to join and interfere with all the other senses, has experiences that are both enriched and informed.

Vision is not straightforward. It is in the world, cultured, and contested. Plato mistrusted vision, in that as a vehicle to perception, it led to interpretations of 'what was seen' that were not rationally linked to reality. Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, in which prisoners facing a wall to which they are chained see evidence of their interpretations of the world outside in the shadows of a fire projected onto its surface, illustrated the deceptive aspect of visual information and its interpretation.⁶⁵

4.3.1 Vision as problematic

The problem with vision is shared with art as it presents itself, encapsulated in Pliny the Elder's anecdote of the origin of painting.⁶⁶ Vision is not merely a register of physiological effect, or a stimulus to memory: vision, and specifically *the act of seeing* demands interpretation. There is a human dimension of *mis*interpretation in this story of representation, which I will return to. Its human dimension, its margin of error, its capacity for fiction, and its receptivity to meaning, are important elements to the reconciliation I propose between phenomenology and material culture.

There is then the problem of the privileged, centrality of the viewing subject and the authority of that position. In the West, the Renaissance subject—the subject who senses and sees—is placed at the centre of all that surrounds them. The subject receives stimuli and projects responses, and is the master of perceptions, spaces, their organisation, and representation. With the advent of modernity at the beginning of the sixteenth century, immediately following the High Renaissance,⁶⁷ scientific study contests that centrality and contextualises the sensing subject within larger, external systems. No longer central, no longer an embodiment of God, the sensing subject is an organism, a bundle of internal systems—structural, muscular, circulatory, pulmonary, and neurological—into which all the senses fold; none, more dramatically, than vision.

Vision's status as the 'special' sense was undermined as it became a subject for physiological and neurological studies, along with touch, taste, smell, and hearing, from the nineteenth century onward. The physiological studies and descriptions of vision effectively contributed to its understanding as being an organic machine.⁶⁸ As though to press the point of the corporeal nature of vision, its physiological aspect was made the content of the work of several artists in the 1960s, whose work threw the viewer back on themselves as they tried to perceive presentations that had no objective form, only light. Returning to the artist James Turrell—his contemporaries Douglas Orr and Richard Irwin could be said to have worked with similar objectives—a viewer was presented with visual experiences that were difficult to define or, indeed, perceive, leaving them with the feeling that vision, without an identifiable object of focus was, in fact, burdened with the significant limitations of their perceiving body, enforcing an acute appreciation that they were nothing more than receptacles of stimuli, and that vision might be reduced to experiences of *effects* on the physiology of eye and mind.⁶⁹

Such strategies were aimed at vision to criticise its elevated status as a *cultured* sense, and so, prejudiced and subject to ideas and ideologies. This culture, however, is an inescapable aspect of vision, which is in and of the world, embedded in its ways and in language, and therefore complex. Vision is not a mere delivery system for sensation, or, at its most anodyne, idle pleasure. The artists who worked with the physiology of vision were presenting a factual rejection of the cultural usurpation of vision by regimes such as perspective, which placed the viewer as the central protagonist of the visible world, a centrality that led to a certain rigidity, and the problem, associated with a single protagonist in charge of vision, of projection.⁷⁰ All lines of perspective, of scenes seen, led back to the eye of the viewer. Artists of the Renaissance had, through perspective, placed vision in the service of the idea of human centrality, an intellectual reflection of Man's embodiment of God and predominance over the physical world. The centrality of the position of the beholder was essential to its art and architecture, wherein everything could be mapped or trapped in the projective nets of perspective.⁷¹ In this system, vision reinforced a narrative of omniscience, of control. However, its regime was understood, almost as soon as it was refined, to be problematic. It was challenged by the styles of Mannerism and the Baroque that followed, which suggested uncertainties in visuality's order and the possibility of differing positions and protagonists of perception.⁷²

4.3.2 The centre loses hold

The undoing of the privilege of the centred viewer is important, preparing the ground for a more complex understanding of the possibilities within cultured visual perception. Another artist's work helps to illustrate this, which attracted the analyses of Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan. In the seventeenth century, Diego Velázquez, the painter to the Spanish court of Felipe IV, expanded the problematic of vision, the one who sees, and what constitutes the totality of a visual experience of a painting in his work, *Las Meninas* (1656). The painting appears, at first sight, to be a group portrait of young princesses and 'attendants.' Upon further scrutiny, however, the edges and the background of the large—life-size—painting provide more complications and more complexity. A painter—and it is assumed to be *the* painter, the creator of the picture and its narrative—looks out of the picture from behind a large, stretched canvas, the back of which is presented to the viewer. In the background, the scene behind the painter, a shadowy figure looks over the scene in the foreground, namely the gathering of princesses sat next to the painter. The philosopher Michel Foucault's analysis of the painting dismantled the image's constructions before the viewer's eyes.⁷³ What, precisely, was the viewer looking at? What was the meaning of this scene? Why was the painter in the scene? What, or who, was the painter looking at? What or who is the painter, in fact, painting? Was the viewer being looked at by the painter, who is depicted—painted—looking out to the viewer in some subtle agreement by the subjects of the painting? What of the apparent subjects (the ladies in waiting, the dwarf, the mastiff? Are they looking at the viewer, too? Are they sitters for a group portrait—which the painting evidently is—or an audience of something outside the picture? And what of these figures, their relations, their countenances, their attire? And what of the figure, seen as a silhouette

→ 4.03



4.03
Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656.

in the illuminated door frame in the background? And what of the other figure there, blurred in a picture frame, apparently caught in the reflection of a mirror? Apart from the exposition of all manner of representation, the 'normal,' stable status of both the viewer and subject is thoroughly destabilised. In his analysis, Foucault outlined the implicit power relations between the monarch who commissioned the work and the painter, who was effectively a servant, yet the master of his work of representation.⁷⁴

The sense of vision attached to the viewer of *Las Meninas* brings, indeed, the problem of the subject as an authoritative centre of perception. The viewer is faced with other (in this case, fictional) subjects that undermine the viewer's centrality, and integrity. The painting provokes a kind of crisis, in which each of the depicted subjects look out from the depths of the picture, not necessarily at the viewer (the viewing subject as self), but at others or another who are either independent of the viewer or have replaced them. The painting creates the possibility that the viewer is redundant to the whole complex set of relations, or that the viewer is someone else. Jacques Lacan also used the painting to understand uncertainties within the regime of vision, asking who is looking in this realm of many looking, and many being seen.⁷⁵ Judgements emanating from the notion of a privileged viewer are shown to be unstable.

The anxiety that comes when the viewer's centrality and presumed omniscience is challenged is profoundly unsettling, and extremely interesting. The fact that this is achieved in representational painting indicates the power within representation itself, to which I will turn later in this chapter. The problem of the centrality of the viewer as perceiving self, provoked by Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, has its echoes in existentialist thought. Jean-Paul Sartre described a condition in which a protagonist's command of what they see meets a fundamental problem.⁷⁶ In Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943),⁷⁷ a situation is described in which a figure entering a park is master of the scene all around them, all being controlled by their vision. They are the master, the centre; all objects are made to exist through their sight. Yet, another (an other) enters the park. The dominance of the seeing self is destroyed by the other who also masters the scene, who also sees, who sees everything, including the seeing 'self', who is now rendered an other, an object. All the power is transferred to the 'new' self. The primacy of the self and the self's gaze is thereby undone, along with the self's authority and integrity. A crisis ensues, in which the self is threatened to be annihilated by the other *who may be the self*, a kind of *doppelgänger*, as in the case of Dostoyevsky's protagonist Golyadkin in his short novel, *The Double* (1846), who finally breaks down when confronted with his hitherto imagined Double—a representation of himself, alive, and usurping Golyadkin's life, his very being.⁷⁸

In these cases, the certainty of the centrality of the perceiving self is undone by a usurper. But an episode experienced by the philosopher Jacques Lacan raised another aspect of perception that is important for the argument I wish to make regarding how a relation is established with the world in which the self loses their centrality, and accepts a condition of a world of others, of other perceptions, of other utterances, of other representations. The episode in question is summarised by the art historian Norman Bryson, which extends the crisis described within Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, to a world of things and a system of signs. It concerns an event experienced by Lacan

when out to sea with some fishermen, one of whom called Lacan's attention to a sardine tin floating among objects on the surface of the water, visible because of the sunlight it reflected. The fisherman said that although he could see the tin, the tin could not see Lacan.⁷⁹ Lacan eventually considered that this might not be true; that when the self would sense that any inanimate object—one that would seem to have no agency—could actually 'look back' at them, it could displace the self's sense that they were in control of vision through their privileged perception of the world.⁸⁰

Lacan's realisation opens possibilities for perception that further diminish the centrality of the perceiving self, placing them not only amongst other perceiving selves, but amidst an environment of things that speak of others. This suggests a condition, or more precisely, the nature of an environment of other things made by other people, that might not only look back but speak back; an inanimate environment that can be imagined as animate, in which artefacts, things, have some sort of agency in that they carry meaning. Perception of this environment necessitates acknowledgement of the 'thinking' or embedded thought of these artefacts. Bryson, extrapolating on Lacan's 'discovery', continues:

"What is the source of this strangely empowered *look back*? Lacan's account depends, not on the irruption of another personal viewer but the irruption, in the visual field, of the Signifier. When I look, what I see is not simply light but intelligible form: the *rays* of light are caught in a *rets*, a network of meanings, in the same way that flotsam is caught in the net of the fishermen. For human beings to collectively orchestrate their visual experience together it is required that each submit his or her retinal experience to the socially agreed description(s) of an intelligible world. Vision is socialised, and thereafter deviation from this social construction of visual reality can be measured and named, variously, as hallucination, misrecognition, or 'visual disturbance'. Between the subject and the world is inserted the entire sum of discourses which make up visibility, that cultural construct, and make visibility different from vision, the notion of unmediated visual experience. Between retina and world is inserted a *screen* of signs, a screen consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into the social arena.

"When I learn to speak, I am inserted into systems of discourse that were there before I was and will remain after I am gone. Similarly, when I see socially, that is, when I begin to articulate my retinal experience with the codes of recognition that come to me from my social milieu(s), I am inserted into systems of visual discourse that saw the world before I did, and will go on seeing after I see no longer.

"Everything I see is orchestrated with a cultural production of seeing that exists independently of my life and outside of it: my individual discoveries, the finding of my eye as it probes through the world, come to unfold in terms not of my making, and indifferent to my mortality."⁸¹

Looking demands a loosening of the boundaries of the self, so that questions might be asked both of that which is viewed, and how one is looking. I propose that an acute degree of consciousness of the act of looking, of the self and the condition of the other, yields content that is extremely important, allowing both the subject/object

of looking and the viewing subject, to be more present, stimulating a meeting to take place that would dissolve the boundaries of both, towards a revelation of the real.

Everything that is made is not just a reality—a set of facts that are experienced by the senses without analysis that are accepted, embraced and felt—but utterances, with all the problems attendant upon the utterance, its status as a signifier of that which is signified, a representation. For example, I propose that buildings are expressions of thought, constructs as well as constructions, and their appearances are not merely consequences of constructive acts, but bearers of ideas, fictions, and meaning: the real. And as representations, I wish to approach those representations, and the real within them, to have some way of meeting what they are. I wish to approach who has 'uttered' them by working through what Bryson calls the "screen of signs", through analysis and interpretation, and something approaching empathy. The environment is full of artefacts—things—that speak of ideas and desires: material culture is precisely founded on this principle. If one can—counter to the direct, not-analysing, *feeling* described by Merleau-Ponty⁸²—read and interpret these materialised utterances, one can 'listen' to the lives and ideas of others who have left the material of those lives and ideas behind them; to the cultures that they were part of; to the fictions that sustained them; and then, begin to address the problem of beginning, of adding to what has been made. It is a parallel to the entreaty of T S Eliot in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in the human world.⁸³ It requires acute attention to the manifested environment, to a movement toward its artefacts, a means of seeing its screen of signs towards that which is within, the real at its core.

4.3.3 Vision and visibility

Vision is situated in the world. Vision meets a world of meaning, of meanings. In encounters with that world, vision is cultivated, cultured, subject to ways and regimes of seeing that are situated within culture, and so, connected to the ideas about the world that emerge and are expressed by others, through language. Vision becomes more than a sense stimulated by external phenomena; through its encounters with a world of constructed things and constructed ways of seeing, it becomes visibility. Visibility is not innocent. Visibility is socialised, cultured; it reads, it interprets things through a screen of signs. The mind learns not only through its store of images,⁸⁴ but its store of signs, attesting to a culture of many diverse viewers, which in turn suggests a degree of sophistication, of an education in seeing. Such educated, cultured vision resides within the viewer among other viewers, and so, beyond the viewer, before the viewer, and after the viewer.

As vision is cultured,⁸⁵ it is necessarily different in different milieus, altered by cultural experience, as well as gender. The gendered specificity to regimes of visibility is a central tenet of John Berger's television series and book *Ways of Seeing*, which tied conventions of representation, namely concerning the naked female—a riposte to Kenneth Clarke's invocation of 'the nude'—in painting and contemporary advertising imagery, with regimes of seeing or visibility, which were specifically organised around the idle—and empowered—male gaze.⁸⁶ The feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey's important essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'⁸⁷ concerned the male gaze, that subjected women to visual systems of control; and the

corresponding usurpation of the filmic male gaze by female protagonists shaped by that gaze is essential to the reading and interpretation of the artist Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* (1977–80).⁸⁸

With different cultures, too, come different ways of seeing, and different regimes of visibility. One encounters, for example, the value in the perception of what is marginal yet culturally specific and available to visibility, as in Junichirō Tanizaki's essay, *In Praise of Shadows*,⁸⁹ where the light perceived to strike a glazed vase or the blackened teeth of a *geisha* in the back of a darkened room, is a light sensitive to culture, to language. The appearance of these figures is contingent upon the cultural significance accorded to them. In his lecture on the gaze, Norman Bryson describes non-Western notions of perception, and the *abolition of the viewer* as the centre of perception. Bryson follows the writings of Keiji Nishitani, who, in criticising the crisis of self and other in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, writes of perception immanent within an all-over field in which the viewer does not hold a privileged position, but is rather part of a continuum, a condition of emptiness, called *śūnyatā*, where neither subject nor object hold on to any permanent form, as they are always unfolding to the impermanent, constantly evolving state of everything in that field.⁹⁰

4.3.4 The screen of signs

In chapter 2, 'Images, utterances, appearances', I discussed Roland Barthes's description of how an advertising image that promoted a brand of Italian food in France used the visually trained interpretation of the language of signs that constitute the advertised products' 'Italianicity', involving the advertisement's viewers in an act of collective decoding of and identification with those products.⁹¹ In that case, consistent with the object of publicity, a process of interpretation led directly to the 'meaning' of the image—in this case, a message—and the kind of viewer-to-image identification that motivates acquisition, consumption, and, in the long-term, 'brand loyalty'. The advertiser's work depends upon the efficacy of the connection between image and response, the effectiveness of the relation between the signifiers—in this case the paraphernalia of 'Italianicity'—and the signified—a set of food products that are purportedly Italian. The food products are not the paraphernalia, but connected to the paraphernalia as the signifieds are connected to their signifiers. There is a gap, that is filled in by the visually trained viewer, and by the regimes of visibility that permit the viewer to artificially bind signifier and signified together. What can be read is cultured, is part of culture: visual culture, material culture, of known or received language, which existed before the viewer and will carry on after the viewer is no longer.

The space that exists between the signifier and the signified is germane to language, and central to the theory of the arbitrariness of the sign established by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. His *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) continued the work of scholars in the last decades of the nineteenth century, who had established that "language is no longer looked upon as an organism that develops independently, but as a product of the collective mind of linguistic groups."⁹² His establishment of linguistics as a specific study was founded on a description of the history and development of all languages and determining "the forces that are

permanently and universally at work in all languages"⁹³ towards the deduction of general laws. In establishing general principles, Saussure explains the role of Sign, Signified, and Signifier. The Sign, in Saussure's definition, is the combination of a *concept* and a *sound-image* (he posits the concept of 'tree' and the sound-image of 'arbour') which are "intimately united, and each recalls the other".⁹⁴ He continues to define the concept as Signified, and the sound-image as Signifier. From there, Saussure establishes his central principles, the first being:

"The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Since I mean by sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier with the signified, I can simply say: *the linguistic sign is arbitrary*."

"...The word *arbitrary* also calls for comment. The term should not imply that the choice of the signifier is left entirely to the speaker; ... I mean it is unmotivated, i.e. arbitrary in that it actually has no natural connection with the signified."⁹⁵

Saussure's arbitrary signs are those from different languages pertaining to the same signifier and signified, signs that are particular to each language and its system. Within each language, the sign may be arbitrary, but it cannot be changed. But the very arbitrariness of the sign demonstrates a slippage or gap between sign and signifier and signified which is, I propose, akin to the gap within representation.

With regard to vision, one may return to the modest painting discussed in the second chapter 'Images, appearances, utterances' by René Magritte, *Le clef des songes*, used by John Berger on the cover of *Ways of Seeing*, that illustrates the simple lesson that the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified is both bound to language and to representation, that the assumptions one has made about the permanence of the sign are fundamentally uncertain: that there are possibilities of slippages, gaps between, following Berger, "words and seeing".⁹⁶

4.3.5 Another case in point

All these possibilities—and problematics—are contained within this culturing of the sense of vision, of visibility, which enriches the possibilities within the experience of architecture, the thinking of architecture, and the making of architecture.

I wish to turn to an exemplar, drawn from the architecture of Nordic countries from the beginning of the twentieth century, considered by Juhani Pallasmaa, among several others:⁹⁷ the Woodland Chapel, Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, designed by Gunnar Asplund (1918–1920). Having entered the monumental landscape of the Southern Cemetery, passing both the hill and meditation grove designed by Sigurd Lewerentz and the series of chapels and portico completed by Asplund in 1940, one walks along a bending road into the wood, and meets a low wall to the left and set in it, a deep, abstract, almost primordial portal frame. An oval cartouche over the opening features a temple and gnarled tree, figures of a moral. The motto reads, *Hodie Mihi Cras Tibi*, Latin for 'Today for me, tomorrow for you'. Through the portal appears a flat plain, with tall pines, and in the middle distance, what appears to be a farm building, perhaps a barn, with a deep porch supported on posts. As one

→4.04.1–6

approaches, the building comes to resemble a temple, with a huge roof over that porch. A golden sculpture, by Carl Milles, of the Angel of Death, sits on the roof. The eaves of the roof are so close to one's head that one can almost touch them. So, too, the golden angel that hovers over blackened, tarred cedar shingles. Pine needles stick to them. The smell of the tar acrid in one's nostrils. One moves under the shelter of the porch, and into the company of eight delicate columns of an attenuated Doric order, painted glossy white. The back wall of the porch is whitewashed. And in the centre of the wall ahead, black, shiny iron doors, their surfaces composed of pieces that seem to have been hastily patched and riveted together.

The floor of the porch is of stone, as though a carpet laid onto the needle-strewn ground that one has just walked across.⁹⁸ One is profoundly aware of the closeness of it all, the materiality of it all, the care of it all, and the facts of one's own body. And so one moves ahead to the doors with a sense of acute attention and something like trepidation.

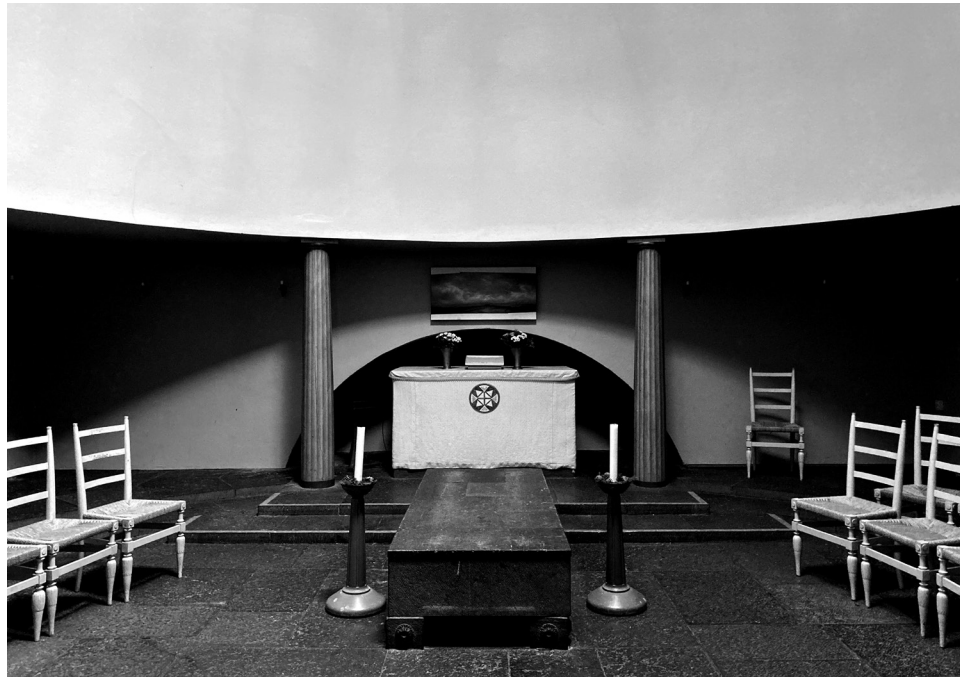
The solid black doors, a *bas-relief* skull protecting the keyhole, open to reveal gates of wrought iron, with snakes wound among vines and embracing more skulls, pagan imagery that has lurked within Western religious imagery for centuries. The gates open and one enters the room, falteringly, stepping—sinking—into a yawning, flat basin of stone paving, bound by a gathering circle of low woven-seated chairs, delicate, painted light grey. One is immersed in low, grey light, and a sense of depth, far beyond the measure of one's own body, even though one feels as though one can touch every wall. Oneself and others, the mourners, will sit together here, around a catafalque that will hold a coffin. Behind it, a low arch suggests the opening to a cellar or cave.

Around the edges of the room, candles burn on diminutive wall sconces. The room seems at once square and round, square rendered round by the slight circular depression at its centre and the sense of what is above, a luminous white dome, suspended impossibly low, resting on columns, like those outside, yet more solemn. And then one realises that the columns are not white-painted wood like those encountered earlier, but their stony echoes. Yet these are not stone, but painted to resemble fluted stone, an emaciated Doric remembrance in *trompe l'œil*, the refuge of the rustic artisan. All these induce solemnity, and tenderness, an atmosphere of solace, of stillness, of not knowing what to say but immersed in thought.

And then it is over, the words of the minister have been spoken under the dome, the casket has been removed, and the congregants have gathered to leave, and so, slowly find their way back through the gates, whose vines now speak of life, life that is still to be lived. And the low porch gives on to the scenes of life that will carry on after one, too, has gone from the world, towards the forest within which one's gravestone will one day be placed. The porch's columns seem light now, and do not even appear to touch the ceiling. The gravity of the Doric gives way to the play of white paint and the forest and daily life.

The Woodland Chapel fuses the typologies—*signifieds*—of the barn and the temple,⁹⁹ the ordinary construction and the monument, and renders this fusion in what seems to be material of the countryside, of the farm, and of the building that people take care of, with white paint, and tar, and brooms to sweep away dust





The complexity of experience



4.04.3-6
Erik Gunnar Asplund, Woodland Chapel,
Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1918-1920.

and leaves. The plan is that of a temple, yet one constructed of modest means, not because of economy, but because modesty and humility are the correct form of utterance for this moment, this acknowledgement of the end of life, and the continuation of life. There must be silence, and something like awe, and shame. The section reveals a barn, a very small, almost agricultural building, with a solemn porch, an unlikely dome sheltering under its roof, and what would be a hearth is the suggestion of an oven to cremate the remains of the dead. It is a building that knows. It knows of the land, it knows of its habits, it knows of the past, it knows of the present, and of the materials, both solid and imaginary, that bring people and their lives and their ideas together.

As one thinks of the form of the chapel, a barn containing a dome borne on painted columns, one is obliged to remember the pilgrimage Church of Wies—Die Wieskirche—and its baroque interior sheltering within a building that might be taken for a building of the country, and the muted, primitive version of this disclosed in the Bruder Klaus Kapelle designed by Peter Zumthor, whose inscrutable presence—a primordial monolith of compacted earth set on the land—gives way to an interior image that takes the visitor back to what is possibly a bodily representation of the fundamental acts of the first architecture.

I propose that the total call to the senses made by Asplund's humble chapel—the conscious drawing forth of touch, smell, taste, the haptic-orientation system, the olfactory system, vision *and* the cultured language of visuality, its referentiality, its imagery, its education in types or signifieds, its external and internal representations of those figures that are either vaguely or sharply known—may provide a model of reconciliation between a phenomenological understanding of experience, and one based on material culture, and within it, representation.

4.4 Fundamental acts

I return now to the epistemological positions central to that reconciliation. In my work in teaching, it became clear that my close colleagues worked both consciously and unconsciously within sets of ideas, implicit in our internal discourse—epistemological frameworks or worldviews—that affected the way we talked about architecture, how we taught architecture, and how we practiced architecture.¹⁰⁰ These frameworks of knowledge were those of phenomenology and material culture. Phenomenology, according to Edmund Husserl, who originated the term, is an investigation of consciousness and its objects, concerning the experience of the world—Martin Heidegger called this the *lifeworld*—and has tended to refer to the idea of an original encounter with the world as presented to the senses of a subject who sees, feels, hears, touches, smells and moves through the world, who is *in the world*.¹⁰¹ This analysis of experience, which, because it is made through the subject's encounter with the world, makes it difficult to describe in terms other than poetic. According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, it is not to be analysed, but described, and felt, completely. Experience resides in the subject, the subject's body, and the subject's senses.¹⁰² Merleau-Ponty also recognises, however, that this is not an experience

in isolation, but one that is part of the life of the subject, connected to other experiences, who alone knows, as it is the subject who connects them. This is obviously centrally important for architects, for as agents involved in the imagining, thinking, and making of environments for people, they are obliged to both anticipate experience and propose conditions and constructions for experience, through an imagination concerning previous experience. The phenomenological position in relation to the experience of architecture as exemplified by Norberg-Schulz, and by extension, its making, suggests a purity—connected to a notion of native or autochthonous knowledge—in its considerations of material, effects, atmospheres, and stimulation of the senses. A stress on describing experience as a return to its 'common knowledge' would seem to evade considerations of the complexity that comes with an embrace of material culture, embedded in language and representation, which, to understand, demands explanation and analysis.

My account of Asplund's Woodland Chapel combines descriptions of phenomenological experience with those germane to material culture: it describes *and* analyses. Material culture concerns the identity of things. It refers to artefacts: objects, interiors, buildings, and cities (the city is both an artefact and an accumulation of artefacts), and the ideas and knowledge of culture(s) that are embedded and represented within them and their complex appearances. I wish to continue to move in and out of and between considerations of phenomenology and material culture, as—taking the character of my description of Asplund's chapel as a kind of model—that they are interwoven. Analysis of experience of the world also involves an analysis of how one interacts with the world.

I wish to emphasise that the experience of architecture is not only a matter of feeling, but a matter of realising the conditions for agency within complex urbanised environments that are designed to affect and control responses and relations with others, with authority, and with the natural world. This approach to the matter of experience has a distinct and implicitly political quality. I wish to encourage the making of architecture that is engaged with the continuous unfolding of ideas and effects that are played out in our societies. How artefacts, their arrangements and relations 'speak' of the ideas of that society is essential to this. I wish to encourage—through engagement with this embedded and embodied 'speech'—criticality and resistance to the tendency within the prevalent neoliberal environment for making icons and displays whose purpose is control, in which subjects do not have agency but are in thrall of the spectacle of power, unwitting consumers of a manipulative, corrosive, and limiting ideology.¹⁰³ Imagining resistance to this, for the architect, means a thinking of, speaking of, and making of architecture that is situated in the world and its realities, and stimulates consciousness of the subject's experience and agency through engagement. I posit that this may come through a much more thorough exploration of appearances, as they take their places in the world, and as they are brought into presence by the architect. When thinking about how to make architecture that does not merely reiterate the projections of power, its publicity and its spectacle, I propose to turn to the matter of the fundamental acts of architecture, the nature of those acts, the intentions that reside within those acts, and the complexity of their experience.

4.4.1 The settlement

As described in first chapter, ‘Territories, interiors, subjectivities’, the acts that surrounded the establishment of early settlements were ritualised, meaningful, and consisted of sets of symbolic acts. The settlement might be seen as an example of agreement: a complex of decisions that made its site distinct. Although the origins of the first urban settlements are not so well known, information being partial, on account of the history of writing not extending as far back as their first establishment some seven thousand years ago, what documentation exists of them, in Iraq or Pakistan—Ur, Nineveh, Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro—is inscribed in ruins, and in objects that suggest the kinds of complex societies that they were.¹⁰⁴ Those pertinent to my argument are illustrated by those fundamental acts that were significant for the establishment of Roman colonial settlements, as seen in Joseph Rykwert’s *The Idea of a Town*.¹⁰⁵ In it, Rykwert describes how the Roman Empire went about establishing colonial settlements through a range of prescribed and ritualised acts and procedures that can be read as emblematic of an idea of systematised settlement and its architecture, set in the world.

Those fundamental acts—directly related to the foundation of the settlement—the reading of the land and the determination of a propitious site using an understanding of topography, geology, sources of water, guided furthermore by the disposition of the sun and the moon, stars and constellations—the work and pronouncements of the *augur*—were realised through a set of prescribed rituals. The site was marked, and a space was defined, in which significant perpendicular axes, the *cardo maximus* and *decumanus maximus*, their crossing demarcated by an *agrimensor*, would determine the division of lots of land and the disposition of structures sacred, profane, and mundane within. That definition of the site and the setting of it apart from the cosmos and its earthly condition, was enacted in the cutting of the *sulcus* (the trench for the foundation of the walls of the settlement), the plough drawn by an ox and a bull, defining the interior of the settlement as a space distinct from the rest of the world without, and from the cosmos. Each of these were essential and fundamental acts required to create the city, and by extension, architecture. One might imagine the site of the settlement as a kind of clearing, in which the world and others might be encountered: a charged space awaiting acts, a space that bears meaning. It is also a space set within the world, a world of others. In the first chapter, ‘Territories, interiors, subjectivities’, this clearing appears as the space in which the settlement of Savannah, Georgia is established. That charged space, one of agreement, would be expanded indefinitely, losing its capacity to bear meaning because of its programme to eliminate the space and existence of the other. What the clearing could be, and what is consequential to this argument, is a significant space of meeting of others.¹⁰⁶

The settlement occupies this clearing and *is* this clearing. Ostensibly, it is a place for all. In that space, relations occur, reality and fiction unfold, and appearances and acts within this space acquire significance and accumulate meaning. The British theatre writer and director Peter Brook described the importance of a space akin to this as one essential for theatre: an ‘empty space’ in which the players and the audience gather to share the telling of a story.¹⁰⁷ Brook wrote of bringing

players to the centre of villages, bearing a carpet that was then unrolled, and upon which players and villagers sat, whereupon the story was spoken. In his theatre in Paris, the Théâtre de Bouffes du Nord, the same approach was taken, one in which the audience surrounded the players, and the play was an act of exchange on and around a charged field, rather than on a stage set apart from an audience. One can imagine the spaces—the interiors—of settlements and cities bearing such potential for charged experience of reality and fiction alike.

4.4.2 Topography and ground

The interior of the settlement is a site distinct from the world. Its ground is significant because it is not like the ground of the world, even though the paths that run through it may be those paths that existed before the establishment of the settlement, intimately linked to topography, movements, relations to pre-settlement means of sustenance. The ground of the settlement is rendered significant because of its distinction from the ground of the earth, while the ground as moved upon and experienced before the settlement by nomadic tribes carried significance because of its capacities to sustain life, providing material for shelter, clothes, and food.¹⁰⁸ Routes across open terrains would be shaped to coincide with the seasonal migration of tribes’ animals, and their search for pastures; and so the whole landscape acquired significance in that it was seen as fecund, fertile, dormant, or barren, and its features both signalled its capacities and provided orientation: it was, to use the phrase of Edmund Husserl, the lifeworld.¹⁰⁹ The knowledge of topography imparted to the individual and the tribe through their movements had a profound effect on their understanding of the world and its bounty, as is clear in accounts of aboriginal peoples’ relations to their landscapes and the stories about the world they have attributed to them.¹¹⁰

The value of topography for this study concerns a translation effected between that order of experience in movement and the ground of the settlement, its interior and its architecture. Haptic experience is significant, in that communication between the ground and the body is direct and felt. Yet the ground of the settlement, the building, is a ground that is made, and so the making of the ground, the building of topography, is an act of some import, whether it may be classified as practical or significant. I suggest that the translation of ground to pavement, floor, platform, or stylobate is always significant, in the fact that a translation has taken place, that a decision or series of decisions has taken place to tamp down, compact, cover, pave, build upon, or build over the earth to make it human.

This is why the various acts of architecture—posited at once as facts and as ideas or operative fictions—are significant: the processes involved in transforming material from its pure state as something drawn or extracted from the world—an area of land, a block of stone, a piece of wood, reeds and grasses, mud—into the world of use—a site or place, a stone slab, a wooden post or beam, woven screens, wattle, daub, brick—or the transformation of these materials, through their meeting and assembly into building—are all significant, regardless of the acts being expedient or symbolic. The making and forming of elements and their assembly thereafter are constituent acts of architecture, necessary for its existence. The interdependence of

architecture's elements, despite the import of each element, is impossible to ignore. They are obliged to come together, to form a synthesis. The refinement of individual elements or aspects and the meeting of those individual elements in a physical and intellectual construction that we might think of as architecture demands both technique and an order of translation, which I think of as a kind of poetry—indeed *poiēsis*—specific to the task of reification and realisation. I will return to this shortly. First, I wish to consider the translation of topography to ground.

Examples of this translation are ubiquitous, but I offer a few here that seem particularly significant. In Venice's network of *calle* and *campi*, one is conscious of the ground under one's feet as one wends one's way through them. The paths, stone laid on deep wooden piles driven into the lagoon upon which the city is built, are reminiscent of that lagoon's winding patterns of rivulets, reminding one that the city is an artificial archipelago, a translation of nature as received.¹¹¹ A language of materials has developed in the city for paths, bridges, edges and clearings of basalt and Istrian stone, of iron and wood and textured paint that one encounters throughout, constituents of a human topography. In her book *Elements of Venice*¹¹², Giulia Foscari describes the material of Venice, and the image of water remembered in its ground. The marble mosaic floor of the Basilica of San Marco, whose surfaces, uneven due to settlement and variously worn because of the different densities of its stones, seem to undulate like the waters of the lagoon and canals: the ground as image can be seen and felt. In the book, which may be taken as a catalogue of the city's material culture, Foscari describes the processes of the making of *terrazzo* floors, whose weight assists in pushing the structures of buildings onto their piled foundations. Terrazzo holds the image of compacted earth, composed of cement and sand and their natural oxide pigmentation. These are mixed with stones of varying sizes and colour and then finely polished. The technique, which involves making floors of considerable depth, material, and mass, allows for large expanses to be laid without joints, reinforcing the impression that terrazzo is as natural as the soil it reimagines. Over the course of time, reflecting the wealth of those commissioning such floors, fragments of marble were added to the formula and decorative patterns added to the floor's surfaces, elaborating—or corrupting—terrazzo's idea.

Also sensitive to the nature of the ground and its address, the architect Jørn Utzon was aware of traditional Japanese architecture, of the setting down upon the ground of the structure of the Japanese house, noting that its wooden posts stood upon and were fitted stones set into the earth. He used this example to elaborate on the significance of the ground, seeing the floor of the house set upon it, like a table; a table that one cannot walk on, but upon which one can sit, and whose architectural components emphasise its innate horizontality.¹¹³ The earthen floors of large portions of traditional Japanese houses, farmhouses—Minka—are compacted.¹¹⁴ One stands on this compacted earth at the entrance to the house and in the kitchen. The motif is continued in more contemporary architecture, such as the early houses of Kazuo Shinohara, in which the earth appears in this form of prepared ground, or, as in the case of the Tanikawa House (1974), as something untamed, a natural slope maintained under the shelter of a large roof. It is reminiscent of the American artist Walter de Maria's Earth Room (1970) in SoHo, New York, a reminder of the

significance of the earth that has been managed, tamed, and translated, and the sensual bond that exists between humans and the ground beneath their feet.

Utzon also wrote of the plateau and the platform, invoking the *stylobate* on the *crepidoma* or base of Greek temples, seeing this as a significant piece of ground, akin to the top of a truncated Mayan pyramid, raised above the rest of the world, upon which one had contact with the cosmos, hovering above the surroundings of the world.¹¹⁵ This ground is significant, and charged, poised between the earth as lived environment and a place in the heavens, among the stars. In Utzon's appreciation of Chinese temples, this piece of raised ground is once more present, in this instance, the stone base, sheltered under an elaborate and lightweight wooden roof, the pairing of the two constituting an entire architectural proposition, which would characterise a series of his projects.¹¹⁶ His own house Can Lis, near Santanyí, Mallorca, evokes this motif, albeit using a trabeated construction standing on a stone base; the house is proposed as a cluster of pavilions evoking Greek temples, the main spaces gathered around a courtyard built on the rock, open to the sea, the sky, and the movements of the heavens.¹¹⁷

Akin to the status of Mayan temples as stone *mesa*, the topography of the Acropolis in Athens is culminated by the stylobate of the Parthenon. This platform is new, sacred ground, devised as though to appear flat, involving the construction of a subtle curvature that parallels the Earth's own sensed curvature. Combined with the inward inflection of the columns that stand on this base, the forms of each adjusted by entasis, the refinements of the drawing and making of the base convinces the eye of what the body senses is true: that one stands on a perfect clearing set against the vastness of the world. This is a case of the surface of the earth being built upon, idealised, and perfected. The bases written about and projected by Utzon share this quality, in which one is highly conscious of an artificial topography, an elevated ground.

The idealised ground carries with it an image or reenactment of real, original, or ancient experience, suggesting that one who walks along the ground might become conscious of their connection with their origins, embedded within them. In Dimitris Pikionis's project for a set of paths to the Acropolis (1946–1957), paths follow the topography of the hill, and are made of pieces of reclaimed stone, some very old, especially arranged to form a sort of linear carpet that responds to local circumstances, so that as one moves across its surfaces, one is aware of oneself and one's place in the world, both in space, in relation to the Acropolis itself, and so, in time. The design is highly specific, intended to elicit acute consciousness in the subject who walks, feels, and sees. Pikionis writes, in his text 'A sentimental topography' (1935):

"As we walk upon this earth, our hearts experience anew that rapturous joy we felt as children when we first discovered our ability to move in space—the alternating disruption and restoration of balance which is walking.

"We rejoice in the progress of our body across the uneven surface of the earth and our spirit is gladdened by the endless interplay of the three dimensions that we encounter at every step... we move up and down, following the rise and fall of the ground, tracing its convexities, which are the hills and the mountains, and its concavities, which are the valleys.

“Then we rejoice in the wide, flat expanse of the plains: we measure the earth by the toil of our bodies...”

“We meditate upon the spirit which emanates from each particular land or place.”

“...Above the fixed, motionless geometry of the earth stretches the perpetually moving domain of air and light.”¹¹⁸

Pikionis desires a profound connection to the world. The paths he designed for Athens are not merely haptic playgrounds, however, but made of remnants of past lives and work and investments, paths of deep time, in which the past and the present coexist through the movements and readings of the subject. The presence of the past is potent. This provokes thoughts about the uses of topography in modernist architecture, in which topography grounds a project not only in the present but in larger expanses of time. A fiction of deep time is inscribed in the treatment of the plan of Alvar Aalto's Villa Mairea (1938–39), in Noormarkku, which offers the house's floors, which one crosses, diagonally, as a translated topography. The plan, which strives to integrate the external landscape with the organisation and movement through the interior, is in effect a man-made landscape continuous with its forest setting.¹¹⁹ It is a modern house, but one imagined as set upon another, storied, ground that existed before it. It is worth noting that the ground is accorded the reverence and significance which would find its place in the later work of Jørn Utzon, from the stone carpet, perhaps inherited from Asplund, which spreads under its leaf-like portico, to the way that saplings, bound together with reeds, touch the ground in the portico and the shelter for the sauna, invoking Japanese as much as native Finnish structures.

Topography is, again, translated into forms that suggest other experiences and other times in Gunnar Asplund's and Sigurd Lewerentz's designs (1914–1940) for Skogskyrkogården, the Woodland cemetery in southern Stockholm. Although the architectural competition for the Cemetery was won by both architects, it was Lewerentz who ultimately became responsible for the treatment of the whole landscape. There are rises to hills and falls through wooded avenues, forests and clearings, spaces where architecture is almost hidden, such as Asplund's Woodland Chapel, and where architecture is the feature of a distant view along a sloping path, as is Lewerentz's Resurrection Chapel. Architecture is also exposed as a monumental ensemble, in Asplund's three crematory chapels. There are two treatments of the topography that Lewerentz designed, among several, that are particularly significant. A path leads from the entrance to the site up a slope and towards a monumental stone cross set adjacent to the giant portico of Asplund's main crematory chapel. To the right of this path there is an open field, in which a pond results from a depression, and an informal apron of stones are set in the grass on a hill that rises away from it. From another approach, steps are set into this Meditation Hill that follow its varying slope, becoming shallower as one ascends them, leading to a quiet place among a grove of trees at its crown. Below, the sloping path to the cross and portico of the main crematory chapel files past a low wall. The path itself is like a carpet of stones,



reminiscent of those of an ancient Roman road, its edges straight and confining. One is aware of being obliged by the path to attend to the low wall to one side, the cross and portico high up ahead, the hill and the grove of trees to the right, the forest held back at the edge of the landscape, as though the landscape was a vast, sacred clearing, and then, think of the stones on the ground beneath one's feet. This all produces a feeling of humility, of time beyond the time accorded to one's own life.

The site as an entirety bears a logic, impelling visitors and mourners to follow the ritual that they are invested in. One either goes to the main chapel or two smaller chapels that precede it, to the left of this path; or beyond to a broad road, and through the rudimentary gate to the Asplund's Woodland Chapel; or on to the forest, and the straight path that descends and then ascends through the narrow, tall avenue of trees to Lewerentz's Resurrection Chapel. On this long path, the ground underfoot is of earth, gravel, and pine needles. After what feels like a very long walk, an impression reinforced by the changing slope and the narrowness of the space produced by the tall pines that bound it, one quite abruptly arrives at the portico of Lewerentz's chapel. It is much grander, more formal, and more rigid than Asplund's modest barn-temple. Here, the portico is separate from the building, which appears as a huge, apparently featureless sarcophagus, a delicate roof hovering over its form. One walks across a plain surface to the portico, and finds oneself again on a stone carpet, a rectangle of stones aligned concentrically, and divided from corner to corner, in four triangular sections. One realises, only just, that one is standing on the surface of a very shallow pyramid. The whole building transmits austerity and ossified refinement, but it is the treatment of the floor in the interior that, although stylistically consistent with its architecture, displays

→4.05

→4.06.1–2



4.06.1-2
Sigurd Lewerentz, Meditation Grove,
Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1918–1940.



another emotional register. Tesserae of white marble set in a grid within darker mortar are crossed by undulating ‘waves’, which give the impression that the floor itself undulates or is in movement. Upon this sits the catafalque that bears the coffin, in white marble carved with drapery. Together, floor and bier form an image that brings tenderness to the chapel’s interior of etiolated classical forms. The movement suggested in the floor is reiterated by Lewerentz in his last church commission in Klippan, St Petri (1975),¹²⁰ in which the floor—in brick, like the entire dark interior—slopes up from the altar and becomes ground, heaving and swelling as it meets the baptismal font, a giant shell, suspended over a crack in its surface.

Asplund’s small Woodland Chapel’s tarred shingle roof sheltered a porch, under which was a carpet of stone. The columns supporting the roof, homespun and painted glossy white, stood on the porch’s humble pavements. At Asplund’s larger and later main Chapel of the Holy Cross, the porch assumes the monumental form of a loggia and atrium. One passes through the loggia, not to the gaping entrance to the chapel, but to a garden, addressed by a waiting room that looks onto it. From the waiting room, one enters the chapel from the side. The floor of this chapel forms a shallow bowl, sloping down and leading one and the other mourners towards the altar and catafalque. The floor is made of stone, a worn stylobate whose stereotomic patterns and contours suggest a gently sloping valley. The joints in the stone are articulated, following the suggestion of its concave surface, concentric and natural. At the catafalque, in front of a bench intended for the family of the deceased, stones have been carved to suggest a patterned carpet at their feet, as though the floor has

→ 4.07

4.07
Sigurd Lewerentz, Resurrection Chapel,
Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1922–1925.



4.08.1-2
Erik Gunnar Asplund, Woodland Crematorium, main chapel,
Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1940.

been woven.¹²¹ At the end of the service, mourners leave by climbing to the light outside, the floor bearing the character of a sloping hill. Through the open end of the chapel (its whole window wall can disappear into the ground), the ground continues to slope until it reaches the flat plane of the loggia, and its monumental shelter. A sculptural group by John Lundqvist¹²² reaches to the light in the impluvium at its centre.¹²³ Here, one stands, the ground affecting responses related to Lewerentz's path encountered earlier. One looks into the sheltered space, and then beyond to the landscape: first, to the Meditation Hill, with its crown of trees, then the outdoor altar at its foot—a bier is surrounded by standing torches, stones are set into the grass in anticipation of mourners who will stand on them—then, a pond that reflects the sky; and to the left, the depth of the pine forest. And then, one looks to the stone beneath one's feet, and the spreading concentric pattern of pavements as it meets those that are regularly arranged on the straightly sloped surfaces of the atrium. The face of these stones is finely tooled, so that it appears as a finely woven carpet set onto the sloping ground. One remembers, here, the carpet brought to villages by Peter Brook and his group of players, the carpet, the empty space upon which players are gathered, and others surround.

→ 4.08.1

→ 4.08.2

4.4.3 Imagining the beginning, Semper's Elements

The elemental qualities contained in the works of Lewerentz and Asplund at the Woodland Cemetery and Crematorium fuse experiences of the body with those of the mind. There is memory, certainly, and there is culture, both familiar and lived; and there is history, embedded if not acknowledged in some deep collective knowledge. There is allusion, and representation. The Woodland, Resurrection and Holy Cross Chapels point to 'original' constitutive elements of architecture. The floor as stylobate, the columns supporting the porch or loggia, the enclosed body of the sacral building, the sober formality of the interior, the sheltering, symbolic roof. One is brought, if one attends to these elements closely, to models for the origins of architecture, to the elements that are brought together to express its idea.

It is a truism that the account of the significance of architecture is tied to stories of its origins, of its original constitutive acts and their synthesis into prototypical form from which proper architecture can be recognised. It is important to note that there is limited to no evidence to what these original constitutive acts were. Instead, these have been the subject of theory, speculation, and fiction.¹²⁴ In the beginnings of modernity, the period of the Enlightenment, the determination of origins, not only in architecture, but in all areas, was a matter of urgency.¹²⁵ In the West, reason, rationalism and scientific analysis were being given priority in their capacities to explain the phenomena of the world and the cosmos and the condition of Man over notions of divine provision.

In the phenomenological account offered by Christian Norberg-Schulz, the first act of rendering a piece of ground separate or distinct from the cosmos is echoed in the first act of architecture, the articulation of inside and outside.¹²⁶ In other theoretical accounts, the origins of architecture are speculated upon in ways that are significant for considerations of material culture. One

can distinguish the idea of architecture's beginnings rooted in the making of a shelter as a prototype of the form of the classical temple, drawn directly from the material offered by nature—as proposed by Abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier in his *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753)—from those beginnings speculated upon by Antoine-Christophe Quatremère de Quincy,¹²⁷ or those by Gottfried Semper, in his works on architecture and making, *Die Vier Elementen der Baukunst* (1851) and *Der Stil* (in two volumes, 1861 and 1863).¹²⁸

Laugier (at least as illustrated in the frontispiece of *Essai sur l'Architecture*, as drawn by Charles-Dominique-Joseph Eisen and engraved by Jean-Jacques Aliamat) imagined a beginning in which architectural forms were suggested by nature, hewn from the living world and modified only slightly, as *ur*-types that come eventually to be represented in primitive constructions, such as those drawn by William Chambers, which strain to connect the idealisation of the classical orders and figures of Greek antiquity with their original constructional elements;¹²⁹ that are represented and reinterpreted in Roman antiquity by Vitruvius,¹³⁰ then reinterpreted and represented once more in Italian Renaissance architecture inspired by the study of Roman ruins by Alberti;¹³¹ revived in French neo-classicism, in, for example, Claude Perrault's Vitruvius;¹³² and then in German neo-classical architecture, by Friedrich Gilly,¹³³ Karl Friedrich Schinkel, and Leo von Klenze, based on antique Greek models.¹³⁴ Laugier's idea is, of course, speculative, toward a theory of the origin of architecture: essentially, an operative fiction. The ruins of antique Greek architecture cluttering the foreground of Eisen's frontispiece, either inspiring or being inspired by the natural construction in progress beyond offered but one model of what architecture could be. The sign was arbitrary, attached to Western architecture derived from Greece and Rome. How could Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Indian, Chinese, Cambodian, Aztec, or Olmec architecture be signified or described? How could their forms be derived from Laugier's hypothesis, particularly as natural and linguistic circumstances varied so significantly from nation to nation?

Quatremère de Quincy saw the differences in architecture from other places, and responded by recognising that there were consistent underlying 'structures' or codes, that one could think of as DNA or genetically determining material that guided constructions and a culturally specific or culturally determined character to their outward expression: this was the idea of *type*, which was articulated in his *Dictionnaire de l'architecture* (1832), but was already evident as a trace or foundation of Jean-Nicolas Louis-Durand's systematic approach to the education of architecture regarding the building of state institutions, in his *leçons*, given to students of the Ecole impériale polytechnique, from 1802 to 1805.¹³⁵ In Saussure's notion of sign and signified, *type* was the *signified*.

Gottfried Semper saw the construction of culturally specific prototypical architecture as foundational, fundamental, essential acts that constituted the technical bases from which a practical aesthetic expression was made.¹³⁶ The various crafts are alluded to in constructions that represented processes of making, marking a transfer of technology into representational constructions, synthesised in architecture—the work of the *archi-tekon*¹³⁷—that 'pictured' original forms of building.

The foundation of Semper's theory derived from his interpretation of an architectural model of a 'Caraïb' hut (from the colony of British Guyana) that he saw at the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851, during his period of exile from Germany.¹³⁸ The view he developed about the architectural prototype or proto-form was profoundly different from Laugier's, which implied a direct line connecting improvisations within natural conditions to the forms of classicism through *mimesis*. This was rejected by Semper in favour of developments that emanated from the historical and local practices of specific crafts pertaining to building: bodies of tacit knowledge, rooted in ethnology. Together, these would yield those forms that would evolve ultimately into those conventions of construction from which, theoretically, the recognisable representational forms of the ancients would issue.

Semper, in his reading of the Caraïb hut, saw ethnological proof of a theory of architecture based on the development of certain forms of work, their associated techniques and their synthesis. Isolating each of these four forms of work along with the architectural components with which they were associated, he described his 'four elements' (*Die Vier Elementen der Baukunst*) as the earthwork, including the floor; the hearth, where a fire would be set for warmth and the preparation of food; the structural framework and sheltering roof of wood; and the lightweight enclosing screen of matting.¹³⁹ The four crafts associated with each were respectively stone cutting; ceramics and metalwork; tectonics (carpentry); and weaving. Each craft was developed to an extent wherein expertise and particularity were achieved; the task of each of element fused pragmatic and symbolic concerns, and the performance as well as the significance of each element was articulated through the acts of forming and making.

Kenneth Frampton's description of these aspects and the work pertaining to the earthwork—the base, the floor—are helpful, the forming of the floor being realised through the craft of stereotomy (from *stereos*: solid and *tomia*: to cut).¹⁴⁰ One might imagine here something more consequent than, for example, the compacting of the ground to form a hard earthen floor. In the *forming* of a floor, stones are cut by skilled workers to precise shapes, laid on compacted earth, and fitted together to create a platform set apart from the ground: a new *artificial* surface. It is an act of artifice. The act also echoes the conceptual clearing that was made to declare the site of the Ancient Roman colonial or military settlement as distinct from the rest of the world, the first act of inhabitation;¹⁴¹ it is the act of separating the interior from the exterior, and can be considered a miniature, or representation of the clearing that articulates that idea. As the clearing makes a place in the midst of the chaos of the world, the ground or floor establishes an interior set apart from, yet in the midst of, everything around it.¹⁴² The floor assumes the status of a clearing and so reiterates the settlement's idea of an interior. Regarding the significance of this act, Kenneth Frampton quotes Vittorio Gregotti:

"Before transforming a support into a column, a roof into a tympanum, before placing stone on stone, man placed the stone on the ground to recognise a site in the midst of an unknown universe: in order to take account of it and modify it."¹⁴³

When I have written that the interior is in the World, this idea, inscribed in the act of making, is what I refer to. The floor is both in the world, and a distinct space within it. From it, the rest of the construction follows. The floor is dry and provides the surface into which the hearth is set—its construction requiring craftsmen with a distinct set of skills—and onto which the framework of posts, beams and rafters will be assembled, that will determine the shape of the construction and its roof. Frampton describes this as the work of the carpenter, the *tekton*, who gives form to the wood hewn from nature, in a precise and meaningful way; and, according to the poet Sappho, the carpenter operated a poetic dimension—*poiēsis*—in this work of forming.¹⁴⁴ This is a very important aspect of considerations of *technē*—the fusion of art, skill, craft, and technique—for it proposes that the joining of elements—tectonics—assumes a poetic aspect that both constitutes and transcends its technical aspect. The stereotomic and tectonic aspects of Semper's 'model' construction are considered as being primary, fusing their purpose with their symbolic dimensions, at once themselves and representations of their ideas, or *pictures of themselves*. The stereotomic is bound to the earth, the tectonic engaged with the horizon, adjacencies, and the heavens and elements above. The hearth is the symbolic core, the locus of sustenance and quotidian action, the figure that gathers those who dwell within. This all reinforces the argument I have made throughout, that artefacts embody ideas, and that their outward appearances are visible aspects of these ideas, related to both language and representation, signs to the meaningful signified, the fusion of idea and purpose.

A final 'layer' to the construction of the Caraïb hut subject to Semper's analysis was its enclosure by the addition of woven screens, partitions integrated with the work of the carpenter. The outward appearance of what Semper called the *Wand*—in English, wall: a word evoking both exterior and interior enclosing surfaces, and the act of division or partition—emerged through the processes of its making: the patterns of weaving, of stitches and knots in split reeds or leaves, such as rattan. The manner of weaving produced patterns, simple or complex, the latter of which contained the possibility of being recognised as having a pictorial or representational dimension. This would transport the surface beyond its functional obligation of keeping out wind and air-borne dirt while providing ventilation. Furthermore, the patterns produced by weaving could be elaborated upon to produce imagery. It is striking that these acts of weaving occur across a very broad range of cultures, developing in relative autonomy.¹⁴⁵ In *Der Stil*, Semper dedicated considerable attention not only to the manner of making knots, in which imagery and even relations to script are embedded, but to the array of representational patterns that find themselves repeated in other crafts of building, such as stereotomy, in his material exchange theory, or *Stoffwechseltheorie*.¹⁴⁶ In describing more substantial wall constructions, he notes that the masonry wall—*Die Mauer*—also bears a relationship to weaving, as can be seen in its own patterns, as is most clearly revealed in brickwork.¹⁴⁷ The weaving of a wall, so one might infer from Semper, can be translated into its making in other materials. The material exchange theory is a matter that depends upon interpretation as well as translation. Within this theory, the brick wall, both remembers and represents the original act of construction,

which in this case, is embodied in weaving, and its communication, or utterance.¹⁴⁸ Semper, positing a theory of architecture derived from an interpretation of a model taken as being representative, concluded that the construction of architecture is invested with meaning through the very acts of its making, inscribed in its technique, which arise from specific local cultures, and are, inevitably, aspects of language. The technique of this conscious or knowing construction is at once pragmatic and representational. The crafts involved in the making and assembling of individual elements lead to a synthesis in the rendering of a significant entity, in which fact and image co-exist in one form that is both itself and its representation.

Focused encounters with these fundamental elements of architecture are notable because these elements re-present those original encounters with the World that have made them: one walks upon the ground one has made into a floor as though one has walked upon it for the first time, understanding that it is laid upon the earth to make a place in midst of the chaos of the cosmos, and, simultaneously, experience its fact and its idea. Each element is individually significant, in its appearance, and its meeting and joining with other elements. Together, they form a synthetic construction. Each element of the construction expresses the idea of itself and consequently represents its essence, re-presenting it in the present, or as in Frampton's suggestion, 'presences itself'.¹⁴⁹ In their synthesis, these elements form architecture that is present in the world, in the midst of the condition of its appearance, and, furthermore, made in full acknowledgement of that condition.

Kenneth Frampton's discussion of Semper is important to my own argument concerning the complexity of experience and the necessary intertwining of phenomenological readings with those pertinent to material culture, and, critically, representation. Semper's theory of architecture deriving from the Caraïb Hut is brought to the present so to serve as an example of the foundation of the idea of material culture, and so, too, as an illustration of its ties to—and dependence upon—representation. Harry Francis Mallgrave's introduction to Frampton's *Studies in Tectonic Culture* (1995), connects the material expression—germane to artefacts of material culture—to representation:

"It is this empathetic sensitivity to form and its material expression—the nineteenth-century notion for *Formgefühl*—that elevates Frampton's tectonic thesis well above the plane of vulgar materialism and lead it back to its complementary touchstone of representation. The author does not wish to deprive architecture of other levels of iconic expression but rather to reinvest a design with a now largely understated layer of meaning, one perhaps more primitive or primordial in its sensory apprehension."¹⁵⁰

My reconsidering of Semper's 'primitive hut', added to all its other reconsiderations, is directed towards looking into those constitutive acts towards building that is conscious of itself and stands in the world, in its conditions, and in time. The hut is not the first construction; it stands among other constructions, and it has been produced having benefitted from the knowledge and experience of previous constructions. It embodies ideas. It aspires to an ideal. The consideration of Semper's

Caraïb hut does not exclude other models, but the hut—it is of course a model that is dwelt upon by Semper, not an artefact encountered in reality—is useful in the way it brings materiality, material culture, symbolism, language, and representation into view by breaking its construction down into its constituent elements as aspects of projective and productive labour. Bringing Semper's model into the present, as a proposition, allows one to look at a construction that is meaningful, one that bound to its conditions, its situation in the world, its idea, the tacit knowledge and creativity of its makers, its communication, its entire experience, its place in time.¹⁵¹ The time articulated within the construction refers to past, present, and future simultaneously: one can see in its total expression embodiments of the ways things may have been done by those who preceded the hut's makers. The hut's construction offers a synthetic experience of effects upon the senses, along with its invitation to read and interpret its signs in the present and their significance; the future is to be found in the construction's promise of affordance for times and lives to come.

In being present in the world, architecture finds itself—inevitably—among an accumulation of constructions of previous periods (including the very recent past), each of which has been proposed as a fulfilment of present need and has borne the imprint of other projections into the future that have preceded them. I advocate architecture (in which I include the making of places and interiors) that acknowledges its contingency, its contingent relations to its environments and conditions. Both architecture and its place are subject to what has been inherited from the past, the conditions of the moment, and projections of action into the future. Architecture is made within conditions wherein there may be a multitude of narratives and projections, each with their own image of past, present and future; each, ultimately, fragmentary.

4.5 The question of autonomy

Architecture, which stands apart from straightforward building through its conscious reflection upon its own acts is, despite this distinction, in the world. There are architects who have insisted on the *autonomy* of architecture, given that distinction from ordinary building—its non-referentiality—and the specific attentions within its practice, attentions very much like those of the four elements constituting the Caraïb hut that served as Gottfried Semper's model.¹⁵² Is autonomy possible or desirable in a practice of architecture that recognises and uses its situation in the world as integral to its considerations, realisation and utility?

Autonomy implies separateness, self-determination, and freedom from external influence. The term is associated with independence, wherein a practice—painting, architecture, writing—has its own questions, reference points, history, and laws. This seems at once reasonable, legitimate, and necessary for the furthering of practice. It is consistent with the poet T S Eliot's notion of working within and upon a canon specific to an art form.¹⁵³ The art critic Clement Greenberg, from the 1940s through the 1960s, advocated the autonomy of painting.¹⁵⁴ To Greenberg, the acts of painting in Modernism were specific to painting alone, distinct from other modes

of artistic praxis. To be true to the praxis, painting would purge itself of external influence, external subjects, and external operations *post factum*, leading directly to a-temporality, and presence: *here and now*-ness. Greenberg went on to promote a set of artists whom he believed upheld these principles. Jackson Pollock's drip paintings did, as did Morris Louis's works, generated by their technique of pouring diluted paints onto unprimed canvas.

However, the orthodoxy Greenberg wished to institute was ultimately subverted by practices that saw the inevitability and desirability of being in and of the world, a world in which it could affect both the viewer and the viewer's conditions, notably, a viewer who was also in and of the world. Pop Art did this in an obvious way, while Minimal Art paired Modernist reductivism with other modes of production so to achieve broader effects on consciousness that were at once aesthetic, spatial and environmental. Donald Judd's 'specific objects' would seem to be autonomous in that they were solely about themselves, their relations and their facture; yet these objects were unfailingly involved in the situations in which they were placed.¹⁵⁵ In the work of Robert Morris, contingent effects were made part of the works, which were in and of the world: they openly asked for engagement.¹⁵⁶ Further critique emerged in the practices that understood that the boundaries between the viewer, the work and context were, in fact, fluid. The works of Michael Asher rendered the operating structures of art galleries and institutions (and hence the making of aura and value) visible;¹⁵⁷ the artist Hans Haacke inquired into the very constitution of the institution itself and its vulnerability to manipulation;¹⁵⁸ Dan Graham's performances and pavilions tested the subjective position of the viewer, and introduced the experience of intersubjectivity, understanding that the viewer's sense of themselves was very much conditioned or controlled by the architecture of the urban environment.¹⁵⁹ This Conceptual Art, all demonstrating the 'de-materialisation of the art object',¹⁶⁰ also demonstrated the interiorised nature of the urban environment. It also demonstrated that this urban environment was at the scale of the continental territory, through its most 'architectural' manifestations, such as Graham's critique—epitomised by his magazine piece, 'Homes for America'¹⁶¹—and the Land Art of Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer and Walter de Maria.¹⁶² Everyone and everything is inscribed within an environment tending to the condition of an interior,¹⁶³ whose features and conditions are constructed, and the consequences of myriad overlaid and interwoven decisions of myriad sources and agencies.

One *can* imagine an autonomous architecture, as it proposes itself, as distinct from 'unconscious' construction: non-referential, distinct from everything else, even as it alludes to everything else. The possibilities of such a practice are self-evident and have been perennially essential to architecture: a representation or reflection of the possibilities of the idea of building, a practice conscious of itself and its specific operations. Yet those operations and that consciousness are bound to the world in which the work is situated, and ultimately contaminate, corrupt, or situate the work through referentiality.

I wish to illustrate the problematic within this notion of architectural autonomy through a reflection on what architecture contains, shelters, and treasures. When one turns to the practice of making the interior, after the act of delineating

a notional boundary between without and within, there are attentions and means and techniques specific to its realisation: its arrangements of spaces or rooms, the relations between them, the character of each, their appearances, their furnishings, fittings, and equipment, their relations to the space(s) and environments without. It is possible to imagine a practice of design specific to the interior—interior architecture, interior design and interior decoration all entertain this possibility—that is involved solely with its own means, removed from the world, or estranged from it, as it proposes that it works inside buildings, with the narratives of interiors, working outwards from the body and its clothing to the lining of the interior.¹⁶⁴ The status of the boundary between the interior and the outside world is rarely touched upon, a neglect that is, in my view, problematic.¹⁶⁵ When one considers the *interior* as autonomous—as it is often considered, almost thoughtlessly, as it infers the private, the sheltered, the not-public—an interior can be imagined that is removed from the world. The interior is commonly thought of as a retreat, a place away from the world, a ‘castle’ pertaining to its inhabitant, a world of one’s own. This common-sense definition of the interior—bolstered by theory¹⁶⁶—would have it as independent of the outside world, autonomous. A most extreme example of this cleavage from the world without is in fiction, alive in the description of the apartment (or series of apartments) of the character Des Esseintes in Joris-Karl Huysmans’s novel ‘À Rebours’.¹⁶⁷ There, the main character indulges in various extravagant and decadent fantasies through the art of interior décor, which ultimately involves evocations of the grotesque and death, most memorable of which is the decoration of a live tortoise’s shell with various gemstones, under which the creature ultimately expires. The command of the interior exercised by Des Esseintes is, in fact, the abiding fantasy that dwells within the autonomous interior and its décor, design, and architecture. I wish to use the fantasy of the interior’s autonomy—an assumption, given the interior’s claim to privacy—as a means toward making visible the fiction of that autonomy, and consequently the fiction that architecture shares.

By our understanding of the interconnectedness of effects that constitute the interior environment we inhabit, and by the definition of the interior that proceeds from its beginnings, the interior is both *in* and *of* the world. It is so despite those aspects of its creation—attached to privacy and individual expression—that are so often deployed to make a case for its separateness or distinctness. It is possible to demonstrate that the interior is both in and of the world without having to resort to origin myths, by looking at in the present.

This is clear when the archetypal private interior is staged. Two exhibitions, one concerning the artist Erwin Olaf’s work, and a parallel exhibition focused on the concept of ‘dressing’ or ‘cladding’ in architecture, were shown at Het Nieuwe Instituut, in Rotterdam in 2014.¹⁶⁸ Erwin Olaf was a photographer, known for photographs that were meticulously composed, nostalgic in character, and artificial. These were printed in large formats and reminiscent of the paintings (very often of the interior) of Edward Hopper. In these, one or two characters would occupy the constructed scenes, isolated, lonely, bored, or distressed. Olaf’s photographic scenes were commonly recognisable tropes of imagery drawn from painterly and filmic worlds familiar to the Western viewer. In the exhibition concerning Olaf’s

work, full-scale (or 1:1) sets were designed by Floris Vos for a series of depicted episodes, using a modest array of visual props and constructed atmospheres and nostalgia to evoke and signify entire worlds. These were interiors of a filmic, televisual, or painterly American past, variously identifiable as set between the 1930s and 1970s. The viewer could recognise each scene as artificial, a fictive world that was detached from the real world of experience but plausibly related to it. The interiors were made, or rather re-constructed, for Olaf’s photographs—designed stages for staged photographs—which themselves had emerged from images. The fact that they might have been representations did not make them any less powerful or valuable; on the contrary, their status allowed one to take them for what they were, namely, narratives with all their effects made manifest. The viewer was familiar with these ‘genre scenes’ through their manifold repetition in media. A notion had developed in theory surrounding the interior that gave priority to its privacy and distinctness, its separation from the world, which championed a notion that the interior does so because it is an extension of our private selves, our bodies and their clothing;¹⁶⁹ a notion that posited that the interior is autonomous, just like architecture can imagine itself to be. Yet here, the interiors were not just idealised interiors, but demonstrations of the recognisable content that was a commonplace, allowing them to be seen as both archetypal and corrupted by material culture: the language of the world of things, effects, and appearances.

As Olaf’s and Vos’s work showed so clearly, there is always a relation to the world without: the ‘clothing’ of the interior would at first appear to protect its inhabitant from the world, responding to that inhabitant’s internal desires and needs. Yet it precisely displays its dependence on influences from without, such as fashion, taste, and fashions in clothing, decoration and lifestyle. This is, of course, not exclusive to Olaf’s pictured interiors, but common to all interiors, save the most extreme, the fantasies of Huysmans’s Des Esseintes being a case in point. The interior cannot negate the existence or its influence of the world without; the two are interdependent, and interiors do not emanate from the private, but the public. The ‘clothing’ of the interior—that which defines the boundary between the interior and the remainder of the World—is a *limit* onto which absorbed and reflected ideas—about the self, the World—are projected and made.

Returning to architecture and its notion of autonomy, we must note that architecture is in the world. The parallel exhibition, *Bekleidung*, translated as ‘cladding’, refers to the term developed by Gottfried Semper concerning that ‘clothing’ that delimits the interior and constitutes the meeting point between the interior and the exterior, the space of everything: the fourth element of architecture; the *Wand*; the wall. In his model, the Caraïb hut, that fourth element is not masonry, but a woven material partition that provides protection for the interior: a pictorial or ornamented surface and representational screen that works two ways: it provides imagery to the interior and projects imagery to the exterior.¹⁷⁰ This two-way operation is important to us: it places the interior and its author, its subject, as central to a scene of exchange, at once seeing and reading the world and communicating—consciously and even unconsciously—to the world. This is the case whether the interior is full of signs and imagery or if it ‘views’ the world through perceptually



4.09
Floris Vos, 1:1 set for Erwin Olaf,
Het Nieuw Instituut, Rotterdam, 2014.

invisible window-walls.¹⁷¹ One can simply imagine a collection of Semper's Caraïb huts set in a wilderness, and appreciate that each would be set in the world among other huts, and that each hut would have knowledge of these other huts and communicate with them and to any stranger that came upon them.

In short, the visible aspect of the interior, from both without and within is 'in the world'. The woven wall—the cladding, clothing, the *Bekleidung*,¹⁷² whether materialised, neutral or de-materialised—coincides with the plane of signification and significance, the threshold. The visible aspect of the interior means something both inside and outside, and one phenomenon among others, each with their projections, messages and meanings. This infers engagement with the world all around, rather than distance, perverse alterity, or, indeed, autonomy. If one understands that architecture, despite the specific character of its acts, is also situated among other buildings, their arrangements and appearances and relations, then a true and thoroughly autonomous architecture could derive solely from being truly non-referential, unrecognisable, other, and intentionally withdrawn from the world, existing solely for its own narcissistic satisfaction.

4.6 The complexity of experience

I ascribe value to the conditions in which architecture is situated, the ideas embedded and embodied in architecture and manifest in its physical presence, atmospheres, and appearances, and the complexity of experience of architecture that arises from the synthesis of all of these. To explore this, one is reliant on several areas of knowledge concerning the experience of architecture: that of consciousness of space, material, and atmospheres, associated with phenomenology; that of the situatedness of architecture and its expressions (or responses) associated with language, praxis, and material culture; and finally, that which recognises the presence and work of artifice, allusion, and representation.

In the first instance, one's notions of the experience of architecture is attached to direct emotional or physical responses to its staged or presented phenomena, to its manifest engagement with material, space, and light. This experience may be so absorbing as to be detached from its situation, or conversely, intimately bound up with it. Experience beyond the artefact—like that evoked by Proust's *madeleine*¹⁷³—may relate to previous experience, the storehouse of images that the mind develops to create consciousness.¹⁷⁴ At the beginning of the twentieth century Edmund Husserl defined phenomenology as a "systematic investigation of consciousness and its objects", an investigation that was necessarily *as open as possible* to inquire into that consciousness and the nature of its object. If the consideration of experience is open, it must be open to everything that the subject has experienced, and everything that is present before them; what is experienced by the whole perceiving body in the here and now.¹⁷⁵

In *Being and Time* (1927), Martin Heidegger extended Husserl's question, in that his inquiry was not just about the presence of things to be experienced as phenomena, but the nature of being of the entity experiencing that presence, and

the meeting of the two. In systematically investigating consciousness, he proposed a deep inquiry that combined the consciousness of being (*Dasein*) with that of being situated in the world. He wrote of the encounters this 'being who is aware of being' would face when set among things and others.¹⁷⁶ Merleau-Ponty writes of the perceiving subject necessarily shedding learned assumptions about the object and environment, leading to a susceptibility of the subject, and an openness to the object directed towards pure perception.¹⁷⁷

In *Genius Loci* (1979), Christian Norberg-Schulz applied Heidegger's philosophy—specifically on his idea of *dwelling* and *being in the world*—to arrive at a phenomenology of architecture.¹⁷⁸ In it, being in the world is extended to inhabiting an environment that represents the world, and a communication between people and the artefacts around them that is at once local, natural, and coherent. One is bound to a *place*, to a specific topography and to traditions of the way *things*—landscapes, infrastructures, buildings, artefacts—have been made, and remade, and re-membered, over generations. Expressions of being are transmitted to materials: to a threshold, a floor, a table, a hearth. One can see the motivation to the creation of elements of building that constitute Semper's Caraïb Hut as a model, used as a basis for the constructive and representational rationale of architecture. In the case of Norberg-Schulz, in my reading, an emphasis is granted to the world as dwelt in, and the connection between that world and its original or indigenous dwellers, suggesting both a purity of expression and a desired state of *autochthony*. Norberg-Schulz infers that the ways things are made *ideally* are of a natural, transparent character, one that extends from the purely feeling, experiencing, and expressing 'naturalness' of the one who dwells in the place of dwelling—representing the world—grown from the very soil, as the Arcadians were said to be: "grown from the earth itself; pre-Selenic; as old as the moon".¹⁷⁹ And so too the objects, buildings, infrastructures and landscapes they make.

The *ur*-condition that Norberg-Schulz re-imagines is now scarcely possible to consummate in any condition other than that of an isolated settlement. Therein lies its difficulty. Its projected ideal of experience cannot be sustained in an urbanised world, and particularly one of cosmopolitan character, made up of parallel and/or shared lives, ideas and experiences of others, their habits of use, of interpretation and misinterpretation, their means of 'making do and getting by'.¹⁸⁰

In reiterating the consideration of the phenomenological paradigm, particularly with regard to its embrace by architects—and despite the compelling nature of the work of the most thoughtful and skilled of them¹⁸¹—I am concerned that aspects of experience that paradigm seem to set aside, that are both pertinent or integral to the experience (and imagining) of architecture, are lost. The complexities that seem to fall away in the phenomenological paradigm are those that arise from the conditions in which architecture is situated. One might call these contingent circumstances, connected to what has preceded the architectural project; what is there; what has been 'uttered' by others before. These circumstances can be, and often are, abstracted or negated by architects to ensure the distinctness, difference, or autonomy of the architectural project. I am advocating, in the interest of expanding the field of experience, the address of conditions as they are, and not as they

are idealised, neither as scenery nor as points of contrast. The conditions I refer to are products of decisions, representative of power relations. For example, ideas about the 'place' of the subject, traditions, disruptions of traditions, demographic changes, cultures, and material culture, are all embedded in artefacts: buildings, environments, and territories. Their attributes are enmeshed with language, and representation. Within the frame of material culture, artefacts are utterances: 'things' that hold ideas. The experience of those artefacts demands a corresponding obligation to engage with them, through 'reading', and, inevitably, through some kind of analysis. The experiences of the body and its senses—as clear as they might be—combined with that of material culture and its utterances, have implications for the subject's experience of architecture.

The purpose of promoting complexity is not for its own sake, but for opening the possibilities of agency for those who use architecture and are affected by it. If architecture is in the world, it resides in a world of ideas that are channelled through its substance, positions, relations, and expressions, which can be engaged with. I have tried to illustrate this in the previous chapters on conditions and context, particularly in resistance to system- or machine-like programmes in the making of territories, cities, buildings, and interiors. Implicit in those chapters was my position that architecture should attend closely to the conditions of its appearance in the world, to the experience of people within those conditions, and the new conditions and subjectivities that architecture is involved in creating. Suggested, too, in the chapter on contexts, was that architecture had the capacity to render those conditions of appearance—through the changes affected by architecture—visible and available to the experiencing subject.

Through doing so, the thought follows that architecture can—and should—contribute to people's sense of living in a present that they can affect; it should contribute to their sense of and capacity for agency within society, which should be recognised as a world of others. These objectives carry a political character. Guy Debord proposed, through his *guide psychogéographique*, a re-configuration of Paris directed by the experiencing subject, represented by a fragmented map with connections between its elements that followed the itinerary of the subject rather than that of the city's design.¹⁸² The guide was offered as a programme of resistance to those ideas and effects of the metropolis that manifested themselves as spectacles in the service of capital, reducing the metropolis's subjects to the status of docile consumers of objects and lifestyles.

In the West, the subject of the urbanised environment lives within its realm of mediated manipulation, and is shaped by that environment, much as the citizens of Haussmann's Paris and Cerdà's Barcelona were shaped by the systemised nature of urbanisation and management. An order of experience for the subject is necessary, one that incites their consciousness, towards the possibility of their agency within their situation. The object of architecture should be, in addition to all it provides by obligation, to enable a complete consciousness, so that all, as conscious subjects, might be free to see, to read, to speak, to move, to associate, and to act. This demands an approach to architecture in which consciousness of conditions and the ideas embodied in their constructed scenes are central. The forces that create the

*phantasmagoria*¹⁸³ of the spectacle¹⁸⁴ desire submission of the subject to its effects, and, naturally to the sponsors of those effects. Walter Benjamin's archaeological recovery of nineteenth-century Paris through the phenomenon of the *passage* or arcade revealed a city—a metropolis—in which the urban subject in all its variety was produced by a coordinated complex of effects, enchantments, disorientations,¹⁸⁵ and spectacles, revealing themselves in the arcades, the streets, and the public interiors of the city. To realise this, another Paris, with its history of experience and interaction, had to be effectively destroyed.¹⁸⁶ The Situationists, some twenty years later, tried to find means of resisting the metropolis's—again, Paris—enticements to consume and be enraptured by spectacle, through the strategy of the *dérive*, in which the subject would re-compose experience following their subjective desires and associations. These are strategies that seem, however, to demand new dream-worlds to replace those created by the spectacle. Are there other ways? Patrick Keiller, the filmmaker and writer, whose own methodology is inspired by the Situationists, has also looked at the landscape as a register of international financial arrangements. One feels desperate at the sight of bucolic landscapes that are in fact fields of investment, but the elaborate descriptions of them, in the film *Robinson in Space*, at least render these invisible forces 'visible'.¹⁸⁷

In recalling the scenes of streets and public interiors within George-Eugène Haussmann's re-design of metropolitan Paris, or, more pertinent to the present, the all-over condition of interior of the urbanised territory, which reiterates *laissez-faire* or neoliberalism's claims that the market and its effects are close to 'nature', one wonders how architecture can resist these forces, or if it can resist them. Architecture that affects consciousness and agency—that does not merely reiterate the metropolitan spectacle's framing or forming of the subject—necessitates a specific address to the conditions in which it appears, so that it can 'speak' of those conditions, rendering them 'visible' so that they may be seen, interpreted and appropriated by the experiencing subject.

4.6.1 The experience of material culture

The experience of urbanised environments and their figures is reliant on their embodied communication, necessitating—beyond their effects on the experiencing body that are phenomenological in nature—the *reading* of those environments. I invoke the notion of reading because language is very much part of the way we understand the things we encounter. Recalling Barthes's ruminations on the rhetoric of the image,¹⁸⁸ there is as much a characteristic of call-and-response in the constructed environment as there is in publicity. Appearances beget responses.¹⁸⁹ The architect and writer Steen Eiler Rasmussen, in his books *London: the Unique City* (1934)¹⁹⁰ and *Experiencing Architecture* (1959),¹⁹¹ presented a complex view of experiences of architecture, that both privileged phenomena—such as material, mass, light, and space—and, in the case of London in particular, the specific effects of *culture* on architecture and the environment, their expressions and materialisations. In both books, the history of the city, its specific solutions, conventions, arrangements, and fantasies are all seen as constituent elements of experience pertaining to it and its *material culture*. I want to describe that notion of material culture again now.

Material culture refers to the ideas and knowledge of culture(s) that become embedded in real things that are made and among which people live their lives.¹⁹² Those things are artefacts—interiors, the objects within them—and the narratives or fictions they embody, as witnessed, for example, in the photographs of Stephen Shore, of ordinary streets, urbanised landscapes, parking lots, and the interiors of hotels, diners, and houses.¹⁹³ Material culture is embodied in the way these artefacts are made, in what is ‘held’ within them, the specificity, similarity, and nuance of their appearances, and the relations between those artefacts in the world.

In looking at the accumulation of things that come to constitute environments, considerations of the consciousness of phenomena, of responses to them, and the living experience of and engagement with material culture, are interwoven. Attempts to describe one’s experience of the world are deeply indebted to how one interacts with the world *with and through things*. Some appreciation of this navigation is useful—particularly for architects, as makers—in considering how one experiences and makes fragments of the world, through the forming of things and the arrangements between them and other things. What one makes adds to the world, adds to contexts, adds to material culture, and, as T S Eliot proposed, alters the relations between everything, and their meanings, forever.

“The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.”¹⁹⁴

Material culture is the expression of a society embodied in things. I will begin by offering a very modest illustration. Some thirty years ago, struggling for an example to explain this notion of ideas embedded and embodied in the form and expression of artefacts, in a tutorial held at my barren apartment in London for one of my art students,¹⁹⁵ I happened upon a cat food bowl left behind by my landlord. It was a curious object, a glazed ceramic vessel in the approximate shape of a fish, terra-cotta-coloured, with splashes of black and white paint across its surface, in the manner of Jackson Pollock, as interpreted through the lens of the ‘Punk’ aesthetic of the early 1980s, which was not Punk at all, but some marketing team’s notion of ‘edgy’ and ‘non-conformist’ graphic-design-associated gesturing. It was an object ostensibly designed for a discerning cat—the fish shape must surely appeal to an intelligent cat?—but it was clear, in the process of describing the characteristics of the object to my student, that this cat food bowl was designed—for it was designed—for a particular kind of cat-owning consumer, who associated themselves with the object, seeing *themselves* as unconventional, edgy, artistic, and the owner of a similarly

distinctive, discerning cat. The object spoke to its consumer through a series of signs, in precisely the same way that Roland Barthes’s consumer of Panzani products was connected to those products through their understanding of ‘Italianicity’, a common cultural knowledge that bound a whole community of consumers together.¹⁹⁶ In this case of the cat food bowl, a bridge was similarly made between producer and consumer: the producer understood the cultural aspirations and connections with popular culture in its ‘Punk’ mode that the splashes of black and white paint would trigger, and the owner’s feeling for their cat’s intelligence in seeing the bowl’s fish-shape as an index of cats’ favourite food. The object spoke to the consumer, and the consumer entertained the fiction that the object would speak to their cat. The object, so the lesson went, communicated ideas and values and spoke of the culture in which it was situated.

To make another, and perhaps more complex instance of material culture available, consider a chair. One could choose any chair, because a chair is utterly commonplace, and, usually, utterly purposeful. I offer here what appears to be a humble, familiar, generic chair, and yet one that is quite specific, and evocative.¹⁹⁷ A chair is not just a chair. It almost always has a purpose or is bound to an environment in which it will be used, and is subject, in the mind of its maker, to an idea of sitting, and another, perhaps similar, idea in the mind of its user, all of which leads to the production of chairs of different forms, proportions, material resolutions, appearances, allusions, and pretences. All these aspects, if they are addressed and realised, help the chair to communicate its purpose to those who encounter it, possess it, use it. The communication emanating from a chair can be subtle and suited to diverse purposes. Depending on the circumstances, the expression of its purposes is either appropriate, ‘fit for purpose’, with the consequence that the chair is happily ‘used’; or, inappropriate (suggesting that it is not quite fit for purpose, or moment or situation). Of course, this might be a matter of context, of time, or custom, or its relations with other artefacts. It might not ‘fit’.

The Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at TU Delft has a collection of chairs, displayed in the manner of an archive, possibly for study, or inspiration. What is significant about chairs, and why should they be exhibited? The chairs, on racks, with labels, are not all by renowned designers; many are ‘anonymous’ designs. Several of them—milking stools, Alexander Rodchenko’s chess-table-and-chairs¹⁹⁸—are designed in accordance with a specific task, others are attached to office work, leisure at home or in cafés, childhood. Each chair offers up abundant and significant information in its form, material and resemblances, suggesting in diversity and variation that the resolution of considerations during their coming-into-being was difficult. There are chairs that are more intelligently and pleasantly resolved than others. In some cases, the matter of discerning ‘what they are’ comes to the foreground, a result of their experimental nature. What transpires, with so many familial objects so displayed, is that these objects were not only designed to function to fulfil certain requirements, but to communicate to their users what their purpose was, and what the character of that purpose was. The chairs, as experimental as some might be, contain and communicate some familiar affordances, and some surprising associations.



One chair in the collection is representative of the synthesis of several recognisable—even incompatible—characteristics. In the case of Gio Ponti's design for the *Superleggera* chair (1951–1957), these different 'identities' emerge as one looks at the chair carefully. The wood-frame chair is delicate, with little visual or real mass, as the name infers: it is 'super-light'. Its timber sections are very slight, their profiles shaped in forms more associated with metal, which suggest the capacities and language of modern technology, rather than wood sections born of the saw or the lathe. The profiles serve as signifiers of that technology and culturally specific forms of work particular to the industrialised north of Italy at the time. The chair bears resemblance with an elegant, early nineteenth-century counterpart, 'Il Campanino', or 'Chiavari', designed by Giuseppe Gaetano Descalzi (1807), which is still in production.¹⁹⁹ Additionally, with its woven wicker seat—a feature of a traditional

process of manufacture by hand—the chair harbours the residue of appearances of the modest, rustic chair that one might find in a Mediterranean household, or any peasant household, for that matter.²⁰⁰ The chair designed by Ponti is a scaffold for imagery that calls to mind different environments and different historical moments, past and present, and those of a projected future.

Why would these images—the traditional and the modern—be made to express themselves simultaneously? Who were the intended users of this chair, the viewers of its fused imagery? Looking at the publicity photographs that accompanied the chair's production and marketing, its divergent suggestions were synthesised for a purpose and meant to communicate an idea concerning the integration of the chair into a way of life specific to that time and culture to the chair's intended consumers and users.

I propose that the simultaneity of 'the future' and the 'traditional' in the chair's appearance was meant to communicate progress and familiarity all at once to people who would buy the chairs for their dining rooms, their kitchens, or their studies; people who would both want to be seen as part of the movement towards industrialised modernity and consumer enfranchisement that characterised Italy's post-war economic 'miracle'. At the same time, those users would have something of what they knew to hang onto, as well as lift with one finger. The publicity photography variously depicts a housewife lifting the chair with the same weigh-scale that she would lift the rabbit planned for dinner, and a schoolboy with neatly combed hair. The same 'type' of image, of a chair being hoisted in the air effortlessly by one finger, is currently used by Fratelli Levaggi in the marketing of their 'traditional' Chiavari chair. In the case of Ponti's *Superleggera*, since the home was—at the time of the chair's introduction into the market—characterised as the environment of women and their work—raising their families and maintaining the home and cooking—the chair was a pledge that freer times would come, and women's labours at home would be lessened or eased.²⁰¹ The chair's lightness was testimony to that promise. And yet the chair promised that the comfort of the home, the reassuring signs of both domesticity and the agrarian past, as the wicker seat is the product of the peasant and the seat of the peasant, would not be swept away by modernity's progress.

This reassuring message offered by a humble chair, mixed with a message of technological progress, was one particularly potent for the Italian consumer market and the populations addressed within it. Industrial cities such as Milano were the sites of both regional migration from Lombardy and migration from the south of Italy. The images of Sicilian agricultural workers and their families making their homes in an entirely different urban industrial culture are deeply inscribed in Italian realist literature and cinema contemporary with Ponti's design.²⁰² The *Superleggera* is just a chair; but *all* chairs have visual and culturally embedded narratives attached to them. All artefacts share this characteristic. Even a cat's food bowl can have narratives bound to it that locate it in material culture. These objects and their embodied stories are evidence of the complexities within material culture. In considering a chair, one is already moving outward to the subjects—citizens, users, 'consumers'—it both addresses and produces, and the narratives embedded in all variety of objects and their relations. The chair is one whose communications speak

to specific times and experience germane to those times, to conditions, and to people. The currency of meaning pertaining to the artefact in question may be short-lived. It may be long-lived, as one sees in those designs that endure, but even these, and the connections that exist between artefacts and people, tend to be swept away by time. The artefact exists among other artefacts and in the nexus of agreements and understandings that exist between people bound by circumstance, culture, and language. The experience of the artefact is one of encounter and relation, of it and other artefacts or experiences, and is at once an experience of the senses and one of reading, association, and interpretation.

Those processes of reading, association and interpretation pertaining to the chair similarly apply to other artefacts, to buildings, streets and landscapes. And with these, our readings and interpretations are necessarily more complex. Constructed environments communicate. Individual buildings within them are made for their time, and their capacity to communicate can also be short-lived and specific to their time alone. That communication can depend on conditions, relations, and other contingent events. Sometimes, by nature or by their sheer obduracy, their communication can remain ‘current’ for a very long time. Or these buildings can find themselves ‘communicating’ intermittently, enjoying periods of relevance or legibility for different audiences at different times, who will interpret their presences and appearances in different ways that are useful to them.

In this context, the topographical photographs of cities and landscapes I have made from the late 1980s to the present document familiar and often banal scenes, but the details of each—for the most part typical products of modernity and urbanisation—betray the nuances and particularities of the material cultures of their place, with all the conflicts between past and present and shifting ideological climates that are inscribed in things, such as the shaping of land, the paving of the ground, the articulation of kerbs, the materials of buildings and their affectations, the typography of their signs, and their specific ‘atmospheres’.²⁰³

Such figures that are characteristic of places bear the imprint of thought: whether logic, ambitions, fictions, fantasies, or ideas. A fragment of postwar Łódź might, for example, imagine itself through its ground works and its name as emulating—and embodying—Versailles and Manhattan. Their appearances speak of these various attitudes to others, reinforcing one’s sense of identification with them, or resistance to their fictions. These appearances can be very complex, particularly in the context of modernity, when the divisions between the past and the present, between occupier and occupied have been continuously antagonised and disrupted. These environments *communicate* and do so through their appearances and resemblances; they are not environments open to pure sensation, but environments open to memory, hope, and fiction.

When one is born into the world, one experiences through the senses, without the intervention of language, or the other. Yet as soon as individual consciousness begins to emerge, it is evident that one exists in a condition of *language*, and systems of speech and vision that predate that individual.²⁰⁴ The experience of the individual is their own only in part; it also borrows from the experience of others that have come before. The pre-existing condition or environment is both

already formed and continuously in the process of being formed. In encountering this world, its scenes, and others, one becomes conscious of one’s own ‘otherness’. Consciousness of the self and the condition outside the self begins a movement toward reconciliation, and its tools are images that the mind builds with, and language.²⁰⁵ A process of exchange ensues wherein the scenes of others, the language of others, forms the space for the conscious self or subject. The subject both meets and lives with the conditions of these scenes and is formed by them by adjusting and conforming to them. The subject then carves out of a space in the world, in which they simultaneously exist within its scenes and are thrown back upon themselves, in a condition of subjectivity, of interiority.²⁰⁶ Within that subjective condition, meetings with these scenes provoke readings and interpretations, re-imaginings, and re-making of those scenes. Experience is a matter of consciousness, of sensorial and aesthetic stimulation, but above all, it is a matter of weaving oneself into the warp and weft of the world.

This navigation of the scenes of the world through moving towards their otherness, interpreting them, imagining them, naming them, claiming them, unfolds continuously, and is always changing. ‘Place’ is not a static condition which must be brought back to some original state; a constantly shifting condition might better constitute an idea of place, distinct from the notion of a *ut*-scene from which human expression is presumed to have sprung. Language, as a medium through which reality is perceived and created, contributes to this fluidity of meaning of a place, which is established in relation to circumstances, contingencies, and others. A place, which constantly changes even as its physical form remains stable, bears the imprint of thoughts and ideas about inhabiting the world. These come from those who have preceded us, as traces that are at once obscured and visible. Cities, in their entirety and in their fragments, develop identities over time, and the material expressions of those cities communicate the breadth of their diverse, specific, accumulated and co-existent cultures, whose expressions are not fixed but constantly in flux. In most cases, these identities are generated over time: incrementally, haphazardly. There are instances, however, in which attempts have been made to impose identities that erase or profoundly alter those patterns and relations that have accrued over time, such as in the case of Sixtus V’s Rome, Baron Haussmann’s Paris, Ildefons Cerdà’s Barcelona, L’Enfant’s Washington, or Ceaușescu’s Bucharest. There are certainly cases in which change occurs in great convulsions, as is characteristic of urban development in the West in modernity,²⁰⁷ or in Eastern Asia since the 1990s.

To illustrate this in more detail, I will return to Steen Eiler Rasmussen’s book *London: The Unique City* (1934), which was a compelling document of the identity of a city explained through its built form—an aspect of its material culture. Rasmussen described that city through its buildings, streets, and landscapes and the tacit knowledge embodied in their expressions, their utterances.²⁰⁸ In his ‘portrait’ of London, the processes and practicalities of building, particularly in domestic architecture of the Georgian period, were shown to yield a set of conventions—a language of form—that was both bound to daily life and legible to the highly diverse subjects of the metropolis. This language was also bound to the economy or the city’s exchange of agreements.²⁰⁹



The objects of Rasmussen's attentions ranged from London's landscapes—embodied in the variety of its parks—such as Hampstead Heath and Hyde Park—to the large variety of its Georgian-period houses, their fronts and backs, and the subtle hierarchies, details and allusions within their construction; and pathways, noting that the city was shaped along natural routes through the landscape. He did not neglect those elements that were 'invisible' yet very present, such as the 'areas' between the pavement and the faces of Georgian houses that provided access and light to their basements that were regularly the workplaces of house servants; nor did he ignore the Georgian architecture of suburbs, where means and funds towards building were reduced, but expressions in the spirit of their grander original models persisted. He considered the integration of shop fronts in this language—delicate constructions of glass and fine timber frames—and the features of industrial districts such as the Isle of Dogs and Kings Cross, of massive brick façades and walled roads, which he related to the 'technical' architecture of glass houses and the treatments of landscape. He addressed the West End's monumental ensembles, such as John Nash's sequence of spaces, with a particular focus on the originally modest theatricality of Regent Street and its Quadrant, noble in its finishes of polished oil paint over render, and the errors of contemporary architects—those operating between 1910 and 1925—in their understanding of it. He wrote of London's material culture and its embedded, tacit knowledge. What is striking about this urban portrait is that all the city's aspects and artefacts were thought of as a piece, a total expression of the city's complex idea of itself and its culture of making, interpretation, and use.²¹⁰

Within Rasmussen's book, in the photographs of London's man-made environment in the 1930s, one can see that the city is constituted by an accumulation of elements, that elements from the past are *present*, and that within the constructions of buildings and landscapes, there were occasionally allusions to other times—often the subject of fantastic or idealised reconstruction—and to other environments, other buildings, other landscapes, other cultures; to buildings and scenes *elsewhere*, which find themselves imprinted in the imagination of the builders or the buildings' designers. This is certainly true of those buildings for which other models had served as inspiration for new designs. For example, the Morning Post building in Aldwych (1906–07), and the Ritz in Piccadilly (1903–06), both designed by Mewès and Davis, were expressions of yearning for the condition of Haussmannian Paris.²¹¹ Something else, other, and 'foreign' was introduced into the material of the architecture, adding to its variety of forms and expressions, altering the traditions of the whole: it is worthwhile remembering T S Eliot's notion of tradition in this respect.²¹² The straightforward decisions that builders tended to make in buildings were culturally inflected. The accumulation of these forms and those of the imagination that appealed to people—and were retained by them—became part of a place's—London's—building culture, and an aspect of that metropolis's material culture.

4.6.2 Allusion

In material culture, one observes the influence of a multitude of effects, among which are those imported from elsewhere and other experiences; effects that allude to other conditions, ideas. Cities dream of being other cities. Many have

dreamt of being, for example, Haussmann's Paris: from London at the beginning of the twentieth century, to Santiago de Chile and Chicago at around the same time. In Chicago, the architect and planner Daniel Burnham's 1910 Plan produced for the Commercial Club reimagined the city's fabric a sprawling tapestry of Parisian boulevards. In the monumental renderings made by Jules Guerin, who, like Burnham, trained at the École des Beaux-Arts, an atmosphere analogous to those created by the painters Gustave Caillebotte or Camille Pissarro was clear.²¹³ These fantasies, too, are constituents of the experience of artefacts, and particularly, of cities, their places, and architecture. The conscious evocation of other conditions, other places, and atmospheres in design is *allusion*. Allusion always involves suggestion and a degree of theatricality to transport the viewer or the experiencing subject to that world that is outside their everyday experience and precisely coincident with it: somewhere else and the here and now all at once. Allusions can be made to any condition or ideal the designer desires, but they tend to succeed when resonant with fantasies shared with or known by others in a particular place, or society, or culture.

The allusion is therefore associated with an expressive idea, one that has some cultural currency. I have written previously about a group of motivating ideas within the expressions of design and other cultural works specific to the public interior and its emergence in modernity.²¹⁴ Several of these interiors, always in urbanised conditions aspiring to those of the metropolis, were dependent on allusions to other 'ideal' conditions, or the ideas at their core. These ideas were shared between different fields of cultural production—music, theatre, literature, painting, and architecture—and manifest in different places, each with apparently divergent cultural identities. I had put forward that the public interior—those interiors we take to be public or consider ourselves to be ourselves in public, and so *appear* in public²¹⁵—had been informed by ideas or themes within culture and design as an aspect of culture, and that the identities of these interiors were quite distinct from how they had been informed by their function, type, need or character. Some of the themes I offered were openly suggestive or *allusive* of singular conditions with deep cultural histories: the garden; the palace; the ruin. In the hands of the designer, the use of each of these themes was useful and potent. By invoking them, designers consciously and unconsciously deployed atmospheres and imagery in ways that allowed the experiencing subject to consider themselves to be simultaneously where they were and within another condition, perhaps elsewhere, exciting senses of wonderment and privilege. This tendency of design is allied to artifice and representation as invoked by Pliny,²¹⁶ Shakespeare,²¹⁷ Dostoyevsky,²¹⁸ and written about by Rykwert.²¹⁹ Allusions in architecture are directions to other experiences and their possibility, fictions in which representation is present, and is furthermore open and available for interpretation and appropriation. Furthermore, the presence of representation in those public interiors that I described charged them with qualities that exceeded those of their organisation or materiality: their artifice, their artificiality, their holding of ideas that rendered them—paradoxically—more present. I have often described this kind of appearance, combining present-ness and representation as one that "is a picture of itself", that "pictures its own fictions".²²⁰

Through the examples of public interiors described through these themes, one could appreciate—with the development of architecture as with that of all other aspects of culture—that a ‘pure’ artefact was either very rare, unlikely, or a myth. All artefacts in the constructed environment appear to be filtered through culture and language-based experience. A ‘pure’ experience of architecture, one reduced to material, space, light, and atmospheres that proposes its rootedness to original experience or encounter with the world is, in fact, also cultural, and cannot exist without a degree of familiarity, either through resemblance, association, or allusion. As the architect acts, the deployment of these associations in design is one of artifice: an aspect of the acts of architecture that is necessary to accept, and in the experience of architecture, necessary to acknowledge. Artifice constitutes part of architecture’s fiction.

4.6.3 Artifice

The architectural historian Joseph Rykwert’s writing often concerned the origins of architecture and settlements, in books such as *On Adam’s House in Paradise* (1972) and *The Idea of a Town* (1976).²²¹ In approaching the design of artefacts, he described design’s necessity of artifice in his essay of the same name (1971).

“In design there must always be the intention, conscious or semi-conscious, to present the actor with a legible set to act within or against. There cannot be design—and at the risk of committing a tautology I would say that no artefact can exist without design being involved somewhere in the making of it—without intention; and it follows, since intention is a voluntary function, that there cannot be design without artifice.”²²²

Nor can an experience of the world, or design, exist without a central and definitive feature of humanity and human interaction, namely, *language*. Earlier, referring to the problem of language and the arbitrariness of the sign, it was evident that it was not possible to perfectly contain the idea in words, that would inevitably be a gap between signifier and signified. Similarly, in design there is constant engagement with artifice, with an utterance that attempts to hold the idea, and therefore, the presence of loss: a loss in translation. There is *always* a shortcoming, something missing—a lack—between the idea and the language that expresses it, between idea and the act that articulates it.²²³ Language, like architecture, is the vehicle, the container of the idea of language or architecture: a form of representation.

The experience of architecture arises from myriad aspects considered so far: the elemental confrontation with material, light, space, one’s movement through space, encounters with material, the ground, and their accumulated affects upon all the senses, all pertaining to the phenomenological paradigm; the experience available to the eye as appearances, and one’s encounter with the artefact as it is embedded in culture, so inciting reading and interpretation, germane to material culture; and, connected to that, the register of allusion, including that aspect of engagement that pertains to representation and some understanding of the human impulse, the idea, or the real.

This aspect of artifice tends to be dissociated from discussion of architecture and its making in several spheres: it is extraneous to the phenomenological paradigm; disregarded in the discourse of contemporary autonomous or non-referential architecture; and dismissed by the adherents of scientifically derived or data-driven ‘parametric’ architecture. Although inherent to design, artifice and its companions, allusion and representation are characterised as antagonistic to ‘truth’. Students of architecture are often and reasonably asked to aspire to facts, to real materials, to authenticity, to science. Embracing artifice, allusion, or representation are characterised as a betrayal of those aspirations and the whole culture of architectural design that has arisen around it.²²⁴ An artificial thing is ‘not quite real’, ‘inauthentic’, ‘forced’, or ‘fake’; a contrivance, a pose taken up by something or someone that says something that does not honestly emanate from that thing or person. This understanding of the artificial is quite correct.²²⁵

In contrast, the authentic is of “undisputed origin, and is not a copy; it is genuine”; it is also “made or done in the traditional or original way, or in a way that faithfully resembles an original”; “based on facts; accurate or reliable”, and finally, “relating to or denoting an emotionally significant, purposive, and responsible mode of human life”,²²⁶ whereas artifice is a device towards the achievement of a specific, communicative, and recognisable form of appearance. It transcends or surpasses the authentic—through its deceptions—with its entreaty, embedded in material culture, to reading and interpretation. Reinforcing Rykwert’s view, I submit that artifice is necessary for the making of architecture, its consideration, its reading, and its interpretation.

I therefore turn yet again to Gottfried Semper’s breaking down of the synthetic work of architecture into constituent, significant, labour-specific acts. In his *Die vier Elemente der Baukunst* (1851), architecture, or the Building Art—in its purported origins and in subsequent iterations across different cultures—was a meeting of those acts, the work of specific trades, each of which was performed with a consciousness, an intention, an idea, that was transferred to their making. In those acts of translation from idea to fact, each acquired their specific outward physical and visible form. The performance of each act involved *artifice*. This word, which comes from the Middle English term for ‘workmanship’, derives from the Latin *artificium*, a fusion of ‘art’ and ‘making’. In contemporary English, it infers “cunning, trickery, deception”,²²⁷ as though following Plato’s critique. What order of planning might have been applied to these performances in a fictive past is impossible to ascertain, but the forms of the four elements of architecture that are the resolution of these acts—the floor, the hearth, the frame and the partition or *Wand*—suggest that ideas were imbedded within them—for example, in the elaborations of joints or the patterns of weaving in the partition—that bore messages, and meaning. There were particularities given to these elements and their assemblies superfluous to that which was strictly necessary, in order that they might—altogether and in their constituent parts—*appear* and mean something to others that saw them and experienced and lived in and around them, who would become, consciously or not, experiencing subjects, readers or interpreters of those constructions. The object of appearance was most likely oriented toward being read and understood,

rather than toward dissonance, unfamiliarity or strangeness.²²⁸ Artifice is almost inevitable. Gestures towards visibility, meaning, reading and interpretation that artifice excites—that engagement of the subject that binds them to the human world as a familiar environment, and even a home—render artifice necessary.²²⁹

From a position derived both from architectural practice and a distance from it, afforded by practices in sculpture, film, photography, and places, as well as teaching, I submit that meaning is inscribed in things, even the most ordinary things, regardless of their makers' consciousness of producing anything other than what is straightforwardly 'useful'. This thought first presented itself to me while travelling, driving across the North American continent with my parents as a child in the 1960s and early 1970s. In those trips, the differences in the most ordinary things would be appreciable as one moved from east to west and back again along a different route. The differences between artefacts like street furniture and roadside infrastructure would manifest themselves from town to town, county to county, state to state; the appearances of banks, cinemas, stores, and public buildings would all seem to have their own particularity. I noted that suburban houses were remarkably alike from place to place—a product of mass construction from catalogues from the late 1940s through the 1970s—but the treatments of drive-ways, front gardens, and porches were all drawn from some hidden authorship that appeared with its own specific manner in each place. On these excursions, cross-sections of a continent's collective idea of itself, I developed attention to nuance, to specific utterances as they made their appearances in different cities, different landscapes, all of them products of human thought, human hands, and human management.

4.7 Representation and its presence

Although artifice is always present in making, and a form that articulates a notion is always sought, whether that is definite or obscure, articulation through form is not straightforward, and an idea is rarely, if ever, translated directly or transparently into a form that *is* the idea. I include in this the forms of functional objects and tools. In design as in speech, there is a gap, inevitably, between what is meant and what is said, between idea and word, between intention and utterance, between thought and speech, between concept and form, between signifier and signified. And yet, some word or utterance or speech—or form—emerges and appears that represents, however inadequately, its idea, or intention, or thought, or concept.

In *representation*, something stands for or signifies something else: a word stands for a concept, a portrait stands for a person, a depiction stands for that which is pictured.²³⁰ Artifice is the *how* this happens, but representation is its inevitable consequence, despite its phenomenal presence,²³¹ and it is what one is left with to encounter, whether it is a confrontation with words, pictures, simple artefacts, paintings, sculptures, buildings, or architecture. I do not wish to simplify or dilute this word, or its significance. Representation plays a key role in what may be drawn from an utterance.

In looking at the world, again, through making photographs of its various appearances, I have been conscious of the presence of representation in scenes before me. I have come to understand these scenes as complexes of utterances within which I have come to see and feel what has been attempted, from whose complexes of representations I have tried to ascertain meaning.²³² What could 'the presence of representation' mean? And why is the acknowledgment of that presence, and the consciousness of representation, important? I propose that seeing what is before one as representation being *present* causes one to seek what lies within representation: the idea, the intention, the thought, the movement towards what is enticing, and troubling: the *real*.

The earliest accounts of representation are contained in the stories of the origin of art. Art, in its 'classical' expression, was typically engaged in forms of depiction, and representation. The role and the significance of representation was clear. The allegory of the origin of painting tells us much about representation and its power. In the first century, Pliny the Elder wrote that painting had been derived from an event: a man and a young woman—Kora of Sicyon, the daughter of the potter Butates of Corinth—were to be separated by his being called to fight as a soldier.²³³ To hold onto him, to remember him, to re-member, re-constitute him, she determined to render an image of sorts, tracing the shadow his profile cast upon the flat surface behind him. It was this trace, re-imagined in the paintings of Romney, Allan, and Regnault,²³⁴ that was left behind, which remained and was kept, so that when he was gone, this trace—a *silhouette*—would always re-present him to her, his presence through his image, his re-presentation, his re-presence, his being made present again. This account is profoundly touching and powerful, and perhaps the silhouette's simple power is what inspired its use as a convention of memento portraiture in early nineteenth-century Europe and America, and as a convention of 'true to life' representation of nature before photography, such as the cut-out 'drawings', of shadows or profiles or silhouettes of plants, those made by Philipp Otto Runge in the early nineteenth century, are exemplary.²³⁵

This is representation in a conventional form that can be readily understood. The silhouette traced by Kora is compelling—it stands in for the lover. But there is a significant gap between the representation and the real it purports to invoke. That gap was eloquently presented by the artist Michael Craig-Martin in his work 'An Oak Tree' (1973), which took the form of a glass of water standing on a glass shelf. In a constructed interview, the artist insisted that the glass of water was indeed an oak tree, and the 'representation' such as it was, was performed by an act very much like trans-substantiation, that phenomenon in the Roman Catholic eucharist in which communion bread is taken to be the body of Christ, and wine the blood of Christ, in Jesus of Nazareth's heretical revision of the Passover Seder in the 'Last Supper': a matter not of evidence, but of faith.²³⁶

This order of representation is exposed in William Shakespeare's play, *The Winter's Tale* (1609–1611),²³⁷ in which representation is made present, and so, as it enters the sphere of reality, disturbs it profoundly. In the play, Leontes, a king, suspects that his beloved queen, Hermione, has betrayed him with his best friend, and so imprisons her. There, she gives birth to a daughter, Perdita; and Leontes,

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believing her to be the child of Hermione's alleged relations with his best friend, exiles her to a distant place. Hermione, despite ultimately having been proven innocent, is believed to have died, without any reconciliation with Leontes. Wracked with guilt fed by Hermione's best friend Paulina, Leontes is further reminded of her by the return of Perdita, now betrothed to a servant of Leontes, and with whom he has found reconciliation. Paulina, who has kept Leontes's feelings raw over some sixteen years, has arranged for a statue of Hermione to be made, to be exhibited to him, partly as a memorial, and partly as kind of torture for Leontes. The statue is unveiled, and its representation of Hermione is so perfect in Leontes's eyes, so convincing in its verisimilitude—her skin, the flush of life, her pulsating veins, her rising and falling breath—that he asks to remain with the statue. Overawed by its life-like aspect, Leontes asks Paulina if she can arrange for the likeness to move. And bidden to move, the statue of Hermione moves. The statue is, in fact, Hermione, who is indeed alive, and present in the skin of this representation. As 'the statue' moves, it crosses—it transgresses—the threshold from memorial to life, from representation to presence, from image to essence, from dream to the real. Leontes is profoundly affected, and shaken, as are the audience, spectators of the 'deception' of this artifice. The living Hermione is taken to be her own representation, her Double, with all the associations tied to her 'original'; and when this Double comes to life, it shakes reality, the boundaries of all who watch this transgression, Leontes and audience alike. The audience's confused emotion—at once fearful and joyous—coincides with the unsettling transgression of the boundary between representation and reality.²³⁸ That boundary is the same transgressed by *The Statue* of the Commendatore in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* (1787),²³⁹ in which the dead man's statue, the *uomo di sasso*—man of stone—leaves the monumental cemetery and asks the reprobate Don Giovanni to be invited for dinner. That transgression, from the world of the dead to that of the living, does not bode well for the anti-hero, who, upon

accepting The Statue's request to join him, is drawn down into the fires of Hell. In Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Double* (1846), the civil servant Golyadkin is threatened with psychic and physical dissolution upon encounter with his imaginary *doppelgänger*, who he believes is doing terrible things while posing as himself, ruining his career and his possibilities in life. The ultimate encounter between Golyadkin's Self and Double leads to the protagonist's psychological decompensation and corporeal collapse.²⁴⁰ The very instability of that boundary between the real and the fictive being is not merely a threat to the working certainties of reality, but a way into the very matter or idea of representation itself, and by extension, the world of appearances.

Representation, in what the painter Philip Guston might have called its 'waxworks' form, acts as a mask, shade, or image, that is always inadequate—yet compelling—for the real.²⁴¹ The artist Michelangelo Pistoletto thought that a viewer might be freed if the opportunity was grasped to occupy the world—the real—that is veiled by representation, within the picture, inside the mirror.²⁴² This is precisely the thesis within Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871).²⁴³ In them, Alice passes through the mirror, and encounters improbable realities, personages, and events. In an origin myth narrative that surrounds the mirror, Narcissus is drawn to an image of another in a still pool. As he looks upon its surface, he sees not a reflection of himself, but an image of an other in another world. The surface of the pool separates him from that other world. As he draws close to the other it so to kiss its countenance, its image dissolves, and is lost. Both the image and its imagined reality are destroyed at the instant of transgression of the surface of the image: the pool; the mirror. Narcissus has not previously encountered his reflection, or that moment when the reflected image of his visage is recognised as merely himself, reflected.²⁴⁴ For Narcissus, the reflected image is that of another; his absorption in love for this other—banishing the nymph Echo to perpetual lamentation²⁴⁵—reminds us that there is a persistent fiction within the mirror and its interior: it contains another world. The temptation remains to touch that surface, to breach it, and grasp that which is within or on the other side, that which is so familiar yet unknown, that which is uncanny, and risk the destruction of that world and one's own world. The prospect of transformation through the medium and agency of the mirror, whether that transformation is manifest in a reconstitution of the whole, a recollection of the condition of Paradise, or access to the world of the other, draws one close to its surface. Yet the possibility of touching that surface, transgressing its boundary, entering its interior and confronting its alterity begets a crisis identical to a meeting with representation. It yields the possibility of an encounter with death.²⁴⁶ The prospect of such an encounter, in which the viewer is drawn towards the presence, surface, and alterity of representation and the real is a phenomenon fundamental to the experience of art. The acknowledgement of the presence within and of representation, causes one to seek out what resides within its presence, whether it is the idea, the ideal or the real.

In the artist Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Mirror Pictures* (from 1963 onwards), the viewer is confronted with a figure 'from life', printed from a photographic source on a mirror-polished stainless-steel surface that seems to simultaneously occupy our world and another world 'inside the mirror'. The viewer is invited to transgress



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the surface of the mirrored plane, and they are invited to occupy within it. That occupation and the invention possible within is the subject of his *Oggetti in Meno* (*Minus Objects*, 1965–66), in which viewers are invited to enter a space of reflections of the ‘real world’ and thereby of representations, which exist in the same space that they do. Pistoletto invites the viewer to enter a space, coincident with and mirroring their own, in which freedom may be achieved, and through this, to see the world as it habitually presents itself; as a world of ideas that people, together, have the capacity to re-imagine, and change. The artist draws the viewer towards that uncertain boundary between representation and the everyday in which meaning is made: the space of the real. He sees the revelation of this space—we might think of the revelation of the sculpture/being of Shakespeare’s Hermione—as an essentially political act, and the occupation of it, liberating, as it promises a kind of agency—the viewer is transformed into agonist²⁴⁷—and is thus also political. The act of looking at these works induces a tension within the viewer akin to the experience of Narcissus, albeit without the fiction of completion. The viewer is poised between two possibilities of being, in which it is possible to imagine that one might cross the surface of the mirror and enter its world, fictional and representational, in which a fundamental reordering of experience may unfold; a world in which freedom may be realised.²⁴⁸ This echoes the hypothesis of Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. Alice tentatively explores and then passes entirely through the mirror, entering a world that confounds her at every



turn. She is almost immediately obliged to abandon any expectations she may have about the symmetry between her own world and that behind the looking glass. She must abandon herself to it.²⁴⁹

Crossing the surface of the mirror is impossible except in the imagination and in the fictions of art, oriented towards consummation, re-membering, re-constitution, re-presence. They produce both attention and a form of tension between the reality of the viewing self and the fictional selves, scenes and possibilities contained within the work of art. This attention yields, ideally, a meeting between the viewer and the work of art, in which movement towards the work of art—and its otherness—undoes the boundaries of the viewing self, acknowledging the possibility of surrendering to that otherness—regardless of whether it is held on a surface, or is somehow deep within its implicated or pictured space. There is a danger, therefore, within this movement in that it threatens the constitution of the viewer, the viewing self. The movement towards the work of art—and one means those which suggest passing into its world—seems particularly perilous when that other world is held in tantalising abeyance, either partly out of sight or interfered with. A further tension, a deep uncertainty, disturbs the attention of the viewer, wherein the viewer's passage to the work of art's interior—for which the mirror is paradigmatic—is frustrated by the autonomy of that interior or interiority.²⁵⁰

One of Pistoletto's *Minus Objects*, *Sfera di giornali* (1965) was a sphere of layered newspapers, apparently born of the streets. In this instance, Pistoletto proposed that as we might cross our world into a world of representations, so too might the work of art enter the world of life. One photograph shows *Sfera di giornali* as seen from within the space of the gallery, about to enter the public space of the city. The sphere was rolled through the streets of Torino as the protagonist of a constantly rolling and unfolding theatre, involving others in its progress. Pistoletto implied that the space of the city was a space of representations that one could constantly reinterpret, modify, and invent; and that politics, as represented in the form of the city, was not static or immutable, but, like the subjectivity produced by the forms and arrangements of the city, a project for the individual and collective imagination, so that both individual and collective freedoms might emerge.

Both Joseph Rykwert and Michelangelo Pistoletto drew attention to the moment that precedes form and representation: Rykwert, through pointing out the presence and necessity of artifice; Pistoletto, through opening the space within the mirror, and over its boundary, into the space of representation. The stories surrounding the origin of painting, and the allegory of representation as illustrated by Shakespeare within *The Winter's Tale* indicate the power of representation when its boundaries are made manifest through movements towards presence, where the real finally appears. The architect is left with this project as thinker, designer, and maker, of acknowledging their work as works of artifice, thereby open to allusion and representation, and the work of that work as achieved through artifice. The architect—as well as the artist or the photographer—can acknowledge, furthermore, that representation has the capacity to make reality present—its intention, emotion, essence—in addition to those aspects of the real that directly affect the senses. Architecture can communicate its idea, its life, in its complex presence.



4.7.1 Representation as presence. Two situations

The environments of cities and the accumulation of artefacts are spaces of representations that share characteristics with the worlds of language. Words inadequately convey the realities that they attempt to describe. When one communicates to another, a further loss occurs, bridged only by elaboration of terms that are shared, or empathy. To compensate for the futility of ever-diminishing meaning, the listener interprets what they hear, shaping the language used by the other to align with their understanding and experience. Communication is a form of agreement, in which language is the currency through which exchange is realised. The artefacts in the constructed environment, elements of material culture, stand in for functions, and ideas. These artefacts have public forms, and an infinitude of private forms, which have expressions, signs, terms, and appearances that contain ideas concerning reality.

At an art gallery in Norwich, England, in 1994, a group of artworks were collected under the title *Menschenwelt* (or 'human world') by the curator Martin Hentschel to evoke the world of ordinary things.²⁵¹ Hentschel spoke of this at the time as a variation of Edmund Husserl's concept *Lebenswelt* ('living world'), described as 'the world of immediate experiences that is a given for every individual—relatively and subjectively—through his modes of perception [and] memory'. At the centre of the gallery, the premise of the exhibition revealed itself to the viewer. In one work, a little boy appeared to sit at a kitchen table covered by a waxed, patterned tablecloth, bent at the corners and tucked around the boy's knees. It was a life-size sculpture, executed in wood and paint, made to resemble a real table, tablecloth and boy. The manner in which it was painted imbued it with its

→ 4.15



own light, which appeared to come intensely from one side, casting a shadow over half the boy's half-turned head and over the folds of the cloth. As one approached from the front, the scene seemed simultaneously three- and two-dimensional, as if one was looking at a photograph. It was at this moment that various associations flooded into the work. Through an order of depiction which was not germane to a three-dimensional object, but to the family snapshot, the sculpture was present as a picture of itself. The representation embodied in its image-like form was present, and disturbing.

The character of the snapshot itself is nostalgic: an artefact which, though archaic and nearly obsolete, is intensely suggestive of private worlds and their experiences, yet (at the time of the exhibition, some thirty years ago) familiar to everyone. The moment of the image's 'taking' slips away from the viewer as it is looked at, rushing into the past as the viewer stands in the present, inducing a kind of vertigo. The snapshot is a token which signifies *lack* and asks for the recovery of that which is missing. It is a trace, like Kora of Sicyon's tracing of her lover's profile on the wall.²⁵² For a work to reside in this gulf between past and present, between absence and presence, would be tragic. However, it is the characteristic of the once common relationship with the snapshot, to gather the missing subject or receding image closer, it must be filled, interpreted, and made to stand in for reality. The relationship between the snapshot and its viewer initiates a process of reconstruction, or re-presencing.

In the same exhibition, Wolfgang Schlegel's *Gate* (1991) was a three-dimensional relief of a banal steel entrance gate, painted dull orange. It was made so it might be construed as an isolated and exaggerated perspective image, with a

vanishing point set far off, beyond the surface of the gallery wall. The viewer confronted a perspective drawing made 'real'; a two-dimensional, idealised representation of a three-dimensional object, as a three-dimensional artefact. It was both representation and *trompe l'œil*; the image was banal, its source a figure commonly experienced, yet rendered strange by its heightened artificiality, its determination to stand on the threshold of picture and reality. Like Martin Honert's *Foto*, it was a representation-as-object. I saw this work again in a castle in Piemonte, where it was mounted on a wall lined with a painted *trompe l'œil* of a belvedere, a fragment of architecture overlooking a landscape. Here it appeared against the painted scene as both a plausible fence protecting the painted idyll, which made it appear to be more real, and as an object that was a picture of itself.²⁵³

The representations of the works in *Menschenwelt* were *present*, suggesting that the artefacts of the world of people might themselves be inventions, representations, artefacts that are pictures of themselves that the viewer encounters every day, unwittingly. The works also inferred, through the nature of those representations, their evocations of nostalgia and familiarity, that the past is bound to the here and now, and that the past is changed and constructed by each moment of the here and now.²⁵⁴ One cannot be spoken of or made without the other. These representations re-enacted the imagining and making of the 'world of humans', its re-imagined artefacts, from the photograph to the gate, particular to the banal environments of industrialised *mittel*-Europe. And in its presentation of another reality,²⁵⁵ it was both strange, and out of place, to a viewer situated in England in the 1990s, a neoliberal *terrain vague*, where in both art and politics, the past was detached from the present for convenience, the present was provisional and merely a matter of sociological interest, and the future was a distant and muted promise of Utopia.

In 1993, at Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, an exhibition by the artist Richard Artschwager (1923–2013)²⁵⁶ featured objects that could be seen as reappraisals or quotations of his sculptural work of the 1960s and 1980s, and his paintings of the 1970s. The familiar range of materials associated with his practice²⁵⁷ were deployed here: Formica® both plain and wood-grained, paint on wood, chromed metal, green baize, and rubberised hair. The suggestion of mass production evident in his earlier work was incorporated into the new: each of the works were multiples. The works could be described as 'domestic', set out in the museum as though it was still a house, in ways that took advantage of the inherent ambiguity of its status as both, and could itself be seen to have collapsed into becoming an image of itself. The naturalness of the installation was encouraged by the operative fiction that the building was working towards returning to its original status as a home. One room contained a version of a shelf of books with two 'bookends'; another a 'picture' and a 'clock'; another a 'chair' and a 'mirror'. None of these in fact functioned like the artefacts they referenced. One first thought that one was encountering a set of modest rearrangements that amounted to no more than not-so-subtle jokes. To move beyond this, one had to give both the setting and the artefacts closer attention, despite the resistance the artefacts offered, the banality of their representations and the materials with which they were executed.



4.17.1–3
Richard Artschwager, *Door*, 1987.



One such piece, *Door* (1987), created some unease from a distance, due to its scale and position on the wall, which approximated that of a picture or painting. Upon closer scrutiny, the object appeared to be a small cabinet, an impression reinforced by features such as chromed hinges and a door pull. Its wood-grained surface, mimicking the fittings in the rest of the building, looked like walnut or some tropical hardwood, associating it with luxury cabinetry. Visitors to the Museum Haus Lange were aware that the building had been designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as one of two adjacent and substantial houses for a wealthy family;²⁵⁸ luxury, manifest in the quality of space, material and detail, was a central characteristic of this building. *Door* appeared to converge with the character of the house's fittings, as if it wished to become invisible, another naturalised aspect of the house's expression. Yet on closer examination, the material employed by the artist was not an exotic wood, but Formica®, a plastic laminate, a material that signals other far less luxurious, indeed banal conditions: it is not 'real', but a *simulacrum*,²⁵⁹ whose closeness to the 'real' is secured through photographic processes. The object had performed a deception and had begun to lie to the viewer. More were to come. The object's dimensions were more common to a picture than any kind of cabinet. It was, in fact, too small and too shallow to contain anything. The viewer was finally tempted—and permitted, another transgression—to open the door, to rupture the plane reserved between artworks and their viewers, to access the interior of the representation, and *use* that which could no longer be a picture.

→ 4.17

At this moment of passing from the status of viewer to user, the boundaries of both the work and the museum—no longer a house—were transgressed, and it was possible for the viewer and user to know the interior, the essence, the ‘truth’ of the work. Upon opening the door, the anticipation of finding that interior was undermined by a complex of contradictory signals. The interior had depth, but no enclosure. There was no top or bottom to the interior, therefore no object could be contained within it. Yet, there was depth; and looking at the door one had just opened, one became aware that the volume of the ‘interior’ of the cupboard corresponded precisely with the volume of the door that had previously sealed it. Imagining that door closed again, the ‘interior’ was squeezed out of existence. Looking again into the ‘interior’, one observed a ‘volume’ with two splayed sides, which resembled a perspective drawing: a *picture* of depth. Suddenly the question of the object that lied about itself arrived again, in yet another form. The door closed once more, this was a cabinet/not-cabinet whose door concealed an image of its ‘interior’, of its own knowledge of itself.

At every stage of coming to know this object, one was aware of being involved in reading signs that were all legible, but whose links to what they signified were inconsistent and unrealised. The search for knowing through reading and interpretation led to confusion. Several pictorial conventions were drawn into the scenario of seeing and usage by Artschwager to stand in for themselves, as representations of themselves. The experience of reading and using the work was one of interpreting and ordering, of disentangling the knots of comprehension, processes that were, through Artschwager’s deceptions, inevitably transgressive, inconclusive, ever-expanding and circular. As the objects’ representations collapsed into each other, the implications of their hypothesised unity unfolded. The knowledge one relied upon for reading *Door* had come from the world that one knew and used. This world made space for *Door* as representation slipped across the boundaries of the real. Works such as *Door* tested these boundaries of the real so profoundly—and with such modest means—that they questioned the whole idea of the unity of the world (a contemporary Western world of codes) and ‘reality’. In the end, their questions had no words, no object, no subject before them. Just question, itself.

4.8 On representation in architecture

In the exhibition *Bravoure*, staged by the architects De Vylder Vinck Taillieu in the Belgian Pavilion at the International Biennale of Architecture in Venice in 2016, visitors were asked to consider acts of building that yielded more than building; that yielded something else that might go completely unnoticed, but was there; which offered building and some aspect that was more than building. The exhibition was arranged as a series of experiences of artefacts and images, of scenes that the visitor was asked to consider as both acts and re-enactments.²⁶⁰ These re-enactments were presented as fragments, both fully present as realistic recreations of their original referents, and as photographic representations of those same referents. Large photographs of these fragments in their contexts attested

to the gap—and loss—between the original and its re-staged proxies. There were other photographs in the exhibition, that were fictions, manipulated, made by Filip Dujardin, purporting to be evidence of realities—places, architecture—that had succumbed to profound re-ordering. They were realistic but falsified representations of impossible or implausible conditions. The exhibition deployed a strategy of undermining reality with these representations of various orders, proposing other realities. Representation was present, inviting visitors to occupy fictions, or sending them into the realms of the uncanny.

The visitor was expected to reconcile the elements that presented themselves in the space—which were representations of real elements elsewhere—with their representations in life-size photographs. It was necessary to reconcile the state of these represented elements through means of the imagination, through reconstructing experiences of encounter with artefacts that were real and not present and representations that were present, as artefacts that were doubles of their originals, and with images that appeared to be ‘originals’ of the artefacts but were in fact ‘distanced’ through photographic representation. The visitor was asked to imagine that they were in a space that held the *idea* of the original artefacts in the display of their doubles and their photographic representation. In relation to these two-dimensional presences, the modelled re-enactments of building fragments became more ‘real’; yet despite the physicality of these represented fragments, their representational aspect became more exaggerated. They were ‘pictures of themselves’. It is likely that the visitor would recognise the strangeness of these presences, their apartness from what any normal version of themselves might be. It is similarly likely that the visitor could become conscious that these fragments were uncanny, distinct from unconscious, ‘normal’ constructions.

Visitors’ imaginations were provoked into engaging in an embrace of excess, in that they were obliged to entertain the fragment and its doubles—one of them real and in the world of use—any one of which could be the double of any other. The ‘sin’ of excess is an accusation made of art; yet the uselessness of art—its very excess—is essential to its power. The same excess in architecture when one does more than build is similarly chastised, as it affords more than what it is obliged to afford, as it does more than what has been ‘procured’. This excess, in difficult, scarce times such as the present, is seen as indefensible: a pretentious luxury, confirming a long-standing complaint about architects and architecture that is raised by clients and project managers alike. Yet the excess of representation is necessary, essential to architecture’s nature. Representation in architecture is inevitable in building that wishes to express its consciousness beyond its basic affordance. It is, furthermore, always present in architecture, either consciously, or unintentionally. Representation is the fluent, poetic aspect of architecture’s parlance, speaking of its relations with its environments and the lives of others, past, present, and future.

As I described in the previous chapter, ‘Contexts’, a consciousness of the tradition within which authors are situated affects their ‘utterances’. This leaves one with the idea that architecture, far from being the mute accumulation of materials and their arrangement in service of function or effects, is a complex construction of diverse motives that are formed and expressed through those forms, that are



simultaneously material, spatial, atmospheric, cultural, and linguistic, and—by their nature—representational. The architect, therefore, bears the responsibility of being a steward of ideas and their constructed representations, and so obliged to be generous to that heightened consciousness that might reveal reality and its fictions to subjects, and so, liberate them.

To conclude, I return to the question, “when one looks at something, what is one looking at?” One is looking at complexes of ideas bound to place, identity, time, histories, circumstance, contingencies, narratives, fictions, life. One is looking at the outward appearance of constructed environments, trying to understand the forces, intentions, and failings that have brought them to their temporary state. In recognising one’s subjectivity, one is also obliged to look at the conditions, ideas and prejudices one has been shaped by. I hope that architects see the obligation to acknowledge these complexities and engage with them, attempt to read them, interpret them, and ultimately, contribute to them, and speak and act amongst them. This effort is joined to other very real obligations and responsibilities. The obligations are not matters of applying of surfaces and appearances as masques or decorations of some otherwise functional object, of reducing one’s role to a sign-maker, or a publicity art director. Rather, the obligations pertain to ascertaining and making meaning, which involve accepting representation and making its essence present, in artefacts—utterances, presences—that are emissaries of the real, and bearers of its immanent freedoms.

With a specific address to those involved in the thinking and making of architecture, I propose that all of this is directed to a set of conclusions: first, that the construction of architecture bears meaning through its very acts of making, which are inscribed in its technique, and are aspects of language; second, that technique within projections and acts of building that are conscious of themselves is both pragmatic *and* representational; and third, the crafts involved in the making and assembling of elements of construction lead to the rendering of significant form, in which idea, fact, and image are synthesised in architecture that is at once itself and its representation. Within that resides the real.

To return to the beginning: one’s attuned encounters with those fundamental elements of architecture as set forth by Gottfried Semper are significant because those elements, in their outward forms, bear the capacity to re-present those original encounters with the world that were embedded in their making: one walks upon the ground that has been made into a floor, and experiences at once its fact as a floor and its *idea* as a privileged piece of ground made by humans, understanding that it is laid upon the earth so to make a place in midst of the world, a fragment of world in the midst of the cosmos.

[1] Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980); Christian Norberg-Schulz (1974), *Meaning in Western Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980)

[2] O F Bollnow (1963), trans. Christine Shuttleworth, Joseph Kohlmaier, ed., *Human Space* (London: Hyphen Press, 2011)

[3] Gaston Bachelard (1958), *La Poétique de l'espace*, trans. Maria Jolas, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994)

[4] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012)

[5] Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006)

[6] Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2016)

[7] Susan Komossa, Kees Rouw, Joost Hillen, eds., *Colour in Contemporary Architecture* (Amsterdam: Sun, 2009)

[8] Kent C Bloomer, Charles W Moore, *Body, Memory, and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977)

[9] David Leatherbarrow, *Uncommon Ground: Architecture, Technology, and Topography* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2000)

[10] Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1959), *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1964)

[11] Kenneth Frampton, John Cava, ed., *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995)

[12] As follows Anni Albers's writing on weaving and textiles. See, Anni Albers (1965), *On Weaving* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017)

[13] Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), trans. Donald A Landes, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 2012). "Phenomenology involves describing, and not explaining or analysing.": Lxx

[14] Emilio Ambasz, *The Architecture of Luis Barragán* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1976)

[15] Renate Petzinger, Hanne Dannenberger, eds., *Donald Judd: Raume/Spaces* (Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1993)

[16] Edmund Husserl (1950; 1952), trans. William P Alston, George Nakhnikian, *The Idea of Phenomenology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973)

[17] Norman Bryson, "The Gaze in the Expanded Field", in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality: Dia Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, no. 2 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988): 86–108

[18] Experiences in teaching architectural design at the Architectural Association, London, between 1986 and 1996; and at TU Delft, from 2002 to 2024, in particular.

[19] Typical of priority given to the natural processes of the market and neoliberalism is Patrik Schumacher, director of Zaha Hadid Architects. See Patrik Schumacher (2009), 'Parametricism: A New Global Style for Art and Design', in *Architectural Design* 79, no. 4: 14–23. In my years of studying and then teaching at the Architectural Association, London (1983–1985; 1986–87; 1988–1992; 1995–96), I regularly encountered—in critiques, conversations and lectures—the various positions assumed by figures who could not or would not countenance material culture or the fact of language in the making of architecture, characterising it as anachronistic; instead, they cleaved to other paradigms, from those of emotions and 'fun' (post-Archigram Peter Cook), to architecture inspired by machines (Archigram), or chemistry, or iteration, or emulations of Peter Eisenman (Eisenman himself, Jeffrey Kipnis, Sanford Kwinter); to data or flows (Farshid Moussavi, Alejandro Zaera-Polo), to the architecture of radical geometry (the SCIARC-inspired parametric contingent, including Greg Lynn), and finally, the architecture of the free market unchained, taking advantage of data and flows and parametric design as strategies for distraction (Zaha Hadid and Patrik Schumacher). For an extended critique of the positions taken up by such protagonists and the uses of those positions within contemporary material culture, see Douglas Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and*

Compliance (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); and Douglas Spencer, *Critique of Architecture: Essays on Theory, Autonomy, and Political Economy* (Basel: Birkhäuser Bauwelt Fundamente 168, 2021)

[20] Antonio Damasio, *Feeling & Knowing: Making Minds Conscious* (New York: Vintage Books, 2021)

[21] Richard Serra, sculptor (1938–2024)

[22] I borrow this turn of phrase as used by the philosopher Andrew Benjamin, from a lecture given at the Architectural Association, London, for the symposium 'Judenplatz, Vienna, 1996' 1996/11/06, concerning Rachel Whiteread's monument there. See Andrew Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd., 2015). See also, Mark Pimlott, 'Rachel Whiteread: Judenplatz Wien A 1997', in *AA News*, Spring 1997

[23] Richard Serra, *Verb List*, 1967, collection Museum of Modern Art, New York <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/152793>

[24] Richard Serra, *House of Cards*, 1969. Lead plates; 4 plates, each 122 x 122 cm

[25] 'Richard Serra', in Germano Celant, *Arte Povera* (Milano: Gabriele Mazzotta editore, 1969): 219–224; Jon Thompson, 'New times, new thoughts, new sculpture', in *Gravity & Grace: The Changing Condition of Sculpture* (London: The South Bank Centre, 1993): 11–34

[26] The cases of this are abundant, but a number are particularly significant: the first, in public space, *Tilted Arc*, 1981, installed at Federal Plaza, New York (removed), see Rosalind E Krauss, *Richard Serra/ Sculpture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986). There are also works which affect and are profoundly related to the architectural arrangements that containment, such as *Snake* (1997), installed for the inauguration of Guggenheim Bilbao; and works added to it for the Exhibition 'The Matter of Time' (2005): *Torqued Ellipses I, II, IV, V, VI, VII*, 1996–99, and Double Torqued Ellipses I, II, III, 1997–99. See Hal Foster, Carmen Giménez, Kate D Nesin, Richard Serra, *Richard Serra: The Matter of Time* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2005)

[27] Rosalind E Krauss, 'Richard Serra/Sculpture'; Douglas Crimp, 'Serra's Public Sculpture: Re-defining Site Specificity' in *Richard Serra/ Sculpture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986); Rosalind E Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', in *October*, vol. 8, Spring 1979: 30–44

[28] Kent C Bloomer, Charles W Moore, *Body, Memory and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977)

[29] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012)

[30] Klaske Havik, Hans Teerds, Gus Tielens, eds., *Oase 91. Building Atmospheres* (Rotterdam: nai010 Publishers, 2013)

[31] Markus Breidschmid, ed., *Olgiati: A lecture by Valerio Olgiati* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2011)

[32] www.olgiati.net, accessed 2024/05/10

[33] Markus Breidschmid, ideated by Valerio Olgiati, *Non-Referential Architecture* (Zürich: Park Books, 2019): 14

[34] Grounded feelings, again, derived from the mind's image-store and the communication that exists between mind and body. See Antonio Damasio, op. cit.

[35] Donald Judd, ed., *Donald Judd: Complete Writings 1959–1975* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 2005)

[36] Gregory Battcock, ed. (1968), *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995)

[37] Dan Graham, 'My Works for Magazine Pages', in Gary Dufour, ed., *Dan Graham* (Perth: Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1985): 8–13

[38] Renate Petzinger, Hanne Dannenberger, eds., *Donald Judd Räume/Spaces* (Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1993)

[39] Dan Graham, 'Art as Design/Design as Art', in Brian Wallis, ed., *Dan Graham: Rock My Religion: Writings and Art Projects 1965–1990* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1993): "While the background in general makes the artwork visible, the lighting *literally* makes the work visible. The lighting system, within which the specific light fixtures of a gallery arrangement function, is both part of the gallery apparatus and part of the larger, existing (non-art) system of electric lighting in general use.": 210

[40] Michael Fried (1967), 'Art and Objecthood', originally published in *Artforum*, Summer 1967; in Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideals* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992): 822–834

[41] <https://www.feldkapelle.de>, accessed 2024/05/12 "Die dem heiligen Nikolaus von Flüe - genannt Bruder Klaus - gewidmete Feldkapelle ist eine privat gestiftete und erbaute Kapelle, ein Ort der Stille, der Meditation und des Gebetes. Jeder, der sie in dieser Absicht besucht, ist herzlich willkommen. "Mögen viele Menschen an diesem Ort einen Weg zu Gott finden!"

[42] Installation in the neo-classical Duveen Galleries at Tate Britain, 30 September 1992 to 15 January 1993

[43] Etienne-Louis Boullée, *Funerary Monument, Typical of Sunken Architecture*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Est. Ha. 53, No. 29 (c. 1785), in Jean-Claude Lemaigry, et al, *Visionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, Lequeu* (Houston: University of St Thomas, 1968)

[44] Indigenous structures for dwelling and meeting, in the form of conical tents, used by indigenous peoples in North America, made of long wooden elements cut from trees, and bound by fabric coverings, often decorated, with opening at the top for ventilation and evacuation of smoke from fires for cooking and warmth.

[45] One cannot help but think of the eighteenth-century pilgrimage churches in the German countryside as a point of reference, such as the Wieskirche in Steingaden (1749–1754), designed by the brothers Domikus and Johan Baptist Zimmermann. Its barn-like exterior was built around an elaborately decorated Baroque interior.

[46] The photographs of the chapel made by Hélène Binet are particularly affecting, picturing the febrile, almost shamanistic aspect of the interior. See Mark Pimlott, 'Hélène Binet: Photographs as Space', in *Composing Space: The Photographs of Hélène Binet* (London: Phaidon, 2012): 200–215

[47] Joseph Rykwert (1972), *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981), with reference to a fictional discourse in Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's speculating on the appearance of 'the first building', *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* (1875): 38–40

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[48] Mark Solms, *The Hidden Spring: A Journey to the Source of Consciousness* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 2021)

[49] Damasio, op. cit.

[50] Bloomer, Moore, op. cit.

[51] Peter Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture 1750–1950* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965): 45

[52] See Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered', in *October* 62, Autumn, 1992: 3–41; and Joachim Schlör (1991), trans. Pierre Gottfried Imhof, Dafydd Rees Roberts, *Nights in the Big City: Paris, Berlin, London 1840–1930* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998)

[53] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1818), trans. Bernard Bosanquet, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (London: Penguin Classics, 1993)

[54] Pallasmaa, op. cit.; Solms, op. cit.

[55] Andrej Radman, *Gibsonism: Ecologies of Architecture*, PhD dissertation, TU Delft, 2012

[56] Bloomer, Moore, op. cit.

[57] Filippo Brunelleschi is credited with its invention, becoming a device of painting in, for example, the work of Piero della Francesca, and in architecture in the work of Donatello Bramante. See Erwin Panovsky (1935), trans. Christopher S Wood, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York: Zone Books, 1991); and Hubert Damisch (1987), trans. John Goodman, *The Origin of Perspective* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1994)

[58] Harry Francis Mallgrave, *The Architect's Brain: Neuroscience, Creativity, and Architecture* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011)

[59] Richard Neutra (1954), *Survival Through Design* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1969)

[60] Bloomer, Moore, op. cit.

[61] Pallasmaa, op.cit.; see also Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema* (Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy, 2001)

[62] Havik, Teerds, Tielens, op. cit.

[63] For extensive discussions of this matter in relation to visual art practice, see the several essays in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality*, Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture, no. 2 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988)

[64] Havik, Teerds, Tielens, op. cit.

[65] Plato (520–514 BCE), trans. Desmond Lee, *The Republic*, Book VII (London: Penguin Books, 1987): 316–325

[66] Pliny the Elder (77–79 CE), trans. John Bostock, H T Riley, *The Natural History*, Book XXXV. Chapter 5 (London: Taylor & Francis, 1855); Anne-Lise Coste explains that the woman in question was Kora, daughter of the potter Butates of Corinth. *Anne-Lise Coste: Thinking of you (body and soul)*, Madrid: Nogueras Blanchard Gallery, 2019/03/30

[67] Marshall Berman (1982), *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983): 16–17

[68] Jonathan Crary, 'Modernising Vision', in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality*, Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture, no. 2 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988): 29–50. Jonathan Crary has written of this scientific and analytical deconstruction of vision as being in service to the instrumentalising impulse in modernity, whether in service to States and their institutions, or the various outlets of production and consumption typical of an industrialised society, in which individuals are regarded as entities to be rendered useful, optimised, or obeisant.

[69] Lucy R Lippard (1973), *Six Years in the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966–1972...* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)

[70] Erwin Panofsky (1924), trans. Christopher S Wood, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York: Zone Books, 1997): "Perspective mathematizes this visual space, and yet it is very much *visual* space that it mathematizes; it is an ordering, but an ordering of the visual phenomenon.": 71

[71] The studies of the Renaissance and the development of perspective are abundant. It is not my intention to open them here, but to indicate that the subject-centred visual regime, most profoundly represented by Filippo Brunelleschi's invention of perspective, and its development and deployments by artists such as Francesco di Giorgio and Piero della Francesca, sublime and 'perfect' as they were, were to be superseded by inversions in the ideals and ambitions of artists that followed soon after. See Hubert Damisch (1987), trans. John Goodman, *The Origin of Perspective* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1994); and Erwin Panofsky (1924), op. cit.: "Perspective, in transforming the *ousia* (reality) into the *phainomenon* (appearance), seems to reduce the divine to a mere subject matter for human consciousness; but for that very reason, conversely, it expands human consciousness into a vessel for the divine. It is thus no accident if this perspectival view of space has already succeeded twice in the course of the evolution of art: the first time as the sign of an ending, when antique theocracy crumbled; the second time as the sign of a beginning, when modern 'anthropocracy' first reared itself.": 72

[72] John Shearman (1967), *Mannerism: Style and Civilization* (London: Penguin Books, 1981)

[73] Michel Foucault (1966), trans. Alan Sheridan, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1994)

[74] These power relations, implicit in all public imagery, were central to John Berger's use of Foucault's analysis in his own critique in how images are constructed. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972)

[75] Jacques Lacan, Jacques-Alain Miller, ed., *Le Séminaire. Livre XI Les Quatre Concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse (1964)* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973); Jacques Lacan, Michel Roussan, ed., *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan. [séminaire XIII], L'objet de la*

- psychanalyse: 1965–1966* (Paris: M. Roussan, 2006); Gérard Wajcman, ‘Ménines (les)’ in *Lacan: L’Exposition: Quand l’art rencontre la psychanalyse* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2024): 164–165
- [76] This is recounted by Norman Bryson, ‘The Gaze in the Expanded Field’, in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality. Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, no.2 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988): 88; Jean-Paul Sartre (1943), trans. Hazel E Barnes, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, Chapter I, section 4 (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956: 254–302
- [77] Sartre, op. cit.
- [78] Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1846), trans. Ronald Wilks, *The Double* (London: Penguin, 2009)
- [79] Norman Bryson, ‘The Gaze in the Expanded Field’, in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality: Dia Discussions in Contemporary Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988): “Lacan’s reworking of Sartre’s scenario dispenses with this personalised other. His story is a good deal stranger. Lacan is away from Paris, in Brittany, out with the fishermen on the open sea. On the surface of the sea are pieces of flotsam, in particular a sardine can, to which one of the men reacts by saying to Lacan: “You see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn’t see you!” The remark disturbs Lacan because he can sense a perspective in which it is untrue: the world of inanimate objects to some extent always look back at the perceiver.”: 91
- [80] Jacques Lacan, trans. Emmanuel Naddim, ibid., Gérard Wajcman, ‘Boîte de sardines’: 52–53, in *Lacan: L’Exposition: Quand l’art rencontre la psychanalyse* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2024): 52–53
- [81] Bryson, op. cit.: 91–92
- [82] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, op. cit.: “Phenomenology involves describing, and not explaining or analyzing.”: lxx
- [83] T S Eliot, ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’, in *The Egoist*, September and December 1919: 54–55; 72–73
- [84] Damasio, op. cit.
- [85] Regarding vision, the imagination, and pleasure, see Peter Collins, ‘The Influence of the Picturesque’, in *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture 1750–1950* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965): 42–66
- [86] John Berger, Sven Blomberg, Chris Fox, Michael Dibbs, Richard Hollis, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972)
- [87] Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’, in *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, October 1975: 6–18
- [88] Peter Galassi, Cindy Sherman, *Cindy Sherman: The Complete Untitled Film Stills* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2003)
- [89] Junichirō Tanizaki (1933), trans. Thomas J Harper, Edward G Seidensticker, *In Praise of Shadows* (London: Vintage Books, 2001)
- [90] Bryson, op. cit.: 96–98
- [91] Roland Barthes (1964), Stephen Heath, trans. ‘The Rhetoric of the Image’, in *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977): 32–51
- [92] Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), trans. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehayé, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959): 5
- [93] ibid.: 6
- [94] ibid.: 66
- [95] ibid.: 67–69
- [96] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972)
- [97] Henrik O Andersson, ‘Swedish Architecture Around 1920’, in Simo Paavilainen, Juhani Pallasmaa, eds., *Nordic Classicism 1910–1930* (Helsinki: Finnish Museum of Architecture, 1982): 123–160. The literature around Asplund is now plentiful, exceeded only by that around Sigurd Lewerentz. Most notable remains Hakon Ahlberg, *Gunnar Asplund Architect 1885–1940* (Stockholm: AB Tidskriften Byggmästaren, 1950)
- [98] Stuart Wrede, *The Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1980): 33
- [99] Wrede, ibid.: 33. Wrede credits this fused imagery to Bengt Johansson. The frontal image of the temple is subsumed by the image of the barn or rural cottage as one passes from front to side. A Japanese quality even appears over the whole, with the roof’s ridge beam a tarred tree trunk.
- 4.4 FUNDAMENTAL ACTS
- [100] I have taught architectural design since 1986, and at TU Delft, in the Chair of Interiors Buildings Cities since 2002, first as Visiting Professor in relation to practice under Professor Tony Fretton (emeritus), then as Assistant Professor from 2009. I was part of a collective teaching group following his retirement in the Chairs of ‘Architecture of the Interior’ (2013–2015), and subsequently ‘Interiors Buildings Cities’ under Prof. Daniel Rosbottom, all with the same colleagues. From 2013, it became necessary to articulate the position held, firstly, by myself, both in writing and in lecture series called ‘Fundamentals’. The first of these series yielded my book *The Public Interior as Idea and Project*; the second, this thesis.
- [101] Martin Heidegger (1927), trans. John Macquarrie, Edward Robinson, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008)
- [102] Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), trans. Donald A Landes, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 2012)
- [103] Douglas Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016). Again, the writing of Douglas Spencer acutely addresses the problem of the avant-garde playing directly into the service of neoliberalism. See also Guy Debord (1967), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995)
- [104] Neil MacGregor (2010), *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (London: Penguin 2012)
- [105] Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), which I have referred to in my books *Without and Within: Essays on Territory and the Interior* (Rotterdam: Episode publishers, 2007), chapter 2, ‘Picturing territories’: 59–109. In it, I tried to establish the significance of the definition of an interior (within) and the world in which the settlement, as interior, was set (without). The conceptual elimination of this distinction, of declaring an entire territory anticipated to be colonised was essential for understanding the mindset of American urbanism and its operative fictions. See also Mark Pimlott, ‘Interiority and the condition of interior’ in *Interiority*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Depok: Universitas Indonesia, 2018): 5–20
- [106] Martin Heidegger (1960), trans. Albert Hofstadter, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row 1977): 116. “Beyond what is, not away from it, but before it, there is something else that happens. In the midst of beings as a whole an open space occurs. There is a clearing, a lighting... This open centre is not surrounded by what is; rather the lighting centre itself encircles all that is... Only this clearing grants and guarantees to human beings a passage to those entities that we ourselves are not; and access to the being that ourselves are.”
- [107] Peter Brook (1968), *The Empty Space* (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2008)
- [108] Jacob Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man* (London: BBC television 1973)
- [109] Edmund Husserl (1936; 1954), *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970)
- [110] Among these stories, those of Arctic aboriginals: Ragnar Axelsson, *Last Days of the Arctic* (London: Polarworld/Reykjavik: Crymogea, 2010; films such as made by Rosie Bonne, dir., *Ammagq* [Nowhere Land] (Canada: NFB, 2015); Mosha Michael, dir., *Natsik Hunting*, 1975; documentaries directed by Douglas Wilkinson concerning traditional Inuit life in the 1950s; stories of Australian aboriginal experience: Bruce Chatwin (1987), *The Songlines* (London: Vintage, 1998)); and other wanderings, written of by Bruce Chatwin, *What Am I Doing Here?* (London: Vintage, 2014); Werner Herzog (1978), *Of Walking in Ice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), and Wim Wenders (1993), *Once: Pictures and Stories* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2001/2010). The value of the experience of topography imparted to the body, as a way of the body coming into being, is described by Dimitris Pikionis (1936), ‘A Sentimental Topography’, in *Dimitris Pikionis, Architect 1887–1968: A Sentimental Topography* (London: Architectural Association, 1989): 68–69
- [111] Italo Calvino (1972), trans. William Weaver, *Invisible Cities* (London: Vintage, 1997)
- [112] Giulia Foscari, *Elements of Venice* (Zürich: Lars Müller publishers 2014)
- [113] Kenneth Frampton; John Cava, ed., *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995); see also Françoise Fromonot, *Jørn Utzon: Architetto della Sydney Opera House* (Milano: Electa, 1998)
- [114] Yukio Futagawa, *Minka 1955 Japanese Traditional Houses* (Tokyo: Ada Editra Global Architecture, 2013)
- [115] Frampton, ibid. Frampton cites Utzon’s article ‘Platforms and Plateaus: The Ideas of a Danish Architect’, in *Zodiac 10* (Milano: Edizione di Comunità, 1962): 112–141. “The floor in a traditional Japanese House is a delicate bridge-like platform. This Japanese platform is like a tabletop. It is a piece of furniture. The floor here attracts you as the wall does in a European house. You want to sit close to the wall in a European house, and here in Japan, you want to sit on the floor and not walk on it. All life in Japanese houses is expressed in sitting, lying or crawling movements.”: 247–248
- [116] Kenneth Frampton, Jørn Utzon: Transcultural Form and the Tectonic Metaphor’, in Kenneth Frampton; John Cava, ed., *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996): 247–298
- [117] Andriette Ahrenkiel, Morten Dougaard, Jesper Rasmussen, eds., *Can Lis: Essays, Interviews, Bagatelles* (Aarhus: Arkitektskolens Forlag, 2015)
- [118] Dimitris Pikionis, ‘A sentimental topography’, in *Dimitris Pikionis Architect 1887–1968: A Sentimental Topography* (London: Architectural Association, 1989): 68–69
- [119] Juhani Pallasmaa, ed., *Alvar Aalto: Villa Mairea 1938–39* (Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Foundation/Villa Mairea Foundation, 1998)
- [120] Wilfried Wang, ed., *O’Neil Ford Monograph 2: St. Petri Church: Klippan 1962–66 Sigurd Lewerentz* (Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, 2009)
- [121] A similar motif is used by Asplund in the patterned tiled floors of the waiting rooms adjacent to gardens of the smaller chapels of Hope, and Faith. See Hakon Ahberg, *Gunnar Asplund Architect 1885–1940* (Stockholm: AB Tidskriften Byggmästaren, 1950): 197
- [122] Yoichi Kawashima, *E. G. Asplund* (Tokyo: TOTO Shuppan, 2005): 58
- [123] Stuart Wrede, *The Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1980): 193
- [124] Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (1C CE), trans. Morris Hicky Morgan, *The Ten Books on Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960): 38–41. Joseph Rykwert (1972), *On Adam’s House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981); Mari Hvattum, ‘The Cult of Origins’, in *Gottfried Semper and the Problem of Historicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- [125] Ritchie Robertson, *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness 1680–1790* (London; Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2020)
- [126] Christian Norberg-Schulz (1979), *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980)
- [127] Joseph Rykwert (1972), *On Adam’s House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (second edition) (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981); Sylvia Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy and the Invention of a Modern Language of Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992)
- [128] Gottfried Semper (1860–63), *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen künsten oder Praktische Ästhetik*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, Michael Robinson, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, or Practical Aesthetics: A Handbook for Technicians* (Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2004)
- [129] William Chambers, *A treatise on civil architecture in which the principles of that art are laid down and illustrated by a great number of plates accurately designed and elegantly engraved by the best hands* (London, 1759)
- [130] Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, op. cit.
- [131] Leon Battista Alberti (1443–1452), trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, Robert Tavernor, *De re Aedificatoria (On the Art of Building in Ten Books)* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1988)
- [132] Claude Perrault, *Les dix livres d’architecture de Vitruve, corrigez et traduits nouvellement en françois avec des notes et des figures.* (Paris: Coignard, 1673)
- [133] Andreas Bekiers, et al, eds., *Friedrich Gilly 1771–1800 und die Privatgesellschaft junger Architekten* (Berlin: Verlag Willmuth Arenhövel, 1987)
- [134] See Mario Zadow, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel* (Berlin: Rembrandt Verlag, 1980)
- [135] Sylvia Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy and the Invention of a Modern Language of Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992); Jean-Nicholas-Louis Durand, *Précis des leçons de l’architecture données à l’École Royale Polytechnique* (1802–1805), trans. David Britt, Steven Lindberg, ed., *Précis of the Lessons on Architecture* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2000)
- [136] John Cava, ed., Kenneth Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995). Kenneth Frampton, expanding on Semper, has associated weaving with writing, and this is of interest to us in the binding of being in the world with language and building, making the case of material culture that much clearer.
- [137] Frampton, op. cit.
- [138] Wolfgang Hermann, *Gottfried Semper: In Search of Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1984)
- [139] Gottfried Semper (1851), trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, Wolfgang Hermann, *Gottfried Semper. The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)
- [140] Frampton, op. cit.: 6
- [141] David Leatherbarrow, *Uncommon Ground: Architecture, Technology, and Topography* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2000)
- [142] Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976)
- [143] Kenneth Frampton, ibid.: 8
- [144] Frampton, ibid.: 3
- [145] Frampton, op. cit.: 14; Anni Albers (1965), *On Weaving* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017)
- [146] Gottfried Semper (1860–63) *Der Stil*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, Michael Robinson, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004); Frampton, op. cit.: 6: “As Semper was to point out in his *Stoffwechseltheorie*, the history of culture manifests occasional transpositions in which the architectonic attributes of one mode are expressed in another for the sake of retaining traditional symbolic value, as in the case of the Greek temple, where stone is cut and laid in such a way as to reinterpret the form of the archetypal timber frame. In this regard we need to note that masonry, when it does not assume the form of a conglomerate as in *pisé* (rammed earth) construction, that is to say when it is founded into coursework, is also a form of weaving, to which all the various traditional masonry bonds bear testimony.”
- [147] Among many books on brickwork, its continuing import for contemporary architects is seen in their own publications. See Stephen Bates, Irina Davidovici, Peter Salter, Jonathan Serginson, *Sergison Bates Architects. Brick-work: Thinking and Making* (Zürich: gta verlag, 2005); Jan Peter Wingender, ed., *Brick. An Exacting Material* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura, 2016)
- [148] Anni Albers (1965), op. cit.
- [149] Frampton, op. cit.: 16

[150] Harry Francis Mallgrave, introduction to Kenneth Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press 1995): x

[151] Klasje Havik, *Urban Literacy: Reading and Writing Architecture* (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2014)

4.5 THE QUESTION OF AUTONOMY

[152] The notion of autonomous architecture has been present since the establishment of architectural theory and history. For this argument, I am addressing a tendency within contemporary practices that in searching for the possibility of architecture, its specific practices and its differences make space for its existence. Sections of this text were derived from my response to a provocation by the architect Anne Holtrop, in the context of a symposium/accreditation procedure concerning the Sandberg Institute's establishment of a programme in Interior Architecture at Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, 21 September 2015. Mark Pimlott, lecture, 'On the interior and the matter of autonomy'. Architects such as Dogma (Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara); OFFICE kgdvs; Valerio Olgiati, and others, are part of this college of practitioners advocating an autonomous and/or non-referential architecture. It should be noted that Pier Vittorio Aureli's advocacy of non-referentiality is situated in the context of his resistance to what he characterises as the indifferent, managerial nature of urbanisation. See Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008); Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2011)

[153] T S Eliot (1919), 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in T S Eliot, *The Egoist*, September; December 1919: 54–55; 72–73

[154] Clement Greenberg (1940), 'Towards a Newer Laocoön', in Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992): 554–559; Clement Greenberg (1960/1965), 'Modernist Painting', in Harrison, Wood, eds., *ibid.*: 754–760

[155] Renate Petzinger, Hanne Dannenberger, *Donald Judd: Raume/Spaces* (Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1993)

[156] Michael Compton, David Sylvester, *Robert Morris* (London: Tate Gallery, 1971)

[157] Benjamin D Buchloh, ed., *Michael Asher: Writings 1973–1987 on Works 1969–1979* (Halifax NS: The Press of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983)

[158] Yve-Alain Bois, Douglas Crimp, Rosalind E Krauss, 'A Conversation with Hans Haacke', in *October: The First Decade 1976–1986* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1988): 175–200

[159] Dan Graham; Brian Wallis, ed., *Dan Graham: Rock My Religion: Writings and Art Projects 1965–1990* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1993); Mark Pimlott, 'Dan Graham and Architecture', in Adachiara Zevi, ed., *Dan Graham Architecture* (London: Camden Arts Centre, 1996): 48–53; Jeff Wall (1985), *Dan Graham's Kammerspiel* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1991)

[160] Lucy R Lippard (1973), *Six Years, The Dematerialization of the Art Object... 1966–1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)

[161] Dan Graham, 'Homes for America: Early 20th-Century Possessable House to the Quasi-Discrete Cell of '66', in *Arts Magazine*, December 1966/January 1967

[162] Rosalind E Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', in *October*, vol. 8, Spring, 1979: 30–44

[163] See chapter 1, 'Territories, interiors, subjectivities'; Mark Pimlott, 'Interiority and the Conditions of Interior', in Paramita Atmodiwirjo, Yandi Andri Yatro, eds., *Interiority*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Depok: Universitas Indonesia, 2018): 5–20; Mark Pimlott, 'Only within', in Mark Pimlott, *Without and Within: Essays on Territory and the Interior* (Rotterdam: Episode publishers, 2007): 271–317

[164] There is a growing body of interior architecture as a specific theoretical and practical discipline. See, Lois Weinthal, ed., *Toward a New Interior: An Anthology of Interior Design Theory* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012); Graeme Brooker, Sally Stone, *Form and Structure in Interior Architecture (Basics Interior Architecture)* (London: Routledge, 2014); Harriet Harriss, Kevin Walker, eds., *Interior Futures*, vol. 2 (Yountville CA: Crucible Press, 2019)

[165] Samuel Beckett (1953), Stephen Connor, ed., *The Unnamable* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010): "That's what I feel, an outside and an inside. And me in the middle. (...) I am in the middle, I am the partition, I have two surfaces and no thickness."

[166] Lois Weinthal, ed., *Toward a New Interior: An Anthology of Interior Design Theory* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012)

[167] Joris-Karl Huysmans (1884), *À Rebours* [Against Nature] (London: Penguin Books, 2003)

[168] '1:1 Sets for Erwin Olaf', and 'Bekleidung', Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, 17 November 2013–30 March 2014; Brendan Cormier, *1:1 Sets for Erwin Olaf by Floris Vos: Bekleidung* (Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut, 2013)

[169] Weinthal, ed., op. cit. See Mark Pimlott, 'Voices Echoing in Empty Rooms', in *Building Design*, 15 June 2012

[170] Mark Pimlott, 'Ornament and picture-making', in Christoph Grafe; Mark Pimlott; Mechthild Stuhlmacher, eds., *Oase 65: Ornament* (Rotterdam: NAi Uitgevers, 2004): 6–27

[171] See Jeff Wall, 'Dan Graham's Kammerspiel' regarding Philip Johnson's Glass House; Jeff Wall (1982), Dan Graham's Kammerspiel (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1991); See Mark Pimlott, 'Picturing Fictions', in *Without and Within: Essays on Territory and the Interior* (Rotterdam: Episode, 2007) regarding Mies van der Rohe's Resor House: 15–57

[172] Gottfried Semper (1860–63) trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, Michael Robinson, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004)

4.6 THE COMPLEXITY OF EXPERIENCE

[173] Marcel Proust (1913–1927) trans. CK Scott Moncrieff, *Remembrance of Things Past*, three volumes (London: Penguin Classics, 2022)

[174] Antonio Damasio, op. cit.

[175] Merleau-Ponty, op. cit. For Merleau-Ponty at the stage of writing *Phenomenology of Perception*, what is paramount is the rediscovery the world through a complete experience of the object, not through conceptualisation or analysis, but through concrete experiences of thinking and bodily senses and feeling.

[176] Martin Heidegger (1927) *Sein und Zeit*, trans. John MacQuarrie, Edward Robinson, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008)

[177] I appreciate discussions regarding Merleau-Ponty and Sigmund Freud with Dr H Van Dullemen-Kuyten.

[178] Christian Norberg-Schulz (1979), *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980)

[179] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004): 526

[180] Richard Wentworth, *Making Do and Getting By* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015); Richard Wentworth, *Berlin 117 Landmarks/Marksteine* (Berlin: DAAD, 1994). In these books of photographs, the streets of the city are shown to be places where things are 'made' through improvisation, working with what is there to create something else—a bench, a shelf—"impure" adjustments whose 'meanings' emerge from the meetings of different intentions, past and present.

[181] Juhani Pallasmaa (b. Finland, 1936) and Peter Zumthor (Switzerland, 1943) are, in my view, the best and the most representative of these architects. Broadly, their works and writings concentrate on experience and its relation to the architectural project. At the same time, my appreciation of their work is tempered by what I view to

be lack of address to the contingent. The work is responsive to site, and to place, but in its constructive idealisations, those situations are reduced to its experiential characteristics. I understand this to be in the pursuit of a heightened or evocative experience of the architectural 'environments' they make, yet my view is that the address of "being in the world" necessitates more deliberate engagement with that world.

[182] Guy Debord, Bauhaus Imaginiste, eds., *Guide psychogéographique de Paris* (Copenhagen: Perlmild & Rosengreen, 1957)

[183] Walter Benjamin (1940), trans. Howard Eiland, Kevin McLaughlin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge MA, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999)

[184] Guy Debord (1967), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995)

[185] Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics, Part I: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered', in *October* 62, Autumn 1992: 3–41; Joachim Schlör (1991), trans. Pierre Gottfried Imhof, Dafydd Rees Roberts, *Nights in the Big City* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998)

[186] Marshall Berman (1982), *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983)

[187] Patrick Keiller, *The View from the Train: Cities and Other Landscapes* (London: Verso, 2013); Patrick Keiller, dir., *Robinson in Space* (UK: BFI, 1997); Patrick Keiller, *Robinson in Space* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999); Patrick Keiller, dir., *Robinson in Ruins* (UK: BFI, 2010)

[188] Barthes, op. cit.

[189] Mark Pimlott, *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (Heijingen: Jap Sam Books, 2016). I argue that the visible identities assumed by public interiors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries suggest engagement with them, some of these relying upon allusion—to ideas such as the garden, the ruin, and the palace—to draw certain forms of recognition from those who use them.

[190] Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1934), *London: The Unique City* (London: Pelican Books, 1960)

[191] Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1959) *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1964); see also Guia Baratelli, 'Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture*. Beyond Modernity by the Medium of Perception without Manifesto', in *Wolkenkuckucksheim: International Journal of Architectural Theory*, vol. 26, no. 42, 2022: 99–121

[192] Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (London: Polity Books, 2010); Neil Cummings, ed., *Reading Things* (London: Chance Books, 1993)

[193] Stephen Shore (1982), *Uncommon Places* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004); Stephen Shore (1972), *American Surfaces* (London: Phaidon, 2005); Stephen Shore, *Modern Instances: The Craft of Photography. A Memoir*. (London: MACK Books, 2022)

[194] T S Eliot (1919), 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *The Egoist*, September; December 1919: 54–55; 72–73

[195] I taught artists in my role as Deputy Course Leader of the Interdisciplinary MA in Art and Architecture at Kent Institute of Art and Design between 1992 and 1994. On the occasion of this tutorial, I was accompanied by the artist Michael Williams.

[196] Roland Barthes (1964), trans. Stephen Heath, 'The Rhetoric of the Image', in *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977): 32–51

[197] Gio Ponti, *699/Superleggera*, production Cassina, 1951–1957

[198] Designed for the Worker's Pavilion, Konstantin Melnikov's design for the Soviet Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair, 1925

[199] Fratelli Levaggi, 'Sedie Chiavarine', <https://www.levaggisedie.it/product-category/sedie-chiavarine>, accessed 2024/05/20

[200] Alberto Bassi, *Design Anonimo in Italia: Oggetti Comuni e Progetto Incognito* (Milano: Mondadori Electa, 2007)

[201] See Francesca Romana Forlini, 'The House I'd Like to Have: Women's Spatial Cultures, Design, and Aesthetic in 20th Century Italy', in *Interiority*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Depok: Universitas Indonesia, 2024)

[202] Lucchino Visconti, dir., *Rocco e suoi Fratelli* (Italy: Titanus Concinor, 1960)

[203] Mark Pimlott, 'A scene', in Mark Pimlott, Tony Fretton, Greg Hilty, *Studiolo* (London: Todd Gallery, 1995); Mark Pimlott, *In Passing: Mark Pimlott Photographs* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2010)

[204] Bryson, op. cit.

[205] See Mark Solms, *The Hidden Spring: A Journey to the Source of Consciousness* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 2021); Antonio Damasio, *Feeling & Knowing: Making Minds Conscious* (New York: Vintage Books, 2021); D W Winnicott (1971), *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge Classics, 2005)

[206] Richard Sennett, 'Interiors and Interiority', lecture at Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2016/04/22. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVPjQhHfKko>, accessed 2024/05/21. See also Georg Simmel (1903), 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in Richard Sennett, ed., *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969): 47–60

[207] Orson Welles, dir., *The Magnificent Ambersons* (USA: KRO, 1942)

[208] Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1934), *London: The Unique City* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1960)

[209] John Summerson (1945), 'The London House and its Builders', in *Georgian London* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2010): 49–68

[210] "I would think that an architect would ask themselves how they might contribute to such a story, the story of making a city, from the scale of a sash window frame to a monumental terrace facing an urban park." Mark Pimlott (2021), 'Without and Within', interview with Dominic Eley, <https://arch-ive.xyz/Mark-Pimlott> (accessed 2024/10/25)

[211] Gavin Stamp, *London 1900. Architectural Design* 5/6 (London: Academy Editions, 1978); Edward Jones, Christopher Woodward, *A Guide to the Architecture of London* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983): 233

[212] T S Eliot, op. cit.

[213] Daniel Burnham, *Plan for Chicago* (Chicago: Commerical Club, 1909): "Plate CXXXI. Chicago. View, looking west, of the proposed Civic Center Plaza and Buildings, showing it as the center of arteries of circulation and the surrounding country. Painted for the Commercial Club by Jules Guerin."

[214] Mark Pimlott, *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2016)

[215] George Baird, 'The Space of Appearance', in Detlef Mertins, ed., *Metropolitan Mutations: The Architecture of Emerging Public Spaces* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company (Canada), 1989): 135–152. Baird opens his essay by quoting Hannah Arendt from *The Human Condition* (1959): "Wherever you go, there will be a "polis": These famous words became not only the watchword of Greek civilization, they expressed the conviction, that action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost any time and anywhere. It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearances explicitly."

[216] Pliny the Elder (77–79 CE), trans. John Bostock, H T Riley, *The Natural History*, Book XXXV. Chapter 5 (London: Taylor & Francis, 1855)

[217] William Shakespeare (1609–11), 'The Winter's Tale', in Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 1997): 2883–2954

[218] Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1846), trans. Ronald Wilks, *The Double* (London: Penguin, 2009)

[219] Joseph Rykwert (1971), 'The Necessity of Artifice', in *The Necessity of Artifice* (London: Academy Editions, 1982): 58–59; originally published in *Casabella* 359–360, December 1971

[220] Mark Pimlott, 'A Conversation', interview with Tony Fretton, in Mark Pimlott, Tony Fretton, Greg Hilty, *Studiolo* (London: Todd Gallery, 1995)

[221] Joseph Rykwert (1972) *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in History* (second edition) (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981); Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976)

[222] Joseph Rykwert, ‘The Necessity of Artifice’, in *The Necessity of Artifice* (London: Academy Editions, 1982): 58–59; originally published in *Casabella* 359–360, December 1971

[223] T S Eliot (1925), ‘The Hollow Men’, in *Collected Poems 1909–1962* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974): 77. “...Between the idea/And the reality/Between the motion/And the act/Falls the shadow...”

[224] Frank Lloyd Wright (1928), ‘In the Cause of Architecture: VII. The Meaning of Materials—Concrete’, in *Architectural Record*, August 1928: 98–104

[225] Beatriz Colomina, Mark Wigley, *Are We Human? Notes on an Archaeology of Design* (Zürich: Lars Müller, 2016)

[226] Oxford English Dictionary

[227] *ibid.*

[228] However, ‘making strange’ is an important quality, which I will return to in chapter 6, ‘The necessity of interpretation’.

[229] Joseph Rykwert, ‘The Necessity of Artifice’

4.7 REPRESENTATION AND ITS PRESENCE

[230] Saussure, *op. cit.*

[231] I refer to the description of Peter Zumthor’s Bruder Klaus Kapelle earlier in this chapter, and its fusion of material presence and image-presence.

[232] Mark Pimlott, ‘Places’, in *In Passing: Mark Pimlott Photographs* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2010): n.p.

[233] Pablo Garcia (2009), ‘The Origin of Painting’, in *Projection Systems*, <http://projectionsystems.wordpress.com/2009/09/06/the-origin-of-painting/>; Pliny the Elder (77–79), trans. John Bostock, H T Riley, *The Natural History*, Book XXXV. An account of paintings and colours. Ch. 5, The Commencement of the Art of Painting (London: Taylor & Francis, 1855); Anne-Lise Coste, *Anne-Lise Coste: Thinking of you (body and soul)*, Nogueras Blanchard Gallery, Madrid 2019/03/30

[234] George Romney, *The Origin of Painting* (c. 1775–1780); David Allan, *The Origin of Painting* (1775); Jean-Baptiste Regnault, *The Origin of Painting* (1785)

[235] *Philipp Otto Runge: Scherenschnitte* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2010)

[236] Mark Pimlott, ‘Michael Craig-Martin’, in Artur Zagula, ed., *Michael Craig-Martin* (Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki, 1994): 57–77; and Michael Craig-Martin, ‘An Oak Tree’: 79

[237] William Shakespeare (1609–11), ‘The Winter’s Tale’, in Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 1997): 2883–2954

[238] The film, *Conte d’hiver*, directed by Éric Rohmer (France: Les films du Losange, 1992), cinematography Luc Pages, recreates this scene within the film, with an atmosphere of naïve theatrical wonder.

[239] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, music; Lorenzo da Ponte, libretto, *Don Giovanni* (KV. 527), first performed in Prague, 29 October 1787.

[240] Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1846), trans. Robert Wilks, *The Double* (London: Penguin, 2009)

[241] Philip Guston, *I Paint What I Want to See* (London: Penguin Books, 2022)

[242] Germano Celant, *Pistoletto* (Milano: Electa Editore, 1976)

[243] Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865); *Alice in the Looking-Glass and What She Found There* (1872)

[244] Narcissus has not gone through what the great majority of babies go through, a ‘mirror-phase’, as described by Jacques Lacan, in which the baby suddenly realises that the other she sees in her reflection is in fact herself. Jacques Lacan, ‘The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience’, Delivered on 17 July 1949 in Zürich at the Sixteenth International Congress of Psychoanalysis’, in trans. Bruce Fink, *Écrits* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 2006): 93–101

[245] Ted Hughes, ‘Narcissus and Echo’, in *Tales from Ovid: 24 passages from the Metamorphoses* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997): 69–78

[246] Jean Cocteau, dir., *Orphée* (France: DisCina, 1950)

[247] Chantal Mouffe (2000), *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2005); Nikolaus Hirsch, Markus Miessen, eds., *The Space*

of Agonism. Markus Miessen in *Conversation with Chantal Mouffe* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012)

[248] This theme is central to Pistoletto’s *Oggetti in meno* (Minus Objects), in which viewers walk amongst and engage with objects that are from a world of representation, which they become part of. Ulrich Loock, *Michelangelo Pistoletto, Oggetti in meno 1965–1966* (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1989)

[249] Lewis Carroll (1872), illustrations, John Tenniel, ‘Alice Stepping Through the Looking-Glass’. Perhaps the mirror, rather than a surface through whose passage one might find a realm of reconstitution and consummation; of reconciliation, remembering and representation—in short, a perfect Paradise—might be instead a universe of total consciousness, of incomprehensible infinitude, or an all-annihilating void.

[250] Jeff Wall, ‘Dan Graham’s Kammerspiel’, in Gary Dufour, ed., *Dan Graham* (Brisbane: The Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1985): 14–40. The artist Jeff Wall, in describing the workings of Philip Johnson’s Glass House, New Haven (1949) at night, in which the owner’s reflection is dispelled by the illumination of figures of the landscape outside, has referred to the ‘vampiric’ gaze, in which the viewer does not appear in the scene through a superimposed reflection, but consumes its figures, and assumes complete power over them.

[251] Martin Hentschel, *Menschenwelt (Interieur)* (Köln: Oktagon Verlag, 1994). The text in this passage derives from the review by Mark Pimlott, ‘Human World’, in *Frieze* 15, March 1994: 57–58. A visit to the Norwich Gallery at the Norfolk Institute of Art and Design, with students of the Interdisciplinary MA in Art and Architecture at the Kent Institute of Art and Design, provided the opportunity for a conversation with the curator. The exhibition ran from 1994/01/13 to 1994/02/19.

[252] Plato, *op. cit.*

[253] At Castello di Rivara, Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Rivara, Piemonte, installed 1994, seen in April 2018.

[254] T S Eliot, *op. cit.*

[255] The exhibition had also been shown at Portikus, Frankfurt; Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster; Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart; Castello di Rivara, 1994.

[256] The text in this passage derives from a review about the exhibition at Museum Haus Lange, Autumn 1993, by Mark Pimlott, ‘Richard Artschwager’, in *Frieze* 14, January 1994: 51–52

[257] Richard Armstrong, *Artschwager, Richard* (New York: Whitney Museum of Modern Art; W W Norton & Co., 1988)

[258] The museum had been designed as one of two houses by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, with the adjacent Haus Esters, 1927–28. See, Kent Kleinman, Leslie Van Duzer, *Mies van der Rohe. The Krefeld Villas* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005)

[259] Jean Baudrillard (1981), trans. Sheila Faria Glaser, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995)

4.8 ON REPRESENTATION IN ARCHITECTURE

[260] Christoph Grafe, Jan De Vylder, eds., *Bravoure Scarcity Beauty* (Antwerp: Vlaams Architectuurinstituut, 2016)

LISTENING

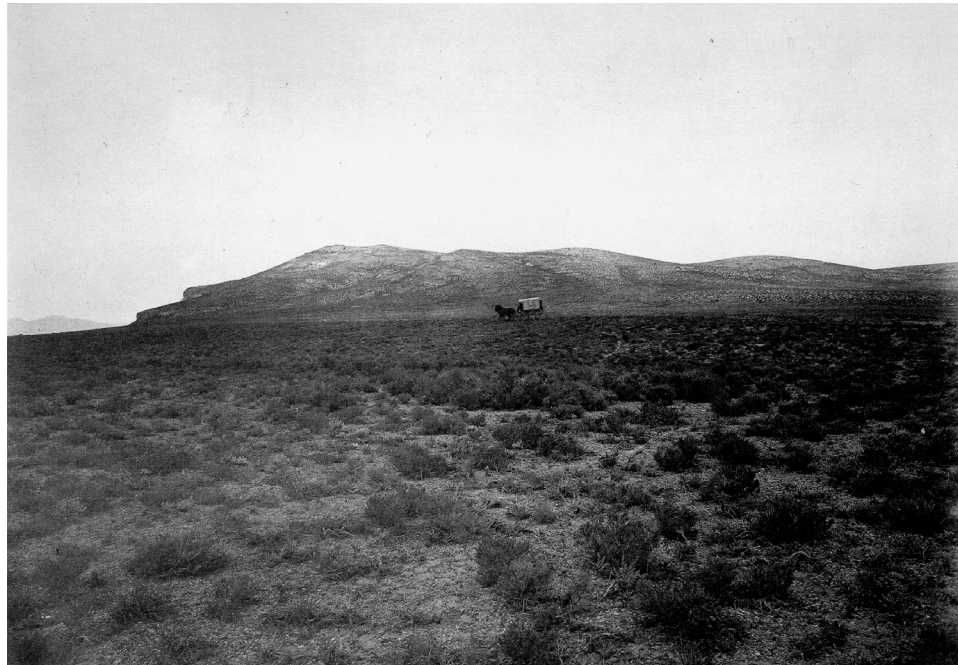
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5 The matter of attention



5.01
Timothy O'Sullivan, *Sage Brush Desert,
Ruby Hills (Nevada), 1868.*

5.1 A desert

→ 5.01

A photograph of a terrain, an empty space, whose subject is perhaps a pair of horses tied to and stationed before a wagon with shelter, in the distance, a relic from another time. Behind them, a hill, or rise, with several shallow peaks, that ends in shallow slopes to a pair of escarpments, to the left of the image. The empty space rises towards the hill and continues beyond it, where, very faintly, can be discerned a distant range of hills, or even mountains. The hill is of indeterminate size, but the horses and wagon suggest that it is not so large, perhaps only marginally higher than the wagon. In any case, one could attempt to measure and estimate its height, assuming the wagon's height is that of a couple of human bodies. But it is not clear, as it is difficult to determine how close they are to the hill. Their distance, as they are quite small in relation to the visual field of the image, suggests that they are not the central subject of the photograph, but figures that help the viewer understand something of the dimension of the space described within the visual field. That dimension is difficult to determine, as the scale of the space is deceptive. It could be relatively intimate, or it could be vast. The space is a scrubland, its low and sparse vegetation distributed evenly, relentlessly, indifferently across the topography, discernible in its nature in the foreground of the image, and apparently identical in nature in the image's receding depth. There is nothing special or particularly interesting about this terrain, or its vegetation. But its topography, its nature, is disturbing, as one cannot quite grasp it. It is strange, and unfamiliar, but also ordinary. And despite it all being visible, it is elusive, and perhaps never knowable, and other.

There is always a context or condition in which images are made, and this image is no exception. It is a view made by Timothy O'Sullivan in 1868, a product of one of the Great Surveys of the American continental interior. The surveys were funded by investors in mining, railways, and the U.S. government and U.S. Army. The photographs, made by several photographers attached to each of the surveys, were scientific tools for the measure and quantification of topography and geological features of territories that were being systematically cleared of indigenous people to allow settlement, resource extraction, and infrastructure to be established. O'Sullivan's photographic work, unlike those of his contemporaries working for the various surveys, acknowledged the otherness of the spaces he encountered, its landscapes, and its remaining inhabitants, as well as the spoliation of that landscape concomitant with European possession. The manner of O'Sullivan differed, profoundly, from his contemporaries. The most renowned of them, Carleton Watkins, had made views of Yosemite in California on 'mammoth' plates that showed it as being a second Eden, one in the American space.¹ The images, which were exhibited widely in the East of the United States served to reinforce the notion that the American project of territorialisation, of conquest of the West, was justified. The photographs served the purposes of ideologies and demagogues championing the American expansion of the frontier as one of holy purpose, and that it was the Manifest Destiny of white European Americans to colonise the entire continental interior.² Watkins's photographs were projections over that space, the views acting as machines for its possession. This

was a common characteristic of the work of other photographers involved in the Surveys, except for the work of O'Sullivan, who recognised the difference of the subjects of his views, whether landscapes, or indigenous groups. There was no exoticism, no projection, but rather, acceptance, and allowance for the presence, identity, and integrity of that and those he met with his camera. This was achieved through an intense order of attention to those subjects.

What does this have to do with architecture? Architecture is a medium, a framework for inducing relations between people, who are not only shaped by it, but agents within it. Painting and other forms of picture-making—with their engagement and questioning of the positioning of the viewer—provide examples that are pertinent to architecture and its constructs. In this chapter, an argument is made for attention to the other, and to the figures and artefacts of the constructed environment. Topographic and 'objective' photography are used as models for that order of attention and empathy required of the architect towards people and environments which are necessary for the beginnings of the architectural project. In moving towards this material, the problem of the image is again referred to, as are devices used by artists to reclaim the image from its uses as a projective device into one in which the subject appears on their own terms. One's sensitivity to this quality and embrace of what it suggests is central to the assumption of an attitude that eschews the impulse of projection in favour of a position characterised by empathy. Accordingly, this chapter is at once concerned with attitudes towards the other,³ and empathy with that or who is outside oneself. It is, furthermore, a plea for attention as a beginning, and as a basis for approaching the architectural project. To develop this, I will once more address looking and ways of seeing, using painting and photography as means of illustrating the necessity of attention. This will involve the *act of looking* as the basis of approaching a subject, and a means towards empathy with the subject. Finally, I propose attention as a foundation for making, and as a key for discerning, reading and interpreting conditions and contexts as a basis for practice.

5.2 Frameworks for seeing. Conventions, power relations, critique

When one is asked to look at something, how does one look? What thoughts enter the act of looking, what judgements precede looking, or invade the apparently transparent process of looking? Is it not a simple act? What or who is being looked at, and who is looking? How are they looking? Looking is learned; the process of looking, which we think of as *seeing*, is not transparent. There are *ways of seeing*, which undermine attention, and obscure the object of attention, an artefact, or an environment, or the other. These ways of seeing are products of cultural training. Does a man look differently than a woman? Are there different ways of looking, different ways of seeing pertaining to one or the other? A photograph by Elliott Erwitt shows two paintings by Francisco Goya of reclining women—'*maja*'—hanging side by side in a museum. One *maja* is clothed, the other naked, holding precisely the same pose; the second painting presents itself as a revelation of the clothed subject of the first

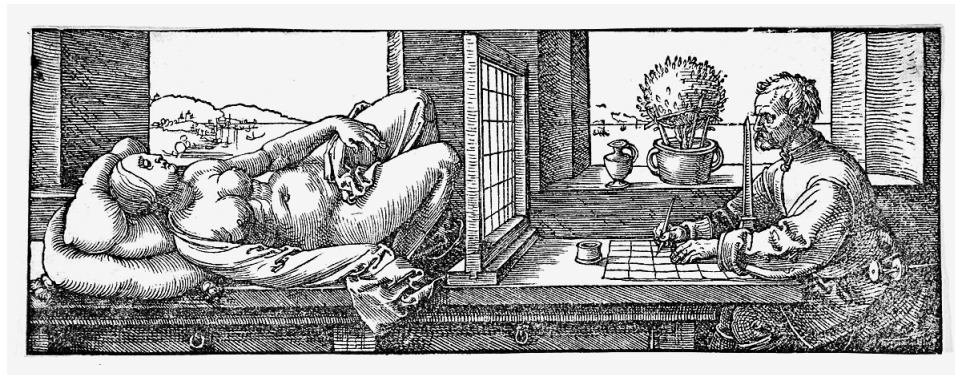


painting, as in a peep show. In Erwitt's photograph, the clothed *maja* is looked at by a solitary woman, while the naked *maja* is ogled by a small crowd of men. The paintings are addressed to viewers who project their desire on a subject that is to be possessed. The photograph's division of female and male viewers divided along desire lines is meant to be humorous, but it reveals an aspect of seeing whose central characteristic is opposite to attention, namely, that of possession.

What does one expect to find or understand when one looks at the object of one's attention? What does one expect to derive from that object of attention, through the act of looking? Is that object an object of desire? In that case, does looking satisfy impulses towards possession or gratification, in which one's gaze upon that object might be transformed into an act of its possession of that object? Or does the act of looking constitute a movement towards that object—or other—to meet it? It is this last possibility that I wish to explore and advocate for, which requires dealing with looking's frequent, if not habitual attachment, to projection and possession.

5.2.1 Some ways of looking

To help resolve these questions, I will consider representational painting of the female figure, echoing the argument of John Berger, made in his television series and book *Ways of Seeing* (1972).⁴ The series and the book that accompanied it were devised, in part, as a riposte to a view set out by the art historian Sir Kenneth Clark in his own popular television series about art, music and architecture commissioned by David Attenborough at the BBC, *Civilisation* (1966–1969), and its accompanying book.⁵ According to Clark, a painting of a naked woman was that of a *nude*: the nude being an artistic convention of depiction of the human body. Berger was bothered



by the word and what it concealed; he was critical of the convention associated with the nude, holding that it was a construct. He wished to re-establish the fact that the nude was, in truth, a naked woman, whose visibility was staged, not as a being, but as an object; to be gazed upon as an object of desire in a setting staged by the painter and the painter's patron through painting. Ostensibly, the painting is made for the male gaze—commissions for such paintings presumed a male client and male viewers—reviving a scene in which a man gazes at a woman. It is made for the pleasure of the viewer—the male viewer—who stands before the completed and displayed painting in the place of the painter. The woman is 'denuded', unclothed; her own expression directed either at the viewer—consistent with the viewer's fantasy—or herself, either caught in her own reflection, a narcissistic look, or inward and apparently oblivious to the viewer, reinforcing her status as object for the male who spies upon her, doubling his desire, and enabling his exclusive possession, as there is no look back at him that might shame him.⁶

The woman, present as the other or the exotic subject, becomes possessed by the viewer, or becomes the viewer's possession through the agency of his gaze. The gaze promises the fulfilment of desire; or rather, it is the substitute for the fulfilment of desire. This is a power relation in which the male viewer both holds power over the subject and bears no responsibility for that power. An engraving by Albrecht Dürer of a draughtsman and reclining (semi-naked) model demonstrates how such an image is generic—already a convention by the time this engraving was made—whose depiction is treated as a problem that is possible to be resolved through objective, scientific means. With the aid of a gridded screen, and a fixed viewpoint aligned with the painter's—and viewer's eye, an image could be made and then enlarged to any size. The voyeuristic character of the construction is quite evident yet masked by its scientific character.

The subject of Dürer's engraving is rendered an object, whose representation is a matter of the draughtsman's control, which finds itself reiterated in the viewer's control. This is a little exercise in power relations. The draughtsman and the viewer are in charge; the subject becomes an object of possession, of control. In the case of



the convention of the nude, the prevailing social and cultural convention of male dominance rendered this power relation natural and transparent. Yet it remains neither natural nor transparent, and this is what must be seen, so one can see.

As described in chapter 4, 'The complexity of experience', the painter Diego Velázquez was well aware of how power relations were inscribed in the gaze: when it came to the painting of royalty—holders of power over Velázquez in his lifetime—he chose to stage the ambiguity of the relation between the painter and his patron by presenting this as a kind of visual conundrum, in his painting *Las Meninas*.

We see a scene, set up for a painting, in which the painter, depicted, looks out of the picture. The painter looks past his canvas, the back of which is also depicted and presented to viewer as a kind of screen obscuring the painter's work; beside him are the ostensible subjects of the painting—the princesses and their attendants—the viewer is looking at, but who the painter apparently ignores, unless he is depicting a reflection in a mirror. Behind them, in the deep space of the painting, the silhouette of a figure entering the illuminated door to the depicted spaces, and a dim reflection



in what appears to be another mirror on the wall of the depicted room, holding the image of two figures, a man and a woman, partly framed by drapery. The depicted painter and all the subjects—even the figures in the mirror— appear to look out from the threshold of the picture plane, out from the painting that we are looking at, towards the viewer, or, towards some other, perhaps true subject of the painter's gaze, the figures in the painter's eye and conscience, the figures who may indeed control the picture, the reflected in the mirror at the back of the depicted scene. The painter appears to be entirely in control of this scene, yet what controls the picture resides elsewhere, in the shadows or beyond the picture. The viewer looks at a set of relations, in which power is at once implicit, explicit, and difficult to locate.

The convention of painting of naked women as *nudes* is how the projective gaze consistently justified its existence and illustrates how the mechanism of projection works. For gazing at an unknown naked woman is clearly prohibited unless it is either legitimated by true relations among consenting intimates, or by some convention: in this instance, that convention that has said that looking at naked women is all right if it is a painting made for the pleasure or gratification of the viewer, who, in this case is always presumed to be male; a convention, furthermore, forced upon female subjects and female viewers.

The genre of the nude, inevitably tied to the artist's gaze, continued to be reiterated in painting until at least the fevered dreams of Pablo Picasso;⁷ it has continued to linger in the imagery of popular culture, particularly in advertising; in other arenas, the objectification of women continues unabated. The point Berger made about the construction of the ways of seeing was illustrated through the example of the sexualisation of the gaze. A contemporary image used by Berger, from a time not so distant from the present serves as a reminder that conventions assume similar



Say when. *HAIG*
DON'T BE VAGUE

forms across historical periods and media. This particular form or convention of imagery entrenched in popular culture—involving male projection, gazing, fantasy of sexual gratification—was regularly embraced by advertising agencies designing product campaigns, in which a variety of messages could be understood by a public that was inculcated in ways of seeing in which the male gaze was the dominant and only important gaze to be served, and it was women who were serving. The nature of that service regularly implied sexual consent or a knowing contract of lasciviousness. This kind of construction has been very pervasive in the making of advertising imagery, even when there is apparently no need to invoke male desire. How this kind of imagery works is akin to the political 'dog-whistle': it communicates to those who might know what it means, while suggesting that it is in fact innocent, and that it does not mean anything like that at all. Haig would have said that they were just selling whisky.

5.05 ←

→ 5.06

The longevity and survival of this kind of imagery is dependent on an eye that has been trained to be rendered incapable of seeing critically. That eye had been trained across different cultures of the image, making the bridge from high culture—painting—to low culture—the advertisement—easy to traverse. The former legitimated the latter, while the former retained its aura and resistance to critique. The overturning of such regimes of imagery, however, involves both discernment and understanding of their construction and purposes. Berger asked how such imagery might be deconstructed in *Ways of Seeing*, as a challenge to image makers and image viewers alike. What was implicit in Berger's question—that one had to be vigilant regarding appearances in the public world—was pursued in the 1970s by academics and artists, bolstered by critical theory influenced by Marxism and Feminism.⁸ This same vigilance is relevant for architects, both with regard to the appearances encountered in the constructed environment and how they are read, interpreted, understood and engaged with; and those appearances that the architect brings into being through acts of building.

Beyond Berger's dissection of the lasting currency of projective regimes of seeing, of which the nude was emblematic, critical approaches in using and usurping these regimes became an abiding theme in contemporary art, with the contribution of both male and female voices, particularly with artists associated with the Metro Pictures gallery in New York in the early 1980s.⁹ In chapter 4, 'The complexity of experience', I referred to Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* (1977–1980), which placed the female protagonist—Sherman herself, in 'disguise'—in the centre of scenes, the entirety of which were drawn from tropes of representation of women in the city in film, in which women were vulnerable, and watched. These images, which situated women in danger of the gaze were themselves reactions to the power that women assumed within the scenes of *film noir*, a genre that focused on the psychology of the subject, especially the anxiety of the emasculated post-war male, in the face of the empowered—and therefore, threatening—female.¹⁰ These 'self-portrait' photographs, which Sherman has continued to make for over thirty years with ever more radical variation, give pause to the act of looking, as her subjects in the *Untitled Film Stills* were clearly constructs, framed in generic, artificial settings familiarised through film, television and advertising; subjects that were the kinds of figures that the viewer was obliged to recognise as inscribed within recognisable genres of character, genres of attire, and genres of situations. The viewer was confronted with consciousness of a dominant regime of seeing that had been made for the male eye's gratification, and for the female eye, in letting her know that the female protagonist's fate was always subject to external, and male, control.¹¹ In these photographs, Sherman took the controls of the devices through which the genre images were constructed to expose the nature of the regime of seeing that subjugated female protagonists.

Only a few years earlier, there were other artists who wanted to challenge the possessive, irresponsible gaze. This involved making a different kind of picture, one that would provoke a different relation between the viewer, the picture, and the picture's ostensible subject. The artist Michelangelo Pistoletto, also discussed in chapter 4, made 'paintings' that implicated the viewer, rendering him/her an active agent in the constitution of meaning (reminiscent of the manner of Velasquez's Las



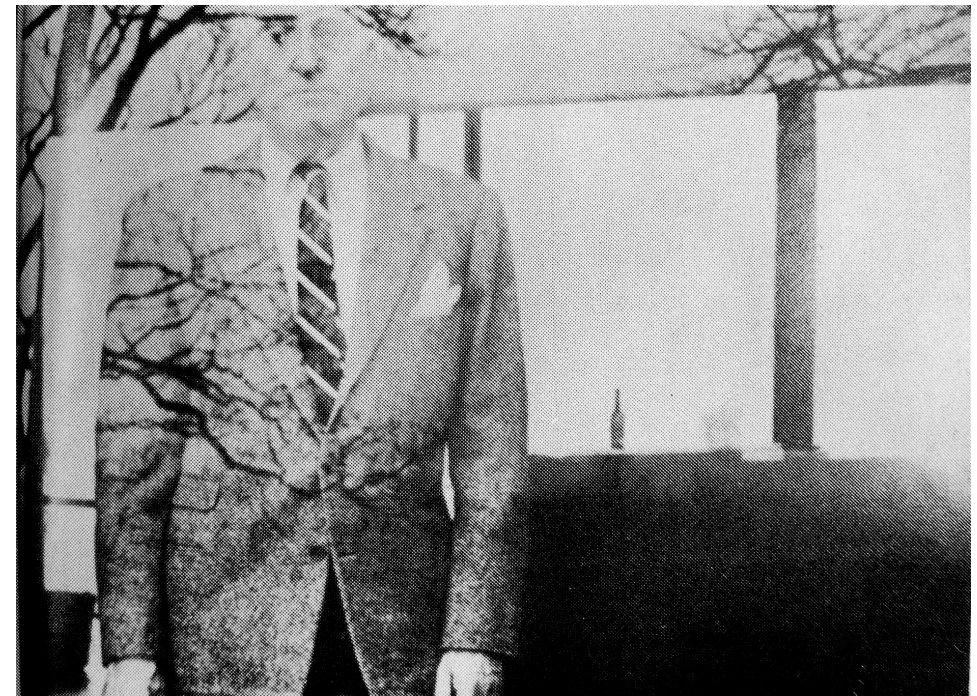
Meninas, adjusted to the everyday). The reflective surfaces of his early paintings were intended to open the relation between the work of art and the viewer as a relation between others, where the viewer of the work of art becomes involved as both as protagonist: the viewing subject and the viewed subject.¹²

Pistoletto, in his *Mirror Paintings*, and in the work *The Etruscan* (1976), in which a statue, its right arm extended, its fingers almost touching its reflection in a full height mirror, posited that the subject might exist in their own world, and as an *other* in a world that mirrors their own; and that at the same time, the viewer is pictured, implicated and a part of that world; and that these worlds and these subjects are contiguous and continuous. On the mirrored surface, the two worlds, actual and mirrored—represented—meet and are rendered continuous. This is significant: the reflected and pictured other must both be approached *as* other, both legitimate, and in the same way as any other, as that other may be the self. The way of looking, the nature of the gaze, the matter of attention, all must be approached carefully. The following questions ensue and unfold: What or who is one looking at? How is one looking? In what context is my looking situated? The uncertainty stirred by the mirror paintings of Pistoletto provides yet another model for a way of looking, one in which the viewer is obliged to place themselves in the position of the other, imagining their situation, and looking out of themselves, at themselves looking, without becoming so captivated with their reflected other that they project their narcissistic desire upon them.

5.2.2 Architecture and the mirror

To extend this, I wish to turn to the artist Dan Graham, whose work consistently challenged the notion of transparency embedded in architectural culture, and the power relations inscribed therein.¹³ Imbalances of power, in his view, were extended, unchallenged, from the architecture of Baroque palaces and their relations to their landscapes, to the design of corporate office buildings, whose transparency had been ostensibly tied to notions of visibility equated with universal agency. Graham understood that this quality attached to transparency was false, and that in fact, the architecture of the glass skyscraper—a modernist paradigm—reinforced power structures. For Graham, the architecture of the glass building, a paradigm of both modernism and metropolitan architecture, was a power *machine*, articulated in its glass wall, and the relations that unfolded from it outward to the city. Within such a machine, the executive of a corporation typically looks out of the window of its glass curtain-walled headquarters, surveying and metaphorically possessing all he sees. This is implicitly a male gaze. The executive does not expect his gaze to be returned, and certainly not by his own reflection. In daylight, the executive cannot see his reflection in the looking glass. There is nothing to check his gaze. In the analysis of Graham's work by the artist Jeff Wall, the executive is a vampire: the vampiric gaze consumes all to sustain the status of the privileged viewer, projecting their power into the world.

As both manifest critique and demonstrations of intersubjectivity,¹⁴ Graham devised a series of installations, and later, glass pavilions, through which viewers could see themselves seeing but also could see themselves being seen.¹⁵



These works described the power relations immanent in architecture by altering the materials through which they functioned, frustrating their conventions by making rooms and pavilions that used glass of different reflective characteristics, making the acts of seeing out, and through, and towards 'the view' more complex, implicating the viewer in these acts or processes by making the viewer conscious of those processes and their part in them. The works acknowledged the two-way nature of relations that were implicit in glass architecture; that there was not one viewer looking out on anonymous others whose only role was to be subjugated to their gaze, but several or many viewers, all of whom are involved in acts of seeing and being seen. In the pavilions, viewers looked through glass sheets whose transparency was modified by varied degrees of mirroring, whose reflectivity was relative and affected by the fluctuating intensities of daylight. The viewer became conscious of themselves looking, either at their reflections, or perhaps being seen by another on the other side of the glass, or through to another, who may be aware of being seen, or not. The heightened consciousness of many subjects at once, looking at others and themselves while others looking at them and themselves produced a heightened awareness of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, while the power relations, promised by the language of the pavilions, that of the glass skyscraper, were undone.

In his essay *Dan Graham's Kammerenspiel* (1982), the artist Jeff Wall described the mechanics of the gaze as articulated through architecture using Philip Johnson's Glass House, and relating it to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Haus Tugendhat

(1936).¹⁶ The glass walls of Haus Tugendhat's salon offered a clear view over its landscape and the city of Brno during the day; but at night, the illumination of the interior transformed these same walls into mirrored surfaces and the landscape disappeared from view.¹⁷ In the day, the owner of this glass pavilion could not see their reflection in the looking glass; their gaze was undisturbed and all-encompassing. Yet at night they were confronted with their own reflection, in every surface. Lily Reich, a figure central to the defining the character of Mies's interiors, and responsible for those of Haus Tugendhat in particular¹⁸ designed silk curtains to be drawn over the windows, not to shade the interior from sunlight, but, as Jeff Wall argued, to protect the interior's occupants from their reflections in the glass surfaces of the rooms at night. In the case of Philip Johnson's Glass House, these same kinds of reflections were eliminated by the careful distribution of low-level lighting—largely, candlelight—within the house, and brilliant nocturnal illumination of the landscape without, all around. Whether it was day or night, Johnson could not see his reflection in the 'looking' glass; his gaze was projected outward, unperturbed. Wall thus characterises Johnson's gaze as vampiric, consuming all so to sustain himself, while never confronting his own reflection. This characteristic allowed, in Wall's view, the power relations implicit in the design of his house to unfold uncritically, transparently, reinforcing the aura of possession of the extensive rural property that he surveyed and owned.¹⁹

5.2.3 Different ways of looking

In the analyses of John Berger and Jeff Wall, and in the art of Cindy Sherman, Michelangelo Pistoletto, and Dan Graham, the act of looking is treated as being neither transparent nor natural; it is substantial, artificial, and demonstrably problematic: conventions of seeing and the embodiment and support of these conventions and uneven relations of power in mass media are, through their work, open to critical examination. Their words and works establish that looking is by necessity a critical process that involves reading, interpreting, and deconstructing what is before one's eyes. Critical looking is conscious; 'just' seeing—as one thinks one does—can be characterised as unconscious, incurious or conventionalised to the point of transparency.

It is not just paintings or architecture that are affected by conventions of seeing; *places* are similarly vulnerable to those attitudes that are brought to them. In relation to paintings and the glass pavilion, I have referred to the gaze, which by its nature is possessive: this is a projection of desire, of control, of power over the subject.²⁰ The assumed result of that projection is the possession of the subject. The projective gaze is a possessive gaze, the projective impulse, a possessive impulse. Projection over territories and their people transforms the lands of those people into possessions of the projective force. A vivid example of this is the case of the American West, which was cast as a domain that could be possessed by an abstract, pragmatic projection, and thus transformed into an interior.²¹

The projective act of Thomas Jefferson's Land Ordinance (1785), described in the first chapter, 'Territories, interiors, subjectivities', took possession of all the territory of the continental interior of a projected United States of America that could

be imagined, an idea that did not require actual sight of these lands to incorporate them. The Land Ordinance was effectively a plan for an advance territorial survey, expropriation, and division. Consistent with its aims were the four Great Surveys of the continental interior undertaken in the 1860s, which used topographic photography as a device to reinforce and promote the claim of its territories, literally looking over and surveying the lands that had already been declared prospective possessions, with the U.S. Army as enforcer. The claimed territory was rendered an interior from the viewpoint of the projective force, the consequence of whose realisation was the elimination—the genocide—of the indigenous other. I refer to this example once more because it illustrates a consequence of the projective model of seeing that stands at the opposite pole to an attitude of looking, and the attention to the object, the subject, and the other that comes with it.²²

How does one look, if looking is so often confused with seeing, or burdened with problematic, commonplace projective conventions? In looking, if truly unburdened by projection, the other is permitted to *be* the other, and the condition of the other is necessarily accepted and respected. Since the other *is* other, the absorption or consumption of the other that the projective gaze habitually promises cannot be achieved. Looking—looking carefully—is difficult, complex, slow, and demands humility. It demands a leaving of the self, even only partially, and the surrendering of inculcated habits, the understanding of the place of convention, and a breaking down of the customary boundaries of the self, as one moves towards the other. This is necessary, if the subject is to appear, as the appearance of the subject is that subject's presentation of themselves to the world.²³ Looking is not a system of noting surfaces, but an intimate process of attention, from which empathy for the subject, for the other, may follow.

The subject may be animate or inanimate. In the case of environments, the architect must understand its features, its elements, its inhabitants and what is inscribed within that environment, all so that it is possible to stand before it, to address it. This requires care, and an order of attention to circumstances that are visible and invisible. Looking, in its fullest sense, therefore, is very important to architects. And this looking is not passive observation, but a committed engagement with the subject of one's attention.

5.3 Topographic photography in the nineteenth century

It seems difficult to make attention visible or manifest, but a certain type of photography, particularly as it emerged in the nineteenth century, did precisely this. One can see what it looked like, but one must also come to understand the demands made upon the photographer when the process of photography was more deliberate and exacting than it is to one's perception now.²⁴

The topographical photograph is a genre and a practice whose methods can serve as a model for a practice of attention. It demands a specific attitude on the part of the photographer. The topographic photograph is the oldest genre of photography, embodying methods that are at once objective and subjective, and it

is this aspect of its central characteristic—the subjective making of an objective *view*—that is marked by an intense relation between the photographer and the subject of the photograph. The relation between the photographer and the subject creates a space that is manifested in the photographic artefact. The photograph is an object. It is also a picture, a space that one imagines one can either recall or occupy. The topographic photographer is open to the scene in front of the camera and must allow it to be what it is. The photographer may recognise that the scenes in front of the camera—an elaboration of lens, box and emulsified light-sensitive plate or film—are either utterly unknown, or affected by human interference, and so, partly known.

In the case of scenes that are occupied and altered by people, the facts of these scenes are made of the agreements of language and their accumulation (more than the accumulation of mere fact), which embody or bear the imprint of ideas about those people and about relations between them, relations to others and to the world. This kind of photographic practice necessitates an order of acceptance on the part of the photographer; of being oneself and abandoning oneself, simultaneously; and allowing the boundary between oneself and the subject—which retains its status as other—to be weakened, ideally creating an empathy between the photographer and the subject. This characteristic makes it relevant as a model for other practices, and notably, for architecture.

In the case of topographic photography, the approach or movement between self and other occurs in a space or zone between the self and the other—in this case, the landscape itself—that is rendered visible in the photograph. Heidegger's turn of phrase regarding a space between the self and the other as a 'clearing' is useful.²⁵ The clearing is a charged space where the boundaries between self and other might dissolve to enable a meeting between the two. This charged space is made evident in both the moment of the making of the photograph and the object—the photograph—that follows, through those acts of attention central to its making.

As described earlier, topographical photography was also used as a tool of the projective impulse, in the project of territorialisation, in the employ of power. In the case of the American West and its 'frontier', the Great Surveys of the 1860s both pre- and post-settlement by 'pioneers', were frequently used to 'sell' fragments of the infinite space of the continental interior—as though it had been abandoned or already conquered—to investors, speculators and potential settlers from the east coast. But the work of the various photographers involved in the surveys were uneven, and often, photographs lacked the quality of that space between self and subject that were characteristic of the work of Timothy O'Sullivan. These other photographs had qualities more in common with European views made of the Middle and Far East from the same period, which pictured their subjects, distant from the West, as exotic—and as subjects of former, current and prospective colonisation—and projections of desire for the other. The photographers were not implicated in these views, but distant, like tourists, framing scenes which one might best describe as analogous to those painterly compositions of the promised land from which they derived. In many cases, these photographs of the American West bore closer relations to American painting from the Hudson Valley School than encounters with

unknown—other—landscapes.²⁶ These photographs, consistent with the object of the surveys that they served, were about the claiming of territory with a camera.²⁷ The camera would then be accompanied by machines of transport and war, claiming the land laid out by the camera's projective acts. In the United States, the land was a wild subject to be claimed, possessed, conquered, first by photographs, and then by armies, railway companies, miners, and pioneer settlers. The rhetoric surrounding this referred to the process of colonisation as a conquest of a woman.²⁸ You will note how close this is to the consumption of images of women described by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*.

The nineteenth-century topographical photograph, like the nineteenth-century portrait photograph, provides a method towards attention to places, artefacts, and others that is important for architects. The photographs of Timothy O'Sullivan raised attention to acute level, demonstrating an empathy towards the landscape and its original inhabitants that allowed these subjects to appear as they were. That, for a photographer with projection over the scene with the object of its possession in mind, would be difficult. O'Sullivan's photographs are notable for their apparent resistance to this impulse, quite possibly because of his experience of the Civil War, and its waste.²⁹ They are notable for their sense of humility in the face of something beyond the capacities of human intervention, control or possession, the very objective of Jefferson's system; for acknowledging the otherness of that environment and its original inhabitants; for their sense of the otherness of the world; for their sense of others, and their sense of time, both immediate and great. One photograph depicts the memento of a survey made by Spanish colonisers in 1526, 338 years before the making of the photograph. Another depicts a stone bearing the marks of sand blown across it over millennia.³⁰

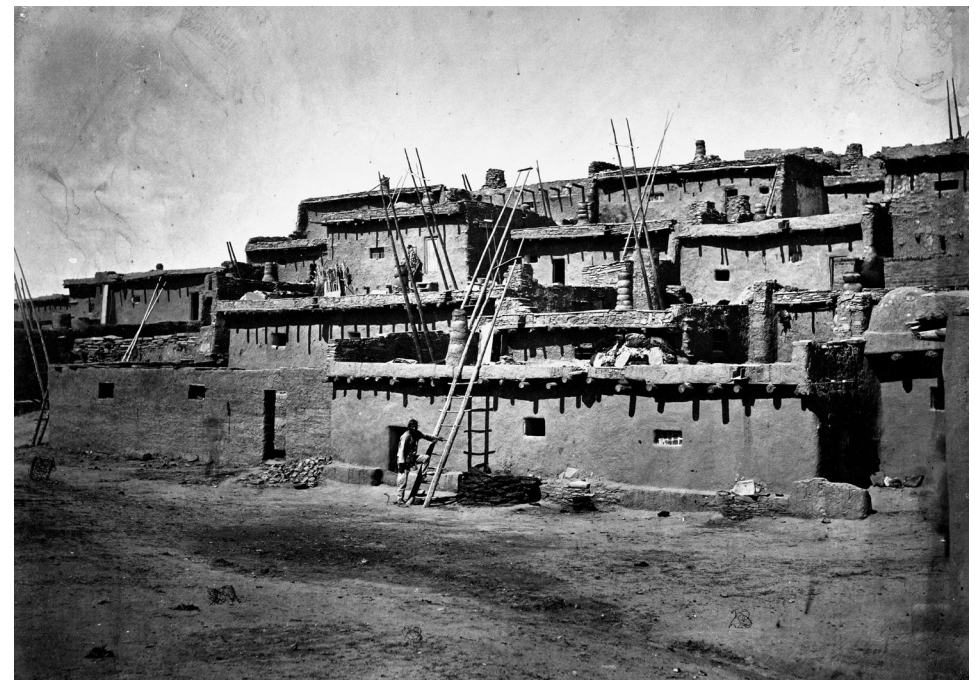
The topographic photograph accepts the world as an artefact, one imagined and made by others: by living organisms, by the workings of the earth, by people and their ideas. If one accepts the world as such, then the work of photography becomes a matter of varying forms and registers of attention. Following this, the topographic photograph should appear to maintain the notion of distance, or objectivity. The origins of the photograph, the making of an image of a stationary subject by using light-sensitive chemicals on a prepared plate, and fixing the image that resulted, was a registration of the facts of that object under light. But the object to be registered or recorded had to be chosen, and in its selection and framing, it was set apart from the rest of the world, thus becoming a subject, and the objective view became immediately the subjective view of the photographer, common to all photography. The photographer was, in the early years of the medium, a wealthy amateur—there was no such thing as a photographer *per se*—who experimented with both techniques and subject matter. In making images, impressions, or views, the new photographer was both an empiricist and a picture-maker, and this latter aspect depended in part on the knowledge of the traditions of pictures, contained entirely within painting. This is important to note before looking at photography of this kind. The combination of 'objective' objectives, of subjects, subjective views and subjectivity, is central to what is both problematic and compelling about looking at and making photographs of the world.

The photographer must come to understand that the subject has its own ‘being’, or its own nature, and that in making a photograph, one is acknowledging and approaching that being, which stands as other to oneself and one’s photographic device. The view-camera (related to camera obscura) was a dark ‘room’ in which the viewed subject, through the glass lens and the chamber, appears, inverted, on a matte glass screen. The photographer meets this projected and inverted image of the subject in the dark, under the cover of a cloth, placing the image of the subject (at a remove from the subject) in a hidden, even intimate relationship. This can create a complex or difficult encounter, especially with a living subject.

5.3.1 Timothy O’Sullivan

This possible difficulty would seem to have been in the mind of the Timothy O’Sullivan, as he made views for several of the Great Surveys of the American West in the late 1860s and early 1870s. These were pursued by a variety of sponsors: railway companies, the military, mining interests, with large budgets provided by investors on the east coast and much further afield.³¹ The photographs commissioned therein were to be at once scientific documents and representations in the service of publicity, whose aim was to entice deeper financial investment to build railways, build settlements along the railways, and open mining interests. A photographer on these Surveys found themselves in the position of functionary, supporting a project of colonisation and extraction. Most of the photographers, most renowned among them Carleton Watkins, made views on large glass plates, in Watkins’s case, on ‘mammoth plates’, that characterised the vast space as something to be possessed. The propaganda value of the photographs, notably Watkins’s views of ‘discovered’ Yosemite, was that through the agency of the image, that space became settlers’ and investors’ property, the realisation of a projected idea.³²

O’Sullivan’s photographs lacked the plenitude of his colleagues’ pictures. They did not seem to be filled with promise. They were difficult, apparently accepting the specificity of their subject: a landscape, a world of others. In one view, O’Sullivan’s mobile laboratory and the pair of horses that drive it are set against an almost featureless sand dune in the Ruby Desert in Nevada Territory, giving some indication of scale, human presence, and a notion of the implausibility of occupation, from the perspective of the settler. The setting of the view is enigmatic, unknown, unknowable. It is alien and might as well be the surface of the moon.³³ There was an aspect of the photographs made by O’Sullivan connected with his approach to the subject, which maintained its specific identity, its otherness. In part, this is due to that lack of fullness; it is difficult to identify the subject within the view; rather, the subject seems to exist all over the view, pervading the image that he makes. He called his photographs views, conforming both to the convention used by photographers such as Carleton Watkins, and the particular status of topographic photography, which promised to offer viewers a distanced experience of a ‘place’ that was otherwise impossible to see.³⁴ In the case of O’Sullivan, his use of the term ‘view’ also suggests the vulnerable, almost helpless position of the photographer faced with the vastness of space. Once one has looked past the objects that O’Sullivan has placed to establish scale, or measure—essential information in the context of the survey—there is only



5.09
Timothy O’Sullivan, *Desert Sand Hills near Sink of Carson, Nevada*, c 1867.

5.10
Timothy O’Sullivan, *Section of South Side of Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico*, seasons of 1871, 1872, 1873.



5.11
Roger Fenton, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, Crimea, 1855.

5.12
Timothy O'Sullivan, *Field where General Reynolds Fell*, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1863.



everything. In attending to this everything, there is no way of containing it; it is only limited through the framing of the image. There is little sense of depth; rather, there is the sense of an infinitude, or a great expanse that cannot possibly be contained or controlled. In making photographs the way he did, he brought qualities to their surfaces beyond the quantifications of scientific documentation consistent with his apparent awe affected by the infinitude of his subjects.

In his images of landscapes, the indigenous other and their settlements, there is a humility, through which, in affording the subject its expression—its being—O'Sullivan releases control over the subject. He only determines the acts that pertain to the framing and making of the image. I characterise this attitude as empathy.³⁵ His is not a romantic pose, but it is one quite unlike the pathos in the work of photographers such as Roger Fenton, who travelled the world to capture exotic scenes or theatres of war to illustrate its tragedies in painterly compositions, in which the subjects were forced into pre-existing pictorial templates.³⁶ Some indication of O'Sullivan's 'difference' is given by contrasting Fenton's staged beauty of the aftermath of war with the photographs made by O'Sullivan of the battlefields of the American Civil War, which achieve absolute specificity in the bloated bodies of real soldiers, real people.

O'Sullivan photographed the territories in which he was immersed, as though surrendering to their authority.³⁷ He acknowledged the primacy of time, etched into the surfaces and geological formations he encountered, and in the conditions of societies and settlements established long before the arrival of Europeans.

5.13
Timothy O'Sullivan, *Rock Carved by Drifting Sand*, Below Fortification Rock, Arizona, 1871.



5.14
Louis Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple*,
Paris, 1838.

5.3.2 Paris and Charles Marville

In the first chapter, ‘Territories, interiors, subjectivities’, I wrote of the effects of the construction of a metropolis—Paris—as a conscious project, one which had direct effects on its citizens. Through the period of and following the recasting of the city’s form and administration beginning in 1850, an individual’s experience would be profoundly affected by the city’s demands embodied in those profound physical and bureaucratic alterations towards their predictable behaviour and performance. Outwardly, this would be reflected in conformity, both in the use of the city and in the presentation of the self in relation to the city and others.³⁸ Like the city’s outward manifestations, people assumed behaviour and appearances that aligned with the objectives of Paris’s ‘makers’—Louis Napoléon III, Georges-Eugène Haussmann—and were turned inwards to their own subjective imaginations. There would be, therefore, a constant tension between the condition of interior as effected by the city and interiority as cultivated within the individual.³⁹

The condition of interior is consistent with a demand for the usefulness of the subject, in which each individual is obliged to perform, or otherwise be considered redundant. The notion of scientific management, developed by Frederick Taylor in the United States in the 1880s and 1890s and commonly known as Taylorism, arose from a similar position with regard to work, one that continues to characterise notions of people’s obligations within the order of the modern state and corporate interests. The operations upon Paris undertaken by Haussmann were



5.15
Charles Marville, *Rue de Constantine*
(*rue de Lutèce*), 1865. View towards the Palais
de Justice; on the left, rue des Deux-Ermites.

not entirely strange to either Paris or France; the creation of civil institutions and the management of health, propriety and the state itself, embodied in bureaucracy, infrastructure, building typologies and architecture, had been part of the project of the French state since the advent of the Enlightenment. The systematic and indifferent character of the operations of bureaucracy on the environment, the settings for life as manifest in urbanisation, reduced individual experience and the detail of life into a set of statistics, to which measures were applied to effect efficiency.⁴⁰ The conditions, manifestations, appearances, representations and publicity described in the construction of metropolitan Paris were similarly consistent with principles of projection germane to the Enlightenment, which decoupled action from relations to the notion of the human body.

In Paris, the photograph afforded the possibility of making a record of the rapidly changing city. Louis Daguerre, a pioneer of photography and inventor of the *daguerreotype*, made photographs of the city’s streets, and possibly the first urban topographic photograph. In that image, made from an elevated viewpoint, the Boulevard du Temple basks in morning light. The very long exposure of the plate effectively erases the presence of people, save one, standing still. The street is an artefact whose components have been assembled incrementally, over time. It is a view of a pre-Haussmannian Paris, its appearance an accumulation of the contribution of many generations, all speaking of their times.

Charles Marville began making photographs around 1850, precisely coinciding with the beginnings of Eugène-Georges Haussmann’s programme of



transformations of Paris, from medieval city into the metropolis of the nineteenth century.⁴¹ His photographs marked changes: streets and scenes that would disappear, the construction of new streets or the profound alterations of old streets, as well as the extensive demolitions that rid the centre of its 'hearts of darkness'.⁴² One notes the specific point of view of one such photograph, raised from the level of the street, possibly taken from the first-floor window of a building, or even more likely from the top of a constructed 'ladder', made early on a summer morning, with no people in sight.

It differs from the view of Daguerre, which may have been taken from a great distance. This is an engaged view but distanced so as to be objective, made by a machine for recording the inanimate artefact of a city street. Marville made a complete document of the city's districts as they were, as they were modified, as they disappeared. These stand in contrast to the photographs he made as the city's transformation took hold, replacing its aggregative environments made over time with a new scenography.

As Paris became the metropolis of the nineteenth century, Marville recorded its new features, its menagerie of equipment and street furniture, its metropolitan facility-oriented infrastructure, whose qualities were closely tied to the notional values of property and class. These included fountains, public water closets, and gas streetlamps soon to be replaced by electric streetlamps, the singular characteristic of the metropolis at night.⁴³ Marville would go on to catalogue the full array of equipment of the metropolis, and its characteristic, new, and for many, alienating scenes. Here, photography was meant to be an objective register of a city in the process

of becoming something that was not yet known. The recording of these elements follows the mechanical supply of equipment and architecture that characterised Haussmann's transformation of the city. It is an objective photography consistent with the character of systematic and managerial urbanisation. Marville's focus on urban furniture and equipment expresses some kind of wonder at the encyclopaedic nature of provision, in which the ungraspable nature of life was capable of being transformed into statistics, and measurable quantities.⁴⁴

5.3.3 Paris and Eugène Atget

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Eugène Atget similarly photographed Paris either as it remained, whether untouched or altered by Haussmann, and as it was disappearing under the processes of modernisation. The old order of the city was becoming extinct by attrition. The photograph, in the case of Atget, is a register of that which had been, that which was immediately past, and of that which—momentarily—is.

The photograph is an artefact of remembrance, embodied, physically, in an image, a thing in the world that might be confronted and read.

Representative of this is a photography of an exceptional fragment in the rue de Seine, pictured as though forgotten. Atget was aware of streets that would soon disappear through modernisation, processes which continued after the lapse of Haussmann's period as Paris prefect. These were the streets of the marginal, the poor, the quasi-rural, the dark interior, and the periphery. He also photographed the interiors of *hôtels particuliers*, their staircases, salons, and bedrooms: these, too, were disappearing artefacts, not because of the work of the wrecking ball, but the departure of the specific class that had created them. Similarly, Atget photographed the gardens of Versailles. He photographed, almost as an equivalent phenomenon, the *guinguettes* outside the walls of the city, where the regulations pertaining to the city within did not apply, hence, all-day dancing, drinking, and other entertainments could occur there. Atget understood that the city walls would also disappear as a consequence of the city's unrelenting urbanisation.⁴⁵

One could call Atget's project one of recovery, a recovery of both past and present, all contained within an image, through which they could never be completely obliterated. The present, in its march towards a future, obliterates everything. He recorded categories or typologies of urban phenomena that were almost certain to become obsolete. The ephemera of the city were also subjects of his attention; the photographs made when the streets were relatively empty, early in the morning, the shopkeepers freshly presenting their wares at the break of day. Atget also attended specifically metropolitan phenomena: the ladies' shop window, the city reflected in its plate glass screen. Atget, who continued to make pictures into the 1920s, provided a template for those photographers, now working with much smaller and more portable equipment, who would document, objectively and subjectively, other places. Through Daguerre, Marville, O'Sullivan, Atget and others, the basis of topographic and urban topographic photography were established. It would then be developed by others, either following more subjective directions, or attempting more rigorous objectivity.

5.16
Charles Marville, *Châlet de nécessité du marché de la Place de la Madeleine, Paris, c 1865.*
View towards rue de Sèze.



5.17
Eugène Atget, *Coin rue de Seine*, 1924.



The early topographical photograph as represented by the work of Timothy O'Sullivan, offers exemplary instruction for the order and intensity of attention to places, artefacts, and others that is necessary for architects to cultivate. O'Sullivan's views exhibited something akin to empathy with regard to the landscape and its original inhabitants, allowing their subjects to exist as they were. A photographer who captures a scene with the viewer's possession of that scene in mind, however, follows the projective impulse, which stands in opposition to that necessary order of attention. Although the projective impulse is such that architects and students of architecture consider it natural, I advocate for the stillness that is requisite in affording the subject—as in the photographic subject—the possibility of their presence, and their appearance, which the architect, in sincerity and humility, can venture to meet.

To aid in finding models for such an attitude of attention with the object of meeting the subject, I wish to continue to consider photographs from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, drawn from both topographic and portrait photography, that did not submit to projective impulses over their subjects, and did not seek to possess the scenes that they selected, but allowed their subjects to appear as themselves, and so, to speak of themselves.

The photograph is at once an act of remembrance, and an artefact of remembrance embodied, physically, in an image, a thing in the world that might be held, looked at, examined, valued, and treasured. This description may be thought of as anachronistic, considering how many have become inured to images through

5.18
Eugène Atget, *Magasins du Bon Marché*, 1927.

their over-abundance, and their dissemination in reproductions far beyond the confines of printed and televised media,⁴⁶ such as those currently driven by social media. These are not ‘things in the world’ as they had been until the emergence of digital photography.⁴⁷

The human subjects of early photographs, and later, those who continued to use large-format cameras, were necessarily still, as exposure of photo-sensitive material required time, and the observations made by the photographer were those of nature, its forms and its growth; or of culture and its expressions woven into the fabric of the world. The photograph was an artefact that preserved and re-presented its subject to others. Often, the photograph served as a memento, or a memorial to that which had existed and had been seen. The photograph was a compelling representation. The photograph did not necessarily exist for its life in reproduction—the most central aspect of its purpose and use now—but for what it remembered, presently.

Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, John Berger have all written about these aspects of photography, describing the medium as a key to understanding the world and humanity within it. Benjamin described the dissemination of the photographic image in mass media and its potential for endless reproduction, which diminished the singular value of the image and implied its utility in other modes of communication. Sontag was aware of the photograph as a tool of ideology, and consequently wary of it. Barthes was conscious of the photograph’s utility in the coded messaging of advertising but also saw it as a unique medium for access to memory and emotion, through its ability to hold detail that, like Proust’s *madeleine*, could cause a rush of recognition, through what he called the *punctum*, its piercing centre. Berger regularly saw the photograph as a means towards not only looking at but recognising and then seeing the other. It is the attitude shared by Barthes and Berger that best represents the attitude I advocate, at once in the consideration of the inherent power of the medium, the status of the photographic artefact as meaningful object, the photograph as means of approaching and meeting appearances, of environments, things, living beings, and others. The photograph is, in this way, not designed as a device for disseminating information, commercial messages, or propaganda, but a means and a method for looking, and through looking, for seeing, for recognising the world and the other. Imagine the photograph as a way of holding on to aspects of the world, of human expression, and dignity.⁴⁸

5.4 Portraits of Buildings and Places

Topographic photography, germane to nineteenth century practice, lost much of its relevance in the twentieth century, as the tools of the photographer moved towards portable, lightweight equipment that could be used anywhere. The darkroom, furthermore, was not, as in Timothy O’Sullivan’s case, a large cabin following the photographer on journeys in the landscape, but a discrete room, containing rather simpler, and soon mass-produced chemicals and equipment for enlarging the much smaller photographic negatives, these no longer on prepared glass plates but on

cellulose film. The photographer could move freely, unencumbered, and this freedom of movement naturally affected the treatment of photographic subjects and pictorial composition. The stillness that was germane to photography made with plate cameras was replaced with notions of instantaneity, speed, and vitality that were consistent with the machine-driven development that characterised the constructed environment and life within it. The time of the photograph changed. From the slow, almost geological time of the topographic photography of landscapes, or the stillness required for portrait photography, time became a moment captured, serendipitously, covertly. Henri Cartier-Bresson’s ‘decisive moment’ became the paradigm of photography, useful for both artistic and journalistic *reportage*.⁴⁹ Despite this, something of the manner of topographic photography remained as an important strain of the medium in the twentieth century, and like its practice in the preceding century, its attitude towards environments, artefacts, and others, provided models for attention and practice that are particularly relevant for the present, as representative practices are faced with the realities of the present. The practices that could be said to hold to this manner maintain, with a variety of types of equipment—but notably, some of that of the nineteenth century that requires a certain stance, position, and accordance of time—an attitude in relation to the photographed subject that gives priority to that subject’s appearance. I highlight practices from the space I have dealt with throughout these chapters, the West, and predominantly the United States and western Europe. This selection omits many valuable practices but is an attempt to offer exemplars for a practice of looking, of listening, of meeting.

5.4.1 Walker Evans & Co.

To describe the continuing and developing practice of topographic photography closer to the present, I first turn to the United States, and the figure of Walker Evans, who, with James Agee, was commissioned by the Farm Security Administration of the American government under Franklin Delano Roosevelt to document the effects of the economic Depression still felt in the 1930s in rural America and towns and cities across the country.⁵⁰ The subjects documented by Evans included landscapes, building façades, street scenes, dwellings, interiors, and individuals, prominently those affected by prolonged poverty. The photographs depicted individuals—women, men, and families—facing difficult conditions with stoicism. The interiors in which they survived were primitive yet cared for. The photographs may have served a propagandic purpose, but were empathetic, and one finds that the worn expressions of the photographs’ human subjects were also to be found in the landscapes, streetscapes, buildings and interiors in which their lives were set. Evans’s method gave priority to intense frontal study, in which the subjects both animate and inanimate commanded the image, and their features were inescapable. This attention, manifest in the photographic image, was then demanded of the viewer.

In his publication *American Photographs* (1938), Walker Evans had introduced the frontal, isolating views of buildings, in which the viewer faced their hoary presences, seemingly alive and reflections of a coloniser’s questionable values. Evans documented buildings in cities and rural areas, in plantations and industrial towns, that may have once been glorious, but had become decrepit over time, collapsing

→ 5.19



5.19
Walker Evans, *Houses and Billboards in Atlanta*, 1936.

5.20
Walker Evans, *Pennsylvania Steel Mill Town*, 1935.

with age, telling of the expedient construction typical of the country, many of them gradually submerged in the indifference of signage, and publicity. This was an America already in ruins and being very much itself, once grand villas obscured by advertising hoardings. Evans's photographs were documents of a period in which everything seemed threatened and threatening, the result of waste and spoliation, a vast environment of obsolescence. A monologue from Orson Welles's film *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) describes this energy and entropy:

"George Amberson-Minafer walked home through the strange streets of what seemed to be a strange city. For the town was growing... changing... It was heaving up in the middle, incredibly; it was spreading, incredibly. And as it heaved and spread, it befouled itself and darkened its skies."

Evans documented those towns that sprang up around various resources, houses appearing, constructed hastily, and then, as resources were consumed and used up, were relegated to ruin. Mining towns, and their entire stories, their life, their lives and deaths, could be found contained within one image, compressing all its details, from its setting in the landscape to its dwellings and life source. These photographs were documents devoid of people, but with the ruins of their lives, the meagre houses of workers finding place amongst the equipment of extraction, the infrastructures supporting it, in wrecked landscapes. Evans's work is very important for an understanding of the capacities of urban topographic photography, through its mixture of apparently objective distance, and human, subjective, empathy.⁵¹

→ 5.20

5.4.2 The presence of the photographer

John Szarkowski, who was the first curator of photography at New York's Museum of Modern Art also worked within the topographic 'tradition'. His frontal, elevational views of Louis Sullivan's buildings deployed extremely compressed compositions, so that all the elements of the urban artefact would find themselves in one photographic space. The photograph requires study to see this specifically American urban condition of what Rem Koolhaas called 'adjacent antagonisms'.⁵² A detailed view of Sullivan's Wainwright building in St Louis contains the whole urban setting in a sliver of image to the left of the building, that otherwise fills the view. In another photograph, a detail of Louis Sullivan's Guaranty Building in Buffalo is bound by a street scene on the left, and advertising on the right, a gathering of the sacred and the profane.⁵³ The viewpoint of the camera is set in the middle of the body of the photographed subject. One is aware, in Szarkowski's photographs, of the judgements of his eye, which are foregrounded to create significant compositions.⁵⁴ Szarkowski has great sympathy and feeling for the work of Sullivan, which he, through those compositions, is in conversation with. Yet the empathy that Szarkowski felt in relation to the subject of his views was most visible in that work that removed his compositional sense from the image. And this was not in photographs of architecture, but of landscape. Like all topographic photographers, he was obliged to reckon with the land. His images portray it as at once miraculous, a human artefact, sacred, and spoiled.

→ 5.21



5.22 ←

The topographic photograph as a discipline was over 140 years old by the time the Russian film director Andrey Tarkovsky made Polaroid photographs of his house, his apartments, and his loved ones.⁵⁵ He embraced photography's capacity to describe not only the subject of the photograph with empathy, but the state of mind of the photographer, who responds to the condition in which he is immersed. Tarkovsky made images around and inside his home outside Moscow with this 'instant' medium, with an attention as acutely focused as that of a photographer with a view-camera under the cover of a black sheet. The photographs Tarkovsky makes seem bound to an instant, as opposed to an event, in which the world appears in consonance with the photographer's emotional state. The Polaroid suggests that the image is transitory, that the world only appears to the photographer for a moment. Despite the emotional charge of this work, and the romantic character, of its compositions and atmospheres, this is, in my view, topographic photography: not a report, but a subjective document of inanimate and animate forms. Again, the medium describes time, or times, collapsed: the past, its dreams and regrets, the life of beings, the passing of things, the joy and melancholy of the present, the apprehension of the future, unknowable and hostile. Not every photographer can achieve this with the medium, however. It is the work of poets with a profound love of the world and a sense of the fragility of life, and their own limited time. Like the figure described by T S Eliot, the poet is one who is aware of that which has preceded them, the canon of works that have made the culture of acts in which they work. In the case of Tarkovsky as artist and filmmaker, the poet is one who knows images, and the

5.21
John Szarkowski, *Guaranty (Prudential) Building*,
Buffalo, 1951–1952.

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making of images. His film *Andrei Rublev* (1966) shows the instinct and struggle of faith inherent in the task of both the icon painter of the fifteenth century, and the protagonist who must construct a bell, who has nothing but instinct, memory and blind faith to make the work possible. It is an emotional and moral commitment that both characters live. Their commitment constitutes a model, and following this, I make the work of Tarkovsky present within this argument because it contains the emotional alertness or openness that is necessary for complete attention, which demands listening to the world and to oneself, in the world.

5.4.3 New Topographics

I wish to return to those photographers, and those methods, that are within the 'classical' tradition of topographic photography as established in the nineteenth century. A generation of American photographers seemed to be returning to the manner of attention germane to its methodology, and again, the American West,

5.22
Andrey Tarkovsky, *Myasnoye*,
September 26, 1981.

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and the continuing processes of settler colonisation, now as suburbanisation, and the ruins of the first wave of colonisation, found themselves the subject of their work. These photographers came to be known as ‘New Topographics’, following the name of an important exhibition in 1975.⁵⁶ They included Robert Adams and Lewis Baltz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, and Stephen Shore, who had already crossed the United States by car, looking at the landscape and its settlements.⁵⁷

Shore is an articulate advocate of topographic photography, teaching and writing, while making pictures, since the late 1960s.⁵⁸ Shore has spoken of the object of such photography as a matter of observing the unfolding of space and the desire to make that space present again for the viewer. Shore works in the way germane to nineteenth-century topographic photography, with an 8x10” plate camera that allows for adjustment of depth of field and parallax.

5.23 ← “The camera was the technical means of showing what the world looks like at a moment of heightened awareness. It is that awareness, of really looking at the every-day world with clear and focused attention, that I’m interested in”.⁵⁹

Shore describes a way of translating consciousness through attention into images that can speak about the world. Composition and measure; the depth of the picture, the information of the image. The subject of these pictures are small towns in the United States and Canada. They have an air of expectation about them, of hope, of failure. They are gentle. And one can see places in them. They are made, like Charles Marville’s photographs of Paris, at times of the day when the city is still, and silent. At dawn, at sunset, and as night falls. And inevitably, they describe a world that has been made, or more precisely, altered, *ad hoc* and fragile. A world that seems at peace, but might just exist in a temporary state, a dream-world. A world of conventions, vulnerable even when made of stone. The photographs demonstrate Shore’s understandings of the limit of those conventions by which people occupy the land, and the presence of the edges of that condition, and the uneasy truce that exists between the natural world as it is encountered and the blunt instruments of civilisation. That natural world that disappears under its programme of endless expansion, extraction, consumption; that natural world that then becomes an image itself, celebrated as it is preserved by the mercy of our systematic programme of exploitation.

Shore represents an American ‘school’ that has appeared to continue the work of nineteenth-century American topographical photographers, to show the specific spatiality and representational complexities of American urbanisation and its relation to the landscape. It is at once open, objective and critical. This characteristic is evident in the work of all the photographers of the so-called ‘New Topographics’ group,⁶⁰ in that there is awareness of the larger conditions—particularly the cultural and economic forces—that shape the territories they bring their attention to. They are aware, as one must be making pictures of the world in this way, of their historical moment, an historical consciousness that the photographer inevitably brings to looking and the making of the photograph. One is obliged to be aware of the ideas, and the lives, embedded and embodied in what one looks at, and to work at looking in order to see.



5.23
Stephen Shore, *West 3rd Street, Parkersburg, West Virginia*, May 16, 1974.

5.24
Stephen Shore, *2nd Street East and South Main Street, Kalispell, Montana*, August 22, 1974.



The views of the subject, which might be described as the thoroughly urbanised American continental space—what the United States government has historically referred to, tellingly, as the interior—are fragmentary yet representative of its total nature, its tropes, its history, its ideas, and its failures. The photographs of Walker Evans and Stephen Shore were made through ‘listening’ to their subjects, which are revealed—or heard, or made visible—through a specific order of photographic attention. As the architect looks, this order of attention, at once analytical, critical, emotional, receptive, and accepting, can be seen as a model for how to listen to the environment in which their work is situated. It must be possible to be, like Stephen Shore, at once analytical in understanding the composition of the constructed environment, and in a state of wonder.

5.4.4 The Düsseldorf School of topographic photography

I now turn to European topographic photography, and its use of objective means towards documentation, the purpose of objectivity, and remembering, in its affordance of the subject’s presence. Exemplary in this regard are the topological and typological photographs of Bernd and Hilla Becher, who worked from the 1960s through the 2000s, on wide-reaching and objective surveys of the obsolete industrial architecture of Western Europe and even the United States, and their native Ruhrgebiet in particular. Their ‘portraits’ of blast furnaces, colliery heads, water towers, factories, gravel houses and half-timbered buildings form at once atlases of typologies

and portraits of the vast efforts and inventions of industrialisation and its embodied labour.⁶¹ The photographs are not romantic. They are exhaustive, in their record of these structures and the role they play in remembering them before they either collapse or are demolished. And in that relentless recording, the specificity of invention and articulation within artefacts that are strictly functional, operative instruments, not intended to be recognised as anything other than working machinery, reveals something else, something profoundly human, like language. Each structure is an embodiment of its workings, and yet, the identity of each follows from the habits and determinations, the colloquialisms, of those who designed them, and those who built them. This is not design for beauty, but design that accords the appropriate form to utility and decorum and accepts the difficult and anomalous bodies that attend to heavy industry. And so, the photographers, working in cloudy conditions to avoid the distraction of shadows so that these forms might appear in their totality, record human effort and attention, work, labour, value, inventiveness, and improvisation.

→ 5.25

Bernd and Hilla Becher were teachers at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and taught a whole generation of German photographers (and even sculptors).⁶² Among those photographers was Thomas Struth. The directness of his photograph of Düsseldorf echoed the ways I had seen the world as a child, and the street and its features appeared in the view in all their complexity, ordinariness, and slackness. All are present, because all are accepted, seen, and re-presented. The photograph shares the stillness and silence of the nineteenth-century urban topographic photographs of Marville and Atget. The street itself, photographed centrally from a slightly elevated perspective, is unexceptional, but it has an appearance, or rather, an accumulation of incidents within its physiognomy that modestly articulate the facts and ideas of life and its organisation. Struth’s apparent acceptance and re-presentation of these embodied ideas, for all their incompleteness and imperfections, gives hope to an approach wherein one can ‘listen’ to the appearances of the constructed environment, with photography as an important and necessary tool through which this can be achieved.

→ 5.26

In his early work, with series of photographs of Düsseldorf and other German cities, Edinburgh, Paris, London, and New York, Struth typically used a specific position, in the centre of streets, following frontal, one-point perspective, the view-camera slightly elevated from normal eye-height, allowing streets and their features to offer themselves to a viewer as for the first time. His photographs demonstrated an awareness that policy and conventions and rules and habits and mistakes formed the faces of streets and cities. Through the photographs, one sees the effects of history, of occupation, of inhabitation, of care or neglect. Through Struth’s listening and looking held in these photographs, one sees that which is generic and that which is specific. All the detail is significant, and one gains a deep sense of the material culture of the place. The decisions that have made these streets and the lives that have passed within them have yielded characteristics that are specific to them. The photographs are registers of their past and present states and suggest their futures. Deeply embedded in these scenes are the signs of incremental change, and the indifference of time and history.⁶³ A paradox resides within them: these places are made from human investments and yet are indifferent to

the passing of lives within them. One can see, through Struth's approach, that the specific conditions of places reveal both their singularity and those characteristics that they share with other places. By attending to the natures of so many streets, their foundations, such as their economies, are revealed.

As the urban form and the layout of streets determine the stance taken by Struth in the making of those photographs, so the specific topographic and organisational conditions influence the character of views that are made. In Napoli, the porous, intimate and overlapping gestures of dozens of generations, a condition described by Walter Benjamin and Asja Latis,⁶⁴ is portrayed in views that echo the city's accumulation of utterances, which seem to pile up over the photographer, cliff-faces of other lives.⁶⁵ In Beaugrenelle, on the outskirts of Paris, or in housing projects in Chicago,⁶⁶ the abstractions of 'the new city' enforce different positions for the photographer that are distant, or up in the air, reducing the buildings that are the subjects of the images, to decorated objects.⁶⁷ How different Struth's portraits of peripheral Paris, gestural, yet arid⁶⁸ are from the liveliness of the *guinguettes* outside the city walls of the city as photographed by Eugène Atget. In the photographs, one sees the outward reality of the urban condition, and the forces that form that reality, in pictured environments that are subject to the mechanics and logics of the financial market, such as the cluster of skyscrapers of Shinju-ku, Tokyo,⁶⁹ or the collision of different historical periods and so different ideas of the city, such as Lima,⁷⁰ or St Petersburg, a Russian city that, in trying to be European, had assumed the dreams of *elsewheres*, and lived with those dreams, having embraced them, and abandoned them, so remaining itself within the ruins of previously held fantasies.

One could return to environments like these at a later time and notice shifts within the characteristics of their constituent elements, that their features have changed, but Struth's images seem to hold on to their deep, essential identities as embedded in their clothing—in the sense of *Bekleidung* written of earlier—that cannot be shed. Registering change is not the object of Struth's practice, in my view. That is the focus of other projects by other photographers specifically concerned with change, who have, within the orthodoxies of urban topographic photography, embarked upon re-photographing environments from specific viewpoints that had been assumed by their original photographers in the past, to register the effects of time and human alteration.⁷¹ Struth's photographs are images of the present, and what has come to make the present what it is.

5.5 Portraits of others: August Sander and People of the Twentieth Century

August Sander's *People of the Twentieth Century*⁷² was a photographic project of vast scope, instituted in the interbellum period of the Weimar Republic, a period of modernisation of German society, of standardisation, and atomisation of individual roles therein.⁷³ The project contained photographs of people, of hierarchies of power and relations that were inscribed in the conventions of people's appearances. The photographs revealed how its subjects offered themselves to appear for a fixed moment of attention, shared between each of those subjects and the photographer.



5.26
Thomas Struth, *Düsseldorfstraße, Düsseldorf*, 1979.

5.27
Thomas Struth, *Ulica Truda, St Petersburg*, 2005.



In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger pointed to—as he analysed images of denuded (rather than nude) women—the persistence of their objectification in popular media in which they were cast as ciphers, vehicles for other purposes and narratives, whether selling appliances, cars, alcohol, or lifestyle fantasies.⁷⁴ His analysis, a classic material culture study, benefitted from Marxist and feminist critique. At its root was a deep humanity. And it was the analysis of August Sander's photographs of people, the foundation and dependence of Sander's practice on attention, and the meeting of the subject and the photographer, or rather, the meeting between the photographed subject and their consciousness of the moment of being photographed, that allowed Berger, through the work of Sander, to develop the paradigm of attention and care. His looking at the photographs of Sander focused on that moment in which the subjects revealed themselves in very precise ways to the photographer—despite

the confines of their clothing and the meanings accruing to it—and in doing so became *living* subjects, living agents, living others, who move toward and are met by the empathetic photographer.

→ 5.28

August Sander's project *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, or *People of the Twentieth Century*, which he worked on from the early 1920s until his death in 1964, was meant to be a portrait of the entirety of German society. It was interrupted by the Second World War, when tens of thousands of his plates and negatives were destroyed. Sander made pictures of individuals and groups of people from all walks of life, professions, strata of society, from aristocrats to people on the margins. A woman who is a circus performer. A woman who is the wife of a painter. A group of students. A postman. A retired farmer and his wife. Two schoolgirls from a bourgeois family. A senator. A street sweeper. A widower and his two sons. The architect Hans Poelzig. The composer Paul Hindemith. A bricklayer's assistant. A Nazi soldier.

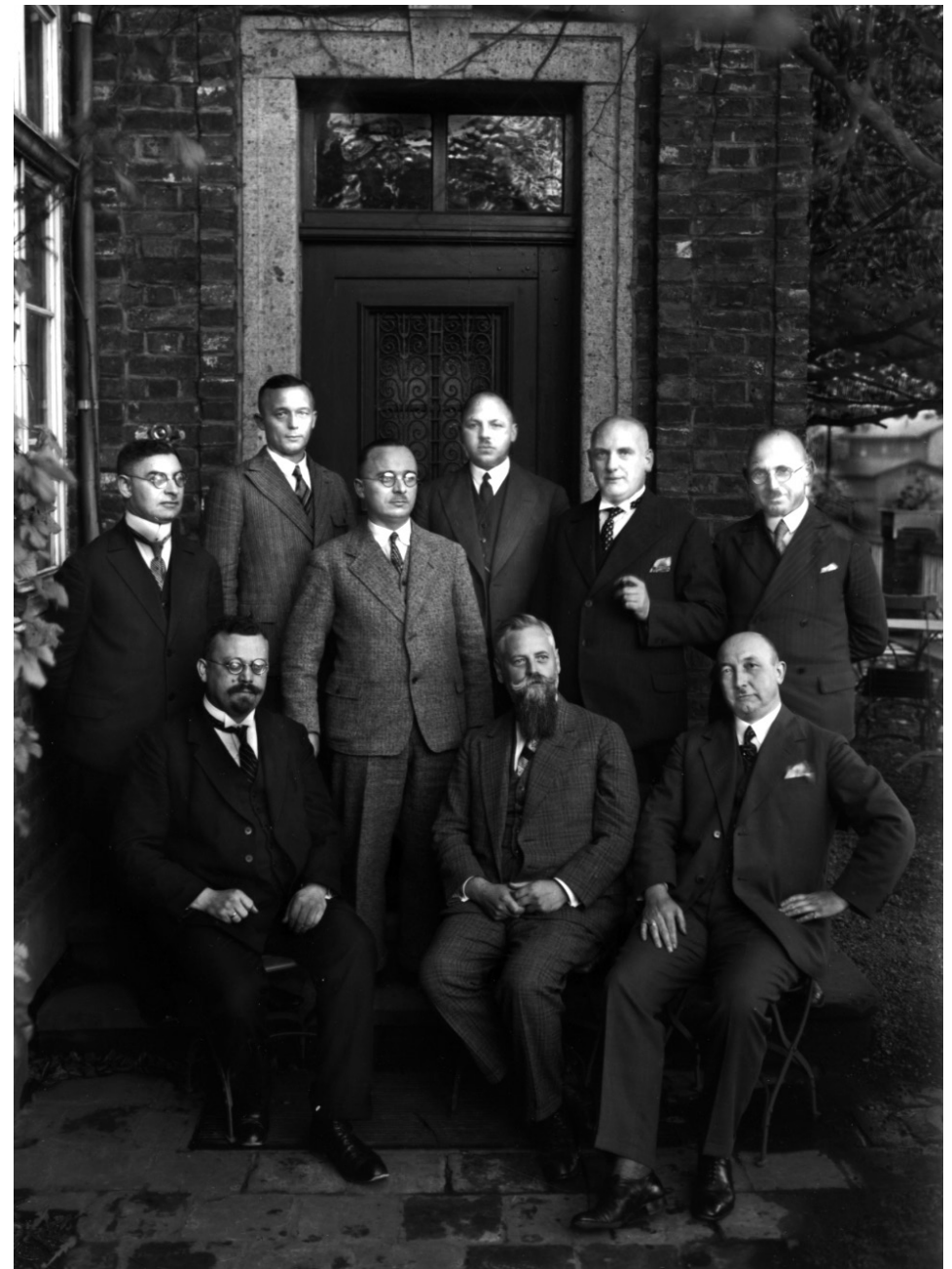
John Berger describes, through the photographs of August Sander, a model for the meeting between the photographer and the subject, in which the subject, even in the limitations imposed or freedoms gained by their costumes, presents themselves and appears in the world standing on their own feet, in the light. It is a proposal, in fact, for a meeting between self and other. In his short essay 'The Suit and the Photograph',⁷⁵ Berger attends to and describes two photographs made by Sander: one of a trio of workers on a Sunday, standing on a country road on the way to an event, another, of a group of town mayors posing in front of a house. The pictured individuals and their dress offer, in their postures and the management of their appearances—the way they wear their clothes—indexes of the structure of society, and their respective positions within it. The suit, and the way the suit is worn, with ease or tension, exhibits palpable signs of the distribution of power in social classes. The trio wear their suits, hats and walking sticks with a measure of bravado. They consider themselves as dressed for the occasion, and pose proudly, half turned to the camera, as though they wish to be seen as dashing characters. In contrast, the gentlemen mayors face the camera directly. They do not make anything more of themselves than figures of note regarded with respect by their towns' citizens, satisfied with their position, their society, their embodied power. This is not about which is better, but rather, about how the subject appears, and the suit is a device through which that appearance is made. The manner that attends to wearing the suit says something about both the impositions and codes of society, and the inner lives of the subjects, who meet their situations, and in standing in them, address and meet the photographer. The photographer, correspondingly, affords the moment of mutual attention for the meeting with the subject, and with this, the photograph is made.

→ 5.29–30

There is complexity to the images of Sander's project: they can be seen as records of types, in which the various forms of attire of individuals render them representative of whole groups within German society, or as portraits of individuals, living inside these vestments, posing so as to be seen. We see the character of each subject within these photographs. The subjects can also be seen as types, fitted into the uniforms and regimens specific to the places and roles they occupy in the regimented German society of this period. The typological and topological aspects of Sander's photographs do not diminish their sympathetic dimensions, their



5.29
August Sander, *Young Farmers*, 1914.



5.30
August Sander, *Group of Mayors*, 1928.

immanent humanity, regardless of whether the subjects are bricklayers, soldiers, intellectuals, politicians, or circus performers. One can look at the photographs and recognise and *see* these subjects, who present themselves and are presented with neither drama nor pathos. Attention to the photographs yields readings of levels of information: one encounters societal types; one encounters unique human beings; one meets subjects at ease before the camera, and others who face it, or turn away from it, uneasily. Each subject brings themselves to a moment or an instant in which they are conscious that they are appearing, and that they are being seen. The subjects *appear* before the photographer, and then through the agency of the photograph they appear to the viewer, as themselves.

This appearance, or rather, this instant of appearance rendered everlasting by the photograph, is realised through a highly conscious moment shared between the photographer and the subject, which requires, on the part of the photographer, respect, empathy, tenderness, humility, and a movement towards the subject, the other. This demands a surrender or an absencing of the self. Empathy, rather than projection, rather than judgement. I see this attitude towards the other, represented in Sander's attitude towards his subjects, and Timothy O'Sullivan's attitude towards the landscape and the other embodied in his views, as a model for the attitude of architects in approaching the subject of their work. It may be taken as a model for approaching, appreciating, and accommodating the conditions in which the work of the architect is situated and the lives of those who dwell within those conditions. It is an attitude that can be transferred to the consideration of the inanimate figures of the constructed environment, clad in various costumes that represent ideas and ambitions, fictions and fantasies, suits designed for appearances in public, or casual attire for circumstances that are largely unseen. The question is, how can the architect look at what is made in order to know what it is, what it says, what it has wanted, what it has hoped, how it had failed, how it wants to be listened to, and cared for?

5.6 The matter of attention

In topographic photography, the photographer is obliged to engage with places and artefacts in a way that is direct, and the photographer's personality—despite all the decisions that come with selecting the framing and adjustments of the image—is necessarily suppressed so that the places and artefacts that are the subjects of the image are visible as themselves, revealed through the image and made present to the viewer.

This precise yet dispassionate method leads to the making of photographic documents in which the subject appears, not the photographer, nor any exceptional circumstance. The time embedded in the photographic image is the opposite of the serendipity of Henri Cartier-Bresson's 'decisive moment'. This approach is both conditioned and facilitated by the use of the large-format view-camera. Its specific regimen binds the photographer to the subject in a precise way. It is laboured, slow, and lacks immediacy. It is formal in the routine of picture making that requires the photographer to effectively disappear under a cloak to see the photographed scene appear upside down on an etched glass plate. The equipment, the technique, and

the distance between the photographer and the subject enforces a high order of the photographer's attention, and the subject's consciousness—if animate—of being photographed. And the subject must, correspondingly, appear before the photographer.

The matter of attention is important to the architect for several reasons. First among these is the necessity of looking, and looking critically, so that the subject before one's eyes can reveal itself in all its complexity and can be properly seen. Some confusion exists between looking and seeing, the latter suggesting a transparency, a clear evidentiality, which dispenses with any critical inquiry. The simple question—when I look at something, what do I see—is an invitation to consider the subject—artefact, condition, other—as a presence and as a construct, and gradually unfold the circumstances and nature of that presence and construct and their implications for its appearance or appearances. This has been illustrated using several examples, from the banal equipment of a suburban pathway, as well as imagery made for specialised and general viewing. From careful looking, one can ascertain the conditions in which those appearances occur, the elements of those conditions and their effects on the object of attention and finally see the subject. Material culture analysis is derived from this way of looking, this manner of attention.

The second reason concerns the impulse of attention, and its objective. In the case of the territorialisation of the American West, for example, one observes that a projective impulse, one oriented towards possession, was the foundation of its principles, embodied in the methods and tools of its planning—the projective net of Thomas Jefferson's grid—and the devices used to observe a vast and unknown territory. A central device came to be the 'looking machine' of the camera taken out into the field to survey scenes, territories, and resources for their utility, extraction, and possession. In many cases, the photographers of the Great Surveys were involved in creating views that appropriated that territory for the purposes of taking possession of land and resources at the expense of the others—indigenous peoples—who lived there. However, a different attitude, embodied in the work of the photographer Timothy O'Sullivan, took the territory to be other, not for possession, but for meeting, developing, in its respect for the specificity of that landscape and its dwellers, an empathetic position, one that ultimately allowed his subject to defy possession, and be seen.

The third reason the matter of attention is important to the architect is that in looking, it is necessary to take in the entirety of the conditions that are presented. These concern not only the physical attributes of the constructed environment and appearances within them, but the forces that generated those attributes. In looking at painting and analyses of the gaze in the mechanics of its constructs, one can ascertain that what is the focus of one's attention is, in fact, situated in a set of relations. The use of 'the nude' by John Berger as a device to illustrate a genre of picture's purpose to create desire, either for the painted subject or for the product promoted by advertising, shows that images are subject to power structures, whose patterns and means cross genres and contexts. Barthes's discussion of an advertisement campaign for Italian food products illustrates that what one sees is embedded in cultural agreements, contingent on language. Lacan's, Foucault's and Berger's use of Velasquez's *Las Meninas* show that the very fabric of an image can be

a demonstration of power structures that exist between artist, sponsor, subjects, and the viewer. Attention is therefore obliged to understand through looking critically at what is happening within and around its subject.

The fourth reason for attention's importance is that one can understand that what is before one's eyes is a remnant of ideas, intentions, and labours that are from another time, another context, another set of conditions, other ideas about life, about society, about relations between people. The utterances of the past make themselves present in artefacts, their appearances and relations, to the present. The meeting of time past and time present is instructive. These artefacts of the past are not to be appropriated as though only being of value to the here and now, but for what they demonstrate about the present, that it is a moment in a progression of time from past to future, and that the vulnerability of the artefact and the ideas invested in it apply just as much to the present, and the fate of its ideas and investments in the time to come. This attention to artefacts in time should challenge the sense that one's projections in the present towards the future are unassailable. Rather, they are just as vulnerable. The advocacy of T S Eliot regarding the poet of the present contributing to the canon of literature is relevant to attention. One's attention is upon a moment between past and future, and correspondingly, one's work should be understood as being engaged with a continuum of time.

The fifth reason that attention is important to the architect is related to the fourth and is illustrated once more by the model of photography, and topographical photography in particular, which is situated in time. The photograph documents and records the state and appearances of artefacts, environments, and people, looking at their presence in time, as accumulations of time past. The photograph enables time to be observed and fixed; it enables appearances, ideas, gestures to be recognised, and held, and remembered. Attention is also attention to time, and the photograph—appreciated as an artefact and not as digital ephemera—is instructive regarding the value of appearances, the fragility of ideas, and the value of memory. The photographic surveys of obsolete industrial architecture made by Bernd and Hilla Becher were concerned with ideas and ways of enacting decisions embedded and embodied in the appearances of facilities that were not about design but betrayed the thought, care and cultural specificity particular to them. In a similar way, Thomas Struth's photographs of streets and places are documents of arrangements made amidst agreements in societies between people, that follow their ideas, habits, hopes, limitations, and errors, and the accumulation of these very human decisions over time, in whose residue or ruins people live and make their lives and new sets of agreements built upon the old. The photograph is, in its best understanding, an antidote to hubris, an advocate for humility, modesty, and shame.

The sixth aspect of attention that is central to the architect's consideration concerns the other, and the understanding that one's work is not about one's own personal objectives, but about recognising and accommodating the other. Much of this chapter has concerned how one looks, and how something outside oneself is ultimately seen. Undermining the projective self that either does not take the other into consideration, or projects their desires over them, has been the object of the writing here. Photography has been used to illustrate the necessity of this critique,

but architecture, traditionally a medium embodying power relations has been used to show that it does not have to be a machine that determines the relation between self and other, but a medium that enables relations between others. Dan Graham's critique of the fully glazed corporate office building, extended in Jeff Wall's essay 'Dan Graham's Kammerspiel', was directed toward that architecture's built-in objectives of domination, in which the empowered protagonist—corporate executive or Philip Johnson—looks over scenes of the city, others, and nature as though they are their own possession: their power unchecked. A riposte to this came in the form of buildings—glass pavilions in the case of Graham's work—that allowed people to be conscious of each other's equal and ever-changing agency. One lives in a world of others, and full attention to the conditions of people's visibility makes this plain, to the architect's benefit.

As one acknowledges that 'I am the other, and the other is me', a different attitude to the beginnings of the work of the architect becomes both incumbent and inevitable. A projective tendency is replaced with one concerned with affordances. Again, the consideration of photography, and the documentary portrait photography of August Sander, eloquently described by John Berger, provides a model for recognising the other and affording the other their place. Almost as important as the photographs themselves, a remarkable portrait of a whole society, is the meeting that takes place between photographer and subject in which a space is created—a clearing—in which photographer and subject, self and other, can move towards each other, see themselves and each other, and meet. In that meeting, the subject comes towards the photographer, presents themselves, makes themselves present, and appears. For the architect, this is a significant model, for the architect is entrusted with creating this space of appearance, and to do so, needs to make environments that are profoundly accommodating and allusive. Within allusion, of course, is fiction, and the space within it for play. It is a space for the other to recognise, see, and meet the other.

A high order of attention allows the architect to approach the inanimate subject—whether it is an environment, a street, a building, a room—with the understanding that this subject embodies specific qualities that necessitate the architect's curiosity, inquiry, sympathy, and empathy; a repression of the architect's prejudices and pre-existing narratives and the clamorous insistence of their personality, to allow the subject to *appear*. The demands upon the architect echo those of T S Eliot's upon the poet:

"What happens is a continual surrender of himself to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."⁷⁶

In the photographic paradigms I have offered, attention is translated into deep looking, into acceptance of the complex nature of the subject and a movement toward the subject, so that the subject's presence may be met, and re-presented. That re-presentation holds onto the many presences and re-presences—or representations—that are present in the subject as it appears.

At the centre of the matter of attention is the subject's presence, the nature of that presence in all its complexity, and the relation that is forged between the artist, or the photographer, or the architect, and the subject. And in moving toward the subject, toward that which or who is present, one moves towards the ways the subject presents itself—the ways it makes itself present—its appearance, its representations therein, its resemblances, its sense of itself. With attention, the artist or photographer or architect's own capacities to see and come to understandings are put into perspective, magnifying one's sense of responsibility. A sense of humility tempers the egoistic impulse, and the work that is required in addressing the subject is by necessity more precise, more searching, more revealing, more open to those who will live with and within that work: specifically, the work of architecture.

The implications for architects giving priority to the matter of attention are these: acute attention to the conditions and situations presented to the architect and to the people who live in and around and with these conditions will incite sympathies, empathies, and knowledge. Following this, the architect will move away from impulses of abstract projections and pursue more carefully attuned addresses to those conditions. And, the architect's work, in all its stages of inquiry, development and articulation, will move toward those conditions and others who dwell within them and for whom they design. These are not instructions for the architect as to how to make architecture; rather, they are encouragements towards the architect's recognition, accommodation, and meeting of the other.

5.1 A DESERT

- [1] Winston Naef, ed., *In Focus Carleton Watkins: Photographs from the J Paul Getty Museum* (Los Angeles: J Paul Getty Museum, 1997); Tyler Green, *Carleton Watkins: Making the American West* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018)
- [2] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004)
- [3] There is I, and you, the other; but you are also I; each is I and the other, at once.

5.2 FRAMEWORKS FOR SEEING

- [4] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972)
- [5] Kenneth Clark, Michael Gill, dir., *Civilisation: A Personal View by Kenneth Clark* (BBC Television, 1966–1969); Kenneth Clark, *Civilisation* (London: Pelican Books, 1969)
- [6] Diego Velázquez, *The Toilet of Venus*, or *The Rokeby Venus* (1647–51). National Gallery, London. Recalling Jacques Lacan and the tale of the sardine tin that can, in Lacan's estimation, can indeed return his gaze, the notion of the subject—the object of desire—being conscious of being seen, and 'looking back' even in a private moment, is plausible.
- [7] Pablo Picasso's Volland Suite, and 347 Engravings repeatedly rehearsed the theme of the artist and (his) model; the theme has been taken on seriously or ironically by artists ranging from Gerhard Richter in the 1960s to Jeff Koons in the 1980s.
- [8] A similar vigilance is required of architects, both regarding the appearances encountered in the constructed environment and how they are read, interpreted, understood and engaged with; and those appearances that the architect brings into being through the conscious acts of building.
- [9] Cindy Sherman was the subject of a solo exhibition, 'Rear Screen Projections', the third at Metro Pictures, New York, 1980/12/06 to 1981/01/07. Artists associated with the Metro Pictures 'group' included Sherman, Jack Goldstein, Laurie Simmons, James Welling, Robert Longo, and Richard Prince. <https://www.metropictures.com/viewing-room/before-metro> Accessed 2024/11/03
- [10] Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Stills*, 1977; Peter Galassi, Cindy Sherman, *Cindy Sherman: The Complete Untitled Film Stills* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2003)
- [11] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, October 1975: 6–18
- [12] Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Mirror Paintings*, 1964; Germano Celant, *Pistoletto* (Milano: Electa Editrice, 1976); Jean-François Chevrier, *Michelangelo Pistoletto e la fotografia* (Porto/Rotterdam: Fundação Serralves/Witte de With, 1993)
- [13] Gregor Stemmrch, 'Introduction: On Dan Graham's Art, Interests, Development, and Related Contexts', in Gregor Stemmrch, ed., *Some Rockin': Dan Graham Interviews* (London: Sternberg Press, 2023): 5–18
- [14] Intersubjectivity being a primary motive for the architect Cedric Price in the Fun Palace project (1957), and an abiding feature of Dan Graham's early artist-audience works, video/dance performances, and glass pavilions. See Gary Dufour, ed., *Dan Graham* (Perth: Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1985)
- [15] Dan Graham, Brian Wallis, ed., *Rock My Religion: Writings and Art Projects 1965–1990* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1993)
- [16] Jeff Wall, op. cit. The image shows Philip Johnson looking out from the Glass House.
- [17] That same glass wall was designed to disappear into a recess in the floor. See Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Casa Tugendhat House* (Roma: Officina edizione, 1984); Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat, Wolf Tegethoff, eds., *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: The Tugendhat House* (Wien: Springer Verlag, 2000)
- [18] Christiane Lange, *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe & Lily Reich: Furniture and Interiors* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006): 104–106

- [19] The house, as a glass pavilion, is comparable to the treatment of one floor of a Miesian glass office building. Johnson's skill in lighting his house at New Canaan was acknowledged: he coordinated the interiors and designed the lighting for Mies's Seagram Building (1957) in New York, which could be seen as a vertical stack of glass pavilions. See, Phyllis Lambert, *Building Seagram* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). His earlier admiration for Albert Speer's lighting design for the Nazi's Nürnberg rally, while 'reporting' on Germany before the war, as an enthusiast and fellow traveller, honed his attention for lighting effects.
- [20] Albrecht Dürer, artist and model. The grid used by artists to 'grid up' their subjects.
- [21] Mark Pimlott, 'Picturing Territories', in *Without and Within: Essays on Territory and the Interior* (Rotterdam: Episode publishers, 2007): 59–109
- [22] The projective model furthermore lies at the core contemporary architecture at the service of neoliberalism, notably from the so-called *avant-garde*, in which one will recognise the mechanics of colonialism. See Douglas Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016)
- [23] As it is culturally conditioned, seeing seems to the most natural thing; whereas looking is demanding. Oscar Wilde, in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) wrote, "It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible."

5.3 TOPOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

- [24] The first photograph made was a picture or register of architecture: an inanimate architectural scene captured from a high window at Le Gras, made by Nicéphore de Niépce, in 1826 or 1827.
- [25] Martin Heidegger (1956), trans. Albert Hofstadler, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971): 17–87
- [26] Painters such as Thomas Cole painted from life but also imagined the scenery of the unseen continental interior, casting is as a kind of Eden on Earth, a notion realised with the 'discovery' of Yosemite. The 'Hudson Valley School' of painters included Frederick Church, and Albert Bierstadt, who painted monumental real and imagined American landscapes.
- [27] See Daniel Wolf, ed., *The American Space: Meaning in Nineteenth-Century Landscape Photography* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983); Winston Naef, ed., *In Focus Carleton Watkins: Photographs from the J Paul Getty Museum* (Los Angeles: J Paul Getty Museum, 1997); Toby Jurovics, Carol M Johnson, Glenn Williamson, William E Stopp, *Framing the West: The Survey Photographs of Timothy H O'Sullivan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010)
- [28] Sandra S Phillips, 'To Subdue the Continent: Photographs of the Developing West', in Sandra S. Phillips, ed., *Crossing the Frontier: Photographs of the Developing West from 1849 to the Present* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art/Chronicle Books, 1996)
- [29] Alexander Gardner (1866), *Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* (New York: Dover Publications, 1959). O'Sullivan's photographs of the battlefield at Gettysburg strewn with bodies, notably 'A Harvest of Death, Gettysburg, July 1863', predate the Survey photographs, and were printed by Gardner.
- [30] Timothy O'Sullivan, *Historic Spanish Record of the Conquest. South Side of Inscription Rock, New Mexico, no. 3*, 1873. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; *Rock Carved by Drifting Sand, Below Fortification Rock, Arizona*, 1871. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.
- [31] United States Geological Survey, 'The Four Great Surveys of the West', <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/c1050/surveys.htm>, accessed 2024/11/09; George M Wheeler, *Wheeler's Photographic Survey of the American West 1871–1873* (New York: Dover Publications, 1983)

[32] Tyler Green, *Carleton Watkins: Making the American West* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018); Winston Naef, ed., *In Focus Carleton Watkins: Photographs from the J Paul Getty Museum* (Los Angeles: J Paul Getty Museum, 1997)

[33] The Apollo astronauts were trained in topographic photography to assess geological features. Their photographs of the Moon were executed under the same premise as those of the Great Surveys, and bear resemblance to the views made by Timothy O’Sullivan. See Michael Light, *Full Moon* (New York: Knopf, 1999)

[34] Richard Pare, *Photography and Architecture: 1839–1939* (Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture/Calloway Editions, 1982)

[35] Regarding the subject of empathy and aesthetic experience as discussed in German intellectual discourse in the nineteenth century, see Harry Francis Mallgrave, Eleftherios Ikonomou, eds., *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1872–1892* (Santa Monica CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994)

[36] Valerie Lloyd, *Roger Fenton: Photographer of the 1850s* (London: South Bank Board, Yale University Press, 1988); Gordon Baldwin, Malcolm Daniel, Sarah Greenough, *All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852–1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)

[37] Daniel Wolf, ‘Introduction’, in Daniel Wolf, ed., *The American Space: Meaning in Nineteenth-Century Landscape Photography* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983): 10: ‘O’Sullivan’s western pictures are, to borrow a phrase from Roethke, the achievement of “a man struggling to find his silence.”

[38] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Penguin, 1977)

[39] Georg Simmel (1903), ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’, in Richard Sennett, ed., *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice–Hall, Inc., 1969): 47–60; Richard Sennett, ‘Interiors and Interiority’, at Harvard Graduate School of Design, 22/04/2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVPjQhJfjKo>

[40] Diana Periton, ‘Urban Life’ in Vittoria di Palma, Diana Periton, Marina Lathouri, eds., *The Intimate Metropolis* (London: Routledge, 2009): 9–40

[41] Marie de Thézy, *Marville Paris* (Paris: Éditions Hazan, 1994)

[42] Marshall Berman (1982), *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983)

[43] Joachim Schlör (1991), trans. Pierre Gottfried Imhof, Dafydd Rees Roberts, *Nights in the Big City* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998);

[44] Diana Periton, ‘Urban Life’, Vittoria di Palma, Diana Periton, Marina Lathouri, eds., *The Intimate Metropolis* (London: Routledge, 2009): 9–40

[45] Françoise Reynaud, Roger Delpire, ed., *Eugène Atget: Un choix de photographies extraites de la collection du Musée Carnavalet* (Paris: Centre National de la Photographie, 1984)

[46] W J T Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Visual and Verbal Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)

[47] James Lingwood, ‘Different Times’, in Martin Caiger-Smith, ed., *The Epic and the Everyday: Contemporary Photographic Art* (London: South Bank Centre, 1994): 8–20

[48] Walter Benjamin (1936), trans. Harry Zohn, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in Hannah Arendt, ed., *Illuminations* (London: Fontana Press, 1973; 1992): 211–244; Susan Sontag (1971), *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 2008); Roland Barthes (1961), trans. Stephen Heath, ‘The Photographic Message’, in *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977): 15–31; Roland Barthes (1980), trans. Richard Howard, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage Books, 2000); John Berger (1968), ‘Understanding a Photograph’, in John Berger, Geoff Dyer, ed., *Understanding a Photograph* (London: Penguin, 2013): 17–21

5.4 PORTRAITS OF BUILDINGS AND PLACES

[49] Jean Clair, *Henri Cartier-Bresson* (Paris: Centre National de la photographie, 1982)

[50] James Agee, Walker Evans (1941), *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001)

[51] The great precedent is of course embedded in the development of urban topographic photography in the nineteenth century. See Richard Pare, *Photography and Architecture: 1839–1939* (Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture/Callaway Editions, 1982)

[52] Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978)

[53] Szarkowski’s photographs of Louis Sullivan’s work are discussed with great care by Hugh Campbell, ‘The Qualia of Architecture: On Sullivan, Szarkowski, Autobiographies, and Ideas’, in Hugh Campbell, *Space Framed: Photography, Architecture, and the Social Landscape* (London: Lund Humphries, 2020): 28–38; Stephen Shore, *Modern Instances: The Craft of Photography. A memoir* (London: MACK, 2022): 80; John Szarkowski, *Guaranty Building, Buffalo, 1894–95, detail*, 1954

[54] John Szarkowski (1966), *The Photographer’s Eye* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007)

[55] Giovanni Chiamonte, Andrey A Tarkovsky, eds., *Instant Light: Tarkovsky Polaroids* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004): “The image is not a meaning expressed by the director, but the entire world reflected as in a drop of water.”; Andrey Tarkovsky, *Myasnoye*, September 26, 1981

[56] Jamie M Allen, Kari Dahlgren, Jessica S McDonald, Martyn Oliver, eds., *New Topographics: Robert Adams. Lewis Baltz. Bernd and Hilla Becher. Joe Deal. Frank Gohlke. Nicholas Nixon. John Schott. Stephen Shore. Henry Wessel, Jr.* (Tucson/New York: Center for Creative Photography University of Arizona/George Eastman House, 2009)

[57] Stephen Shore, *American Surfaces* (London: Phaidon, 2005)

[58] John Szarkowski acquired Stephen Shore’s photographs for the collection of the Museum of Modern Art when Shore was 14 years of age. As a late teen, Shore ‘resided’ in Andy Warhol’s Factory in New York, making photographs of the other ‘residents’, films, parties, and other happenings.

[59] Stephen Shore, *Modern Instances: The Craft of Photography. A memoir* (London: MACK, 2022)

[60] Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Nicholas Nixon, John Schott, Stephen Shore, and Henry Wessel, Jr. were featured in the 1975 exhibition ‘New Topographics’. They shared an approach with nineteenth-century topographic photographers, yet differed in their points of view, and the framing of the photographic subject. Bernd and Hilla Becher’s work, mostly made in Europe, was fundamentally different from the work of their American counterparts.

[61] Bernd und Hilla Becher, *Anonyme Skulpturen: A Typology of technical Constructions* (New York: Wittenborn and Co., 1972)

[62] Their students included the photographers Thomas Ruff, Axel Hutte, Andreas Gursky, the sculptor Stefan Balkenhol, and Thomas Struth. See Jean-François Chevrier, James Lingwood, *Un autre objectivité/Another Objectivity* (Milano: Idea Books, 1989); Martin Caiger-Smith, David Chandler, eds., *Site Work: Architecture in Photography Since Early Modernism* (London: Photographers’ Gallery, 1991); Sharon Essor, Valeria Liebermann, trans. Catherine Shlebert, Fiona Elliott, *Thomas Ruff* (London: Essor Gallery, 2001); Thomas Weski, ed., *Andreas Gursky* (Köln: Snoeck Verlagsgesellschaft, 2007); Iwona Blazwick, James Lingwood, Andrea Schlieker, eds., *Possible Worlds: Sculpture from Europe* (London: ICA/Serpentine Gallery, 1990); Thomas Struth, Ulrich Loock, *Thomas Struth: Unbewusste Orte/Unconscious Places* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 1987); Christoph Schreier, Stefan Gronert, eds., *Thomas Struth Straßen: Fotografie 1976 bis 1995* (Köln: Wienand Verlag, 1995)

[63] One of my one-day mentors at Goldsmiths’ College was the photographer Craigie Horsfield, who spoke of the indifference of history to human suffering. An important conversation. In 1989, he wrote, “There is a passage of Joseph Conrad’s where he writes of the artist as, “...speaking to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives, to our sense of beauty and pain, to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—and to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity

that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts.” I am convinced of the necessity of such belief. How else are we to resist the myriad barbarisms of our world, how else resist the indignities of suffering visited on so many of our fellows?” Craigie Horsfield, in Jean-François Chevrier, James Lingwood, *Un autre objectivité/Another Objectivity* (Milano: Idea Books, 1989): 154

[64] Walter Benjamin, Asja Lacis (1924), ‘Naples’, in Walter Benjamin, trans. Edmund Jephcott, *Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1986): 163–173

[65] Thomas Struth, *Corso Vittorio Emanuele, Napoli*, 1989, from Christoph Schreier, Stefan Gronert, eds., *Thomas Struth Straßen: Fotografie 1976 bis 1995* (Köln: Wienand Verlag, 1995): 119

[66] Thomas Struth, *South Lake Apartments III, Chicago*, 1990, from Christoph Schreier, Stefan Gronert, eds., *Thomas Struth Straßen: Fotografie 1976 bis 1995* (Köln: Wienand Verlag, 1995): 125

[67] Thomas Struth, *Beaugrenelle, Paris*, 1979, from Thomas Struth, Ulrich Loock, *Unbewusste Orte/Unconscious Places* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 1987): 51

[68] Scenes that are described with both acceptance and affection by Annie Ernaux (1993), trans. Tanya Leslie, *Extérieurs* (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2021), and recast in Lou Stoppard, ed., *Extérieurs: Annie Ernaux and Photography* (London: MACK/MEP, 2024)

[69] Thomas Struth, *Shinju-Ku (Die Hochhäuser)*, Tokyo, 1986, from Christoph Schreier, Stefan Gronert, eds., *Thomas Struth Straßen: Fotografie 1976 bis 1995* (Köln: Wienand Verlag, 1995): 131

[70] Thomas Struth, *Calle Wakulski, Lima*, 2003, from *Unconscious Places* (Berlin: Prestel, 2020)

[71] Mark Klett, Ellen Manchester, JoAnn Verburb, *Second View: The Re-photographic Survey Project* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984); Caroline Mollie-Stefulesco, ed., *Séquences paysages: revue de l’observatoire photographique du paysage 1997* (Paris: Hazan, 1997)

5.5 PORTRAITS OF OTHERS

[72] Die Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur Köln, eds., *August Sander: People of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Aperture, 2022)

[73] Angela Lampe, *Germany/1920s/New Objectivity/August Sander* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2022)

[74] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972)

[75] John Berger (1979), ‘The Suit and the Photograph’, in *About Looking* (London: Writers and Readers Cooperative Publishing, 1980): 27–36

5.6 THE MATTER OF ATTENTION

[76] TS Eliot, ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’, in *The Egoist*, September; December 1919: 54–55; 72–73

6 The necessity of interpretation



6.01
August Sander, *Young Farmers*, 1914.

6.1 A Photograph

→ 6.01

John Berger's look at photographs, and specifically those made by August Sander that inform his essay 'The Suit and the Photograph', is one of attention to specific objects, as discussed in the previous chapter, 'The matter of attention'.¹ The photograph is more than an object, it is an artefact produced with methods specific to a certain order of photographic practice, within a culture that is both observed and constantly producing itself. It is both an image, and it is a mirror. In the essay, Berger places two photographs side by side, and compares the attitude and presentation of the respective groups of subjects to comment upon the presentation of the subjects towards the photographer and his apparatus, their relative ease, their performance, and comments on how each group, as individuals and collectives, *appear*. The observations he makes are derived from the pairing of the photographs, which permits an analysis based on readings of elements—clothing being central—shared by both groups of subjects in each photograph. Berger undertakes something that is inscribed within August Sander's entire project, *People of the Twentieth Century*, whose object was to photograph as wide a band of German society as possible, as that society went through fundamental changes over a period of forty years.² There are many photographs—six hundred and nineteen—and when one sees a very large gathering of these photographs in a setting outside the printed monograph—a format one is habituated to, in which one passes by one photograph after the other—another character is added to Sander's project. It becomes almost scientific. Almost, because its 'objectivity'—made in the cultural context of *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity), is constantly tested by presentation of the subjects of the photographs to the camera, and then, to the viewer. The project carries associations with the later project of Bernd and Hilla Becher, in their photographs of industrial architecture, an extended process of looking and documenting with a rigorous methodology, which commemorated this architecture through its photographic registration, and showed this architecture to be a product of human decisions of both functional and cultural value.³

In the case of Sander's *People of the Twentieth Century*, Berger seems to be less concerned with the anthropological-cultural project than the human aspect of the individual photographs, the presence of the subjects in each image, and the subject's presentation of themselves in the photographic image. There is an attempt to understand how the subject makes their appearance, the circumstances surrounding that appearance, and, as bridges in its movement towards the subject—an other—the empathy of the photographer. A scientific mind would turn to analysis. A mind attuned to appearances, utterances and images would turn to interpretation and its necessity. Another mind would resist interpretation, and be more concerned with *feeling*. The purpose of interpretation is to get closer to original meanings. It is directed towards encountering reality and the real.

A televised conversation about story-telling between Berger and Susan Sontag (1983) illustrated differences in points of view about what stories were, what their purpose was, and their points of origin.⁴ Berger invoked beginnings, linking story-telling to human experience and primary scenes of sharing, to lived reality. In his own documentary or fictional writing, he had frequently focused on the lives

and struggles of real people.⁵ Sontag spoke, in contrast, of stories' relations to lies, invention and fantasy. I bring this conversation to light not only because of these respective attitudes to stories, but, in addition, what the echoes of these positions imply in their apparently differing attitudes to interpretation.

The attitude of Berger is dedicated to real lives, real experiences, and priority given to listening. When he speaks of stories, he does so as though he is listening to stories told by others, stories made for the attentions of small audiences, stories spoken, as one might today find in Jemaa el-Fna in Marrakech. It is very much like the idea of the theatre imagined and performed by Peter Brook, in which a troupe of players comes to a village, lays out a carpet, and plays in close contact with the villagers, who are invited to sit around the edges of the carpet with the players.⁶ The intimacy woven between players and audiences is that which exists between speakers and listeners. The desire to communicate, to understand across a divide between dweller and visitor, audience and player, self and other, is bridged by the common themes of the play, and by interpretation. Sontag's stories are those of invention, of extraordinary things, of legend. These are also the ancient stories, those of Gilgamesh, of the Mahabharata, of Beowulf.⁷ In these, there are also bridges between the past and present, attempts to reconcile times of origins with experience of the present. These, too, are subjects of those plays brought to the villages and theatres by Peter Brook. The bridges are those of interpretation. "The act of explaining the meaning of something" is, in situations such as story-telling and myth, fluid, searching for meaning. Unlike hermeneutics, in which the interpretation of holy texts is pursued to find their precise meanings, the interpretations of fictions both life-like and fantastic are imprecise and individualised, the province of magicians.

There is a play in this conversation between Berger and Sontag, where one might think that they are in disagreement with each other. But in fact, they both seem to be trying to get to the same thing. Berger wants to speak of intimacy, and interpretations that pertain to the individual. Sontag wants to speak of invention, and interpretations of stories that take the listener into worlds beyond personal experience, which expand the domains of hope. I want to embrace the possibilities of both, in considering how the architect might interpret the scenes and the latency of the constructed environment. The effort made in looking at environments, in drawing close to them, in seeing them as the world of others, with the object of drawing close to and meeting the other, demands interpretive acts that bridge the space between self and other, between the architect and the environment that the architect will touch and change. It is useful, therefore, to study some of the implications of Sontag's and Berger's respective positions.

My position is sympathetic to those held by both these protagonists. I hold that interpretation is necessary for consideration of the conditions met by the architect in the constructed environment, but that this interpretation is not a matter of translation, of this means that; rather, the openness offered by interpretation is essential in offering spaces for those who will occupy, dwell in, move through, and benefit from that which the architect makes. The attitude discussed is one that recognises the conditions of the constructed environment, reads and interprets those conditions, and works with the utterances of those conditions to render them more visible and available to

those who dwell in them. This requires attention to the contingent, the interrelations between artefacts, the interdependence of artefacts, and the acknowledgment that the architect's work is to become part of that environment of interdependencies, embedded in them. The architect will also be aware, as I have argued in previous chapters, that their work will, despite its fusion to that which exists, change it. The point of arguing for interpretation is that the change caused by the incursion of the architect's work will be in a direction that does not destroy the conditions that host it, but extends and develops its accumulated narratives. The argument is made through examples drawn from my own inter-disciplinary practice, dating from 1988 onwards.

6.1.1 Interpretation

Susan Sontag's essay, 'Against Interpretation' (1964) is a defence of art, and a rebuttal to the tendency at that time in art criticism to search for the 'content' of the work of art, against which its form serves as a vehicle, for meaning, which obliged the viewer or the critic to work *through* the form to get to the content. Sontag effectively argues against the hermeneutic order of interpretation which attempts to finalise, once and for all, the meaning of the text, the artefact, the work of art. She opens her essay with two quotations, the first from the painter Willem de Kooning, and the second from the writer Oscar Wilde. A useful balance exists between the two:

Willem de Kooning: "Content is the glimpse of something, an encounter like a flash. It's very tiny—very tiny, content."

Oscar Wilde: "It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible."

The consciousness of one's own condition, and one's position, carries with it the awareness that it is not authoritative, not at the centre, but that of a constructed self among all other constructed selves. With the obligation that the architect has towards organising spaces, relations, constructions, and appearances, a strategy or means must be arrived at in order to work. In my view, and in relation to what I have written about movement towards the subject and the other, one must accept the surrender of authorship, and embrace the circumstances in which one works, and contingency. Despite the suggestion within the title that Sontag opposes interpretation, she in fact argues for a movement towards that which is encountered, in this case, the work of art. She objects to the type of interpretation that aims to establish equivalences, or 'this equals that', as follows:

"Of course, I don't mean interpretation in the broadest sense, the sense in which Nietzsche (rightly) says, "There are no facts, only interpretations." By interpretation, I mean here a conscious act of the mind which illustrates a certain code, certain 'rules' of interpretation. Directed to art, interpretation means plucking a set of elements (the X, the Y, the Z, and so forth) from the whole work. The task of interpretation is virtually one of translation. The interpreter says, Look, don't you see that X is really—or, really means—A? That Y is really B? That Z is really C?"⁸

Sontag advocates a different kind of encounter entirely, wherein there is a direct relation to the work of art, to the subject; one that is real, and visceral.

“Equally valuable would be acts of criticism which would supply a really accurate, sharp, loving description of a work of art. This seems even harder to do than formal analysis...

“Transparency is the highest, most liberating value in art—and in criticism—today. Transparency means experiencing the luminousness of the thing itself, of things being what they are...

“Once upon a time (when high art was scarce), it must have been a revolutionary and creative move to interpret works of art. Now it is not. What we decidedly do not need now is further to assimilate Art into Thought, (or worse yet) Art into Culture.”⁹

“The function of criticism should be to show *how it is what it is*, even *that it is what it is*, rather than to show *what it means*.”¹⁰

“In place of a hermeneutics, we need an erotics of art.”¹¹

The desire for direct experience, direct reading, direct description is consistent with a phenomenological position and its appeal to the senses. Sontag’s desire is to remove the work of art from the prattle of interpretive text that surrounds it. Sontag’s object, to approach and *feel* the core of what is there, most valuable, and connected to life, is not so distant from Berger’s own purpose. It is an epistemological matter. The question asked by John Berger, which is, in essence, “What do I see when I look at something?” demands inquiry into what its subject is in its situation, in the world. Sontag’s desire to keep a separate space for the work of art, safe from assimilation in Thought and Culture, is apparently at odds with Berger’s desire to pull everything back into the world of experience, of material culture, of language. Sontag would seem to leave that context aside. She addresses, instead, directly, the moment of meeting of the work of art, which is very much like the position Berger wants to reach in meeting the other, a position of empathy. It is worth pointing out that my own position desires to have it all: a consciousness of the conditions of visibility of the subject, whatever it is, and an intimate meeting with its ‘essence’, or what I have called elsewhere, the Real. It is a position of reconciliation that binds phenomenology and material culture, through the agency of representation.

Berger’s readings of Sander’s photographs, like his readings of paintings of ‘nudes’ and the echoes of such imagery in advertising campaigns of the early 1970s,¹² are tied to material culture, and relations that exist between artefacts that share ideas, and the ways these artefacts communicate in order to become both seen and known. This enables interpretation. Representation is embedded in material culture, through resemblance, association, and allusion. In acknowledging the presence of representation in artefacts—the constructed environment and its scenes as artefacts—one may move towards the real through appearances. Berger’s point in analysing Sander’s photograph of the three farmers is not so much about undertaking a sociological study—though that is certainly an aspect of the work of his

analysis—but about looking at people as they *appear*. His method allows him to approach the other, not as an object, but as a human being who makes themselves present in the photograph through the obscuring disguise of their attire. In recognising representation and its presence in the subject of one’s study, it becomes possible to move closer to the real that resides within that subject’s appearance. In the case of the constructed environment, this is a matter of finding the human idea within constructed representations, or, as I have put it earlier, constructed utterances.

My position in relation to interpretation is aligned more closely with Berger’s, in that in encountering a condition, one must be aware not only of prevailing characteristics and their qualities, but of the events from which they have arisen and which continue to influence them. This is, in my view, the obligation of the architect. When one looks at something, one must ask what it is that one is looking at—which demands reading—or ‘listening’—and interpreting what one is looking at, in order to *see* it. One must ask *why* things are as they are, and where things are, both of which demand deeper inquiry into the nature and history of the conditions and effects surrounding those things. One must inquire into the images they present, and attempt to interpret those images in light of their situation. One must inquire into the relations between things both immediate and alluded to, to continue to determine what one is looking at. All of this demands attention, and movement towards the artefact and its manifest idea so that a kind of meeting can occur. The meeting is one between the self—the architect, replete with what that figure knows and has experienced—with a human artefact and its situation. That artefact is other, and should be regarded as unknown or unknowable. A connection between the self and that other must be made, which is in part achieved by a loosening or surrender of the boundaries of the self, and receptivity towards, a ‘listening’ to the other. That listening is very broad and deep, as it must be attendant upon the condition in which the artefact is found, and its relation to other conditions, such as those that are tied to emulation of other images, identities, fantasies. One must furthermore come to understand changes to the conditions in which the artefact is situated through time, changes that profoundly alter the setting of the artefact. The photograph which is used in the introduction to chapter 3, ‘Contexts’, *Praha CZ1991*, shows artefacts, such as a fragment of a village, hemmed in by nineteenth- and twentieth-century urbanisation, profoundly affected by changes to the environments around them, isolating them, uprooting them. Looking and listening necessitates interpretation. It is not translation. One must accept that one’s interpretation is just that. Like the utterance, an interpretation is inadequate, incomplete, imperfect, and can be a misinterpretation.

An encounter with the conditions of the urbanised environment is an encounter with a fragment of the lived world of others, of others’ works, others’ utterances. Moving towards this world demands familiarisation with the networks of agreements through which it has been made. This demands—beyond openness and empathy—consciousness of oneself and the conditions within which one has been subject, of oneself among others, of what one knows, and of what one does not or cannot know. It is a leap into the unknown, and so necessitates interpretation to bridge the difference between worlds, between self and other. By either immersion or by increments, one must come to see what is familiar and what is strange,

→ 6.02





6.03.1-2
Mark Pimlott, Peter St John, with Tony Fretton,
Neckinger Mills Loft, London, 1987.

recognising that one might not speak the language of the condition or artefacts one encounters, and that one must temporarily estrange oneself from one's own points of reference, one's experiences, one's own language and identity. One must loosen the boundaries of one's own self, recognising that one, too, is other. Concretely, this involves looking, asking questions, and listening, even if one cannot ask questions. The environment itself, one of inanimate artefacts, speaks of lives and ideas. So far, I have offered models for approaches to urban conditions, contexts, and others that have been drawn from a variety of disciplines and practices, prominent among them works of topographic photographers and contemporary artists. All of them stand at some distance from the acts that are required of the architect and from those real meetings with the conditions one encounters as an architect. The following sections will attempt to draw closer to both those acts and meetings, through examples drawn from my own experiences in practice.

6.2 Beginnings

One can speak of photographs or paintings as artefacts within specific cultural circumstances and settings; one can speak of architecture as observed without revealing the elements of attitude or approach towards how a condition is encountered, read, or listened to. One can speak of the interpretation of the conditions one encounters, and how one acts within them. Throughout these chapters, it has been my object to write of those considerations that pertain to the beginnings of the acts of architecture, instilling attitudes for those beginnings that I believe are necessary, and giving priority to working deeply with ideas embedded in contexts, while avoiding the more obvious inclinations of the architect towards projection, invention, 'innovation', and egoism.¹³

In my early work (1987–1990), I was interested in revealing unconscious aspects or fictions of the city, in which buildings would act as agents for making these aspects visible, and through those buildings, the ideas or fictions realised in buildings and cities in different times, over different historical periods would be reconciled. I was concerned with the image of the city, and representation was used as a tool in order for that image to be visible and appreciable to those who lived with and used newly constructed environments. The first project is an interior in south London, the second, a competition project for a very large building complex in Tokyo, both designed in collaboration with Peter St John.

6.2.1 London

The project for an apartment and studio for an electronic musician and record producer in South London was on the top floor of a former tannery, Neckinger Mills, adjacent to a railway viaduct: a loft.¹⁴ Neither Peter St John nor myself were as yet professionally qualified, and so Tony Fretton, who had recommended us to the client, oversaw our work.¹⁵ The two of us felt obliged to commit ourselves to a position, and wanted to make an implicitly political statement. Margaret Thatcher was still in power. The setting was at the time a strange part of Bermondsey, with council blocks, garages, store rooms, workshops and the railway viaduct into London

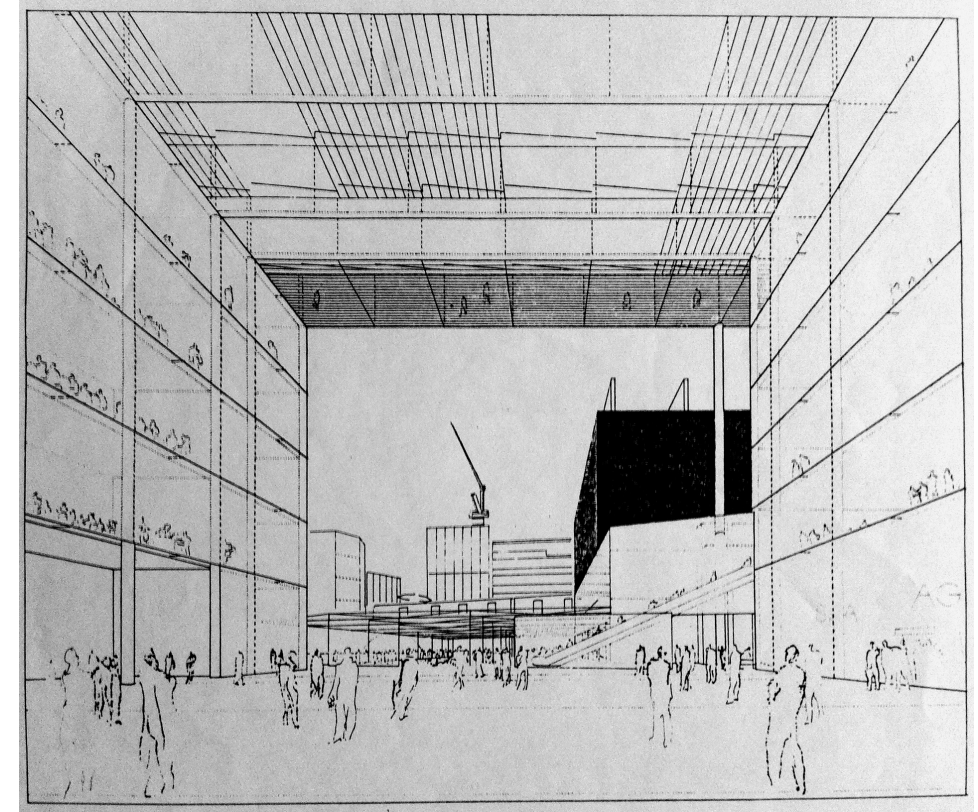
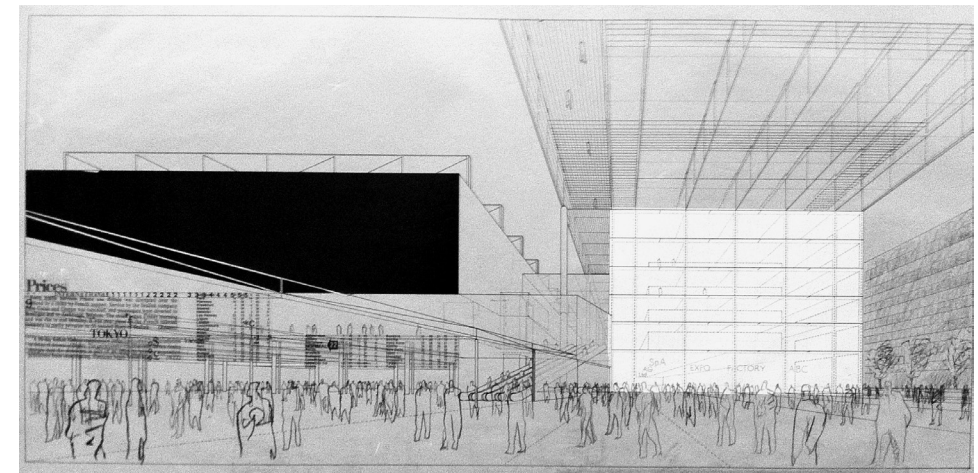
→ 6.03.1-2

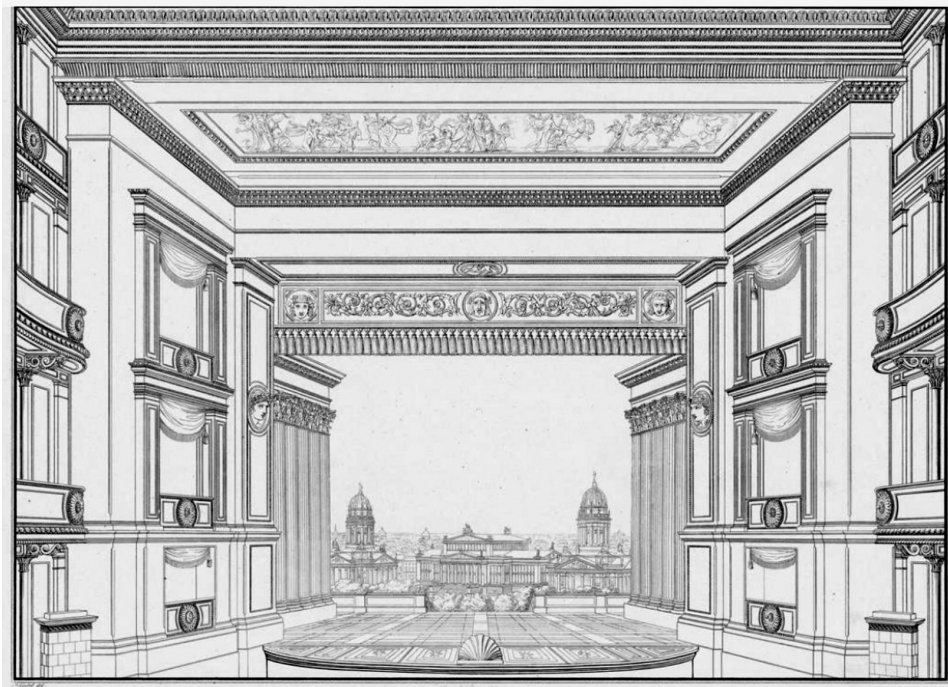
Bridge station. From the loft's windows looking north, one could see in the distance, Tower Bridge and the dome of St Paul's Cathedral. The thought was that the huge interior should somehow be continuous with its environment; that its features should be extensions of artefacts outside, especially those of the workshops, and should make one conscious of the features of its setting, from the scale of the city to the scale of the artefact. The artefacts in the loft suggested relations with the appearances of ordinary things in the neighbourhood, and filtered them through a measure of picturing or representation. The space and material of the loft were taken to be connected with the surrounding landscape. To this end, the kitchen was set behind a screen that could open to the view, its two sides painted slightly different tones of the same colour, so that it would appear as an emphatic abstract object. A similar strategy was applied to the design of a large table. It was made in two sections, one of maple and one of ash, the grain of the latter more pronounced, which a sense of visual depth as one saw it on arrival in the first big room. A pantry of plywood and Formica® was placed within a folded screen of stainless steel expanded mesh. A little stair placed next to the window as a secondary means of escape was painted to look like a pictured stair. Over the years, I added other pieces of furniture to the loft that played upon the boundary of utility and uselessness, whose object was to set forth a more far-reaching position regarding man-made artefacts, and their connectedness, a residue of my childish perspective in which everything appeared to be part of one great place in which all places, people, and times were connected. I was interested in designing things in which other things—other artefacts—would be part of the identity of the thing designed, and that incompleteness, interdependence, contingency and weakness were essential aspects of this. This was an early apprehension of the workings of material culture, though I had, as yet, no name for it. Furthermore, I thought that architecture's representational character could reveal the hidden representational character of everything else: that the ordinary could be revealed as being a concatenation of fictions that if only attended to closely, could reveal ideas that were the basis for the way things were.

6.04.1-2 ←

6.2.2 Tokyo

The competition project for Tokyo International Forum competition designed with Peter St John (1990), demanding the accommodation of a programme for trade halls, trade centre, exhibition halls, theatres and auditoria and attendant public spaces was situated adjacent to the rail viaduct leading to Tokyo's central station, and on the boundary between the Marunouchi and Ginza districts. The former was organised on a grid, and abutted the Imperial Palace and its gardens; the latter was relatively chaotic, and known for its constant process of rebuilding. The project addressed the programme and site with two large adjacent buildings. To the Marunouchi side, running along the entire length of the city block, a large-span megastructure containing stacked pavilions and terraces was clad in insulated white glass, acting like *shōji* screens to the interior; to the Ginza side, a chain of auditoria were clad in black brick, increasing in size in relation to the widening space afforded by the viaduct. At the widest part of the site, a large covered opening was created in the white glass building—as though its large-span structure was missing a bay—and the black brick





boxes of auditoria stopped short of this opening to create a low glazed concourse. In the monumental sheltered space that was the hole in the white glass building, one could look directly into it and its stacked pavilions, or one could look outward, through the opening—several storeys tall—to the railway lines and the city beyond. The major public space was a sheltered proscenium through which visitors might see themselves amidst the other components of the Forum and the framed view of the Ginza district, in its state of constant movement and change. I saw the space as equivalent to the proscenium backdrop of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Schauspielhaus in Berlin (1821), in which an idealised view of Berlin (as imagined by Schinkel) reinforces the audience's perception of the city's self-image.¹⁶ The view of a fragment of Tokyo similarly showed the city as both a fact and an idea, and, through the confinement of its framing, a picture, and by extension, a fiction.¹⁷ The project remained fictional.

6.3 Things, situated

In 1990, I moved away from architectural practice to a visual art practice, with the constructed environment and architecture 'in mind'. My work from this point onwards became more directly engaged with the themes of representation in everyday artefacts and their interpretation, contingency, and the inter-dependency of these artefacts, in order to devise strategies for making work in the world. Each work was made for a specific condition, and so required a meeting with each condition,

and so an interpretation of that condition, in order for each work to become both embedded or situated within its condition, continuous with it, and a productive or critical alteration of that condition. Like Eliot's notion of the true work of art's relation to the canon of poetry, I had hoped to simultaneously reinforce and change the condition that was the subject and situation of the work. The object of this strategy was that the conditions could be appreciated as constructs, as products of ideas, as fictions that people could command rather than be subjects of, or subjected to, towards kinds of freedoms. The works could enable subjectivities other than those determined by the designed environments. The works were often framed within the contexts of visual art commissions, yet were close to architecture, frequently dependent on architecture, and proposed in the language of architecture, yet 'free' because of their status as art. They are offered for consideration here as demonstrations in practice of the attitudes I have advocated in these chapters.¹⁸ I will explain the principles used in thinking of how these acts would work in these environments, and the work the works do. The projects have acknowledged the presence of representation in the constructed environment, have been aware of the contingent nature of meaning in contexts, have been concerned with experience and material culture and so the attention to, reading and interpretations of the utterances of given environments. They have, furthermore, suggested a variety of possibilities for experience, and ideas of other phenomena, and elsewhere.

6.3.1 Contingency and weak form

When I left architecture as my central practice, I made art that deflected attention away from itself, and towards its contexts, to the conditions of its visibility. At first, sculptures alluded to other artefacts like plinths and panels; and then suggested more recognisable objects, though it was difficult to be precise about what those objects were. They suggested usefulness and invited use, but were useless, even though one could approach them, even touch them.¹⁹ *Studiolo* (1995) was the title given to a group of inter-related works made for an installation in a 'white cube' art gallery.²⁰ The gallery itself looked like how a 'white cube' should look: it was conventional, and signalled the kind of business of art that went on within, its appearance aspiring to the condition of other galleries of contemporary art, which themselves had come to aspire to the conditions of visibility of works of contemporary art in museums. This particular gallery also bore close resemblance to a more renowned gallery of contemporary art in London, emulating its features and palette of materials and equipment. In other words, the gallery was a representation of another gallery, a simulacrum, and a model, derived from other white rooms that punctuated the language of Modernist architecture.²¹ It was 'weak', in the sense that it was an iteration, an evident fiction.

The installation occurred in two rooms, the first of which was adjusted to appear to be more like itself. Its features and contours were drawn over with Letraset® Letraline® black adhesive tape, so that it appeared to be drawn; the light of a small roof-light was enhanced with additional fluorescent fittings; a diminutive table stood in the room as though a miniature of one that might expect to be there. This first room, intended to be a picture of itself, appeared at once as itself and a

6.05 ←

6.05
Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Perspektivische Ansicht aus dem Zuschauerraum auf die Szene, mit der Vorstellung der beim Einweihungs-Prolog aufgestellten Dekoration, in dem Königlichen Schauspielhaus zu Berlin, 1818–1821.*



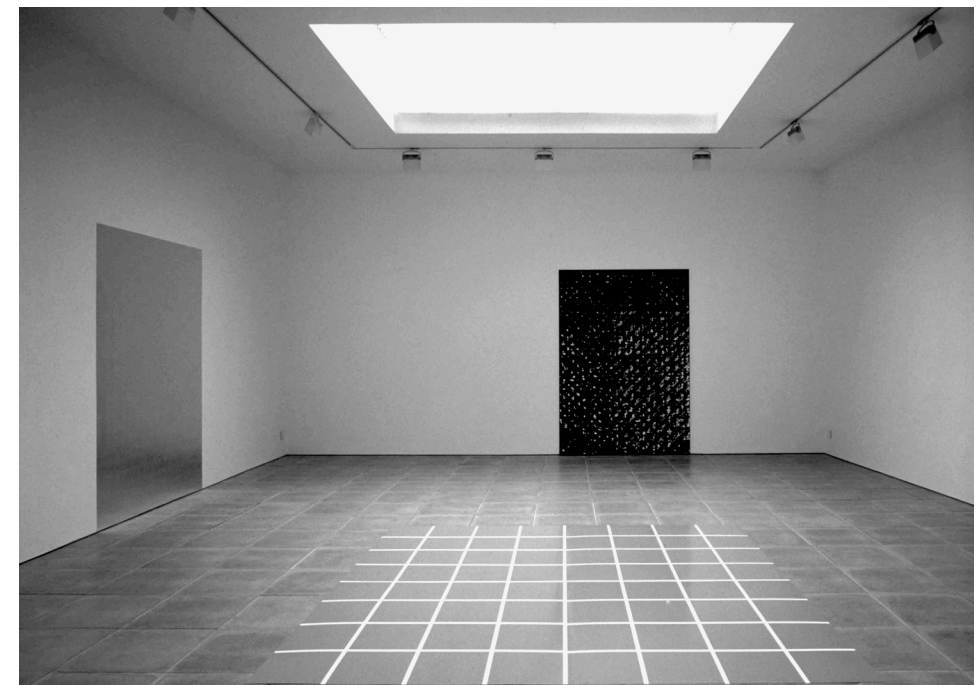
representation, one that was close to the real, and was real, but kept collapsing into its image, and then re-emerged as itself. Like the rotunda of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum, it seemed real.²² The second room, accessed through a featureless opening, contained a pair of 'paintings' that emulated the size and proportion of the opening one had walked through. One was a 'drawing', following the convention of cross-hatching of a dark space that might be the interior of a painting, the other was a surface of silver leaf directly applied to the wall, suggesting another, brighter interior, both of them 'openings' to fictive spaces; a flat sculpture on the floor was a 'picture' of the floor surface. In a corner one saw upon leaving the room, the slightly irregular geometry of the room that wanted to be a 'cube' corrected by a floor-to-ceiling partition of plasterboard and skimmed joints mounted on a custom-made painting stretcher,²³ and adjacent, a photograph of a succession of galleries under construction, of plasterboard and skimmed joints,²⁴ with openings like those one had actually and imaginatively passed through.

Like the entire gallery, each of the works was dependent on contingencies, on something outside itself, a context, a partner. The gallery was dependent on the 'other gallery' and other galleries for the authority of its own imagery. The drawing of the gallery in *Studiolo* was dependent upon the support it was drawn upon: the room and its details. *Little Table* was dependent on the image of a little table and the expectation that a real table might stand in its place, as it often did. The sculpture on the floor, *Grid*, was dependent on the pattern, size, and colouring of the floor paving, and on its picture-inflected resemblance to a generic Carl Andre sculpture.²⁵ The

6.06-11 ←

6.06
Studiolo; Little Table, 1995.

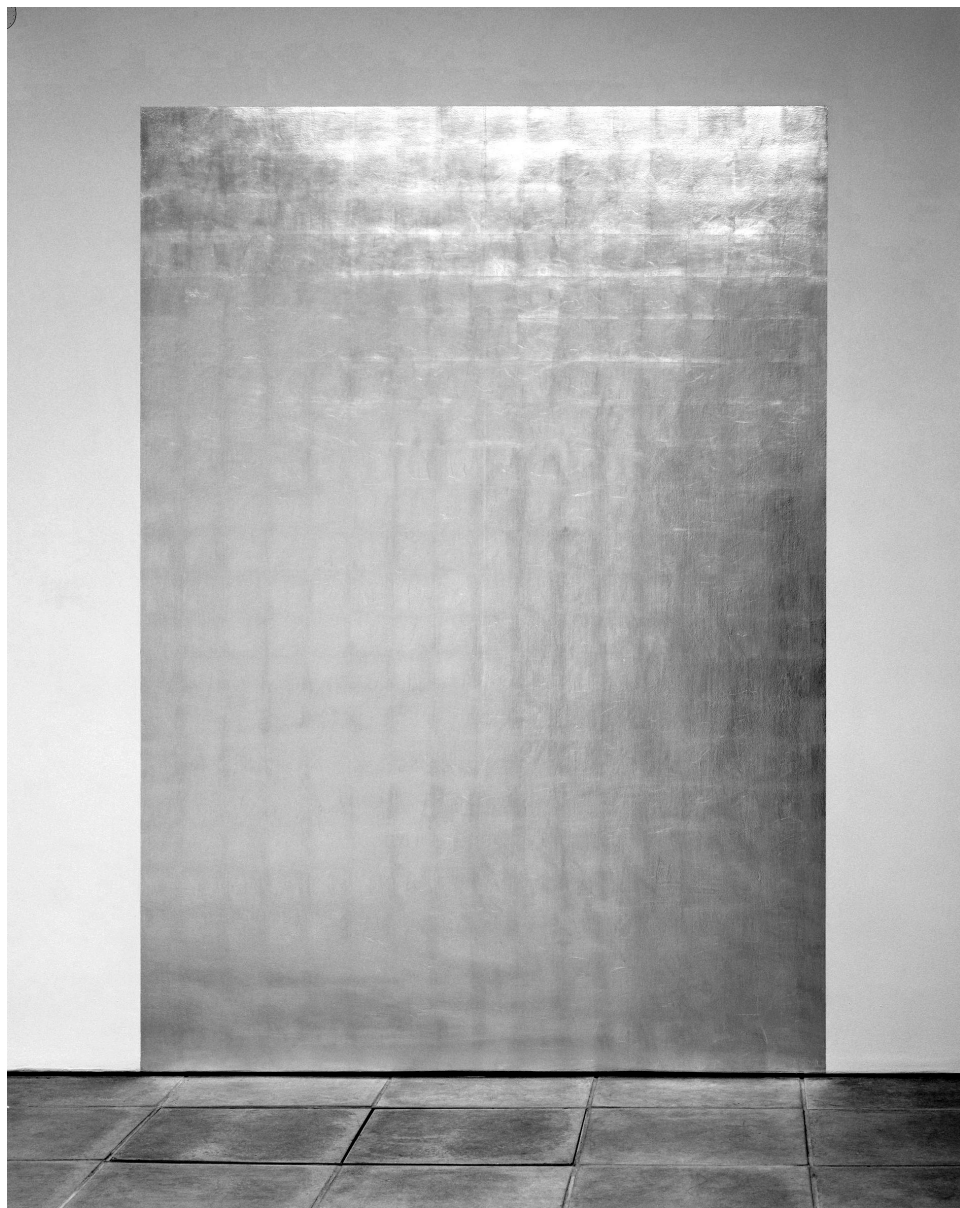
276



6.07
*Grid, (Silver) Surface,
Drawing (Dark)*, 1995.

6.08
Maastricht NL 1993.

277



6.09
(Silver) Surface, 1995.

278



6.10
Drawing (Dark), 1995.

279



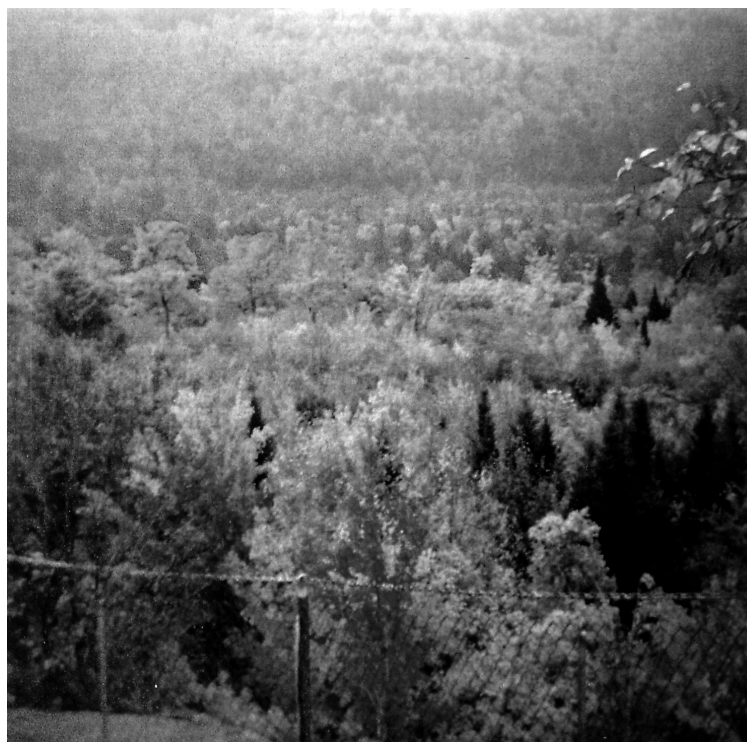
paired ‘paintings’ were dependent on the idea that paintings depicted, and so were depictions of each other, both representations of the opening to the room they were placed in. Even that real opening came to depend on the paintings of ‘openings’. The plasterboard partition that ‘corrected’ the gallery’s geometry would not have existed had the gallery walls been perpendicular to each other, and the gallery’s outward features—perhaps its entire substance—may have been derived from the plasterboard walls in the adjacent photograph. The photograph, with its succession of openings, may well have been a photograph of the gallery one stood in, looking at the opening one had entered the second room from, looking through to the first room and its own opening to the office opposite. No work stood on its own, all displayed dependencies, all works’ meanings—such as they were—were contingent upon their context, either immediate, or distant, in the form of references. The installation proposed that each artefact or picture depended on the conditions of its own visibility, and that each



was furthermore dependent on the existence of other artefacts or pictures for its existence. Each element was weak, completed by all the other elements. A deeper conclusion was drawn from *Studiolo*, namely, that the interdependencies of elements in the installation were analogous to those that existed in the constructed environment, contexts wherein individual artefacts contribute to the whole, and were neither autonomous nor simply antagonists in a congestion of antagonistic adjacencies.²⁶ This conclusion would become central to my work that addressed contexts directly, in films, photographs, and finally in permanent works in and for places.

6.3.2 Narrative documents

I worked with the view that ideas were embedded in artefacts, that artefacts were, inevitably, representations of ideas, even if they were intended to be ‘transparent’ in their function, and furthermore, that meaning emerged from the relations between these artefacts, and the nature of their interdependence. Films, such as the series *1965*, pictured in their imagery and described in their narratives the built environment as complexes of constructs, their fictions and contingent relations.²⁷ Using footage shot in London, Paris, and Kyiv, and my own narrative, the films were explicit about the investment of ideas and values in artefacts and environments, from the superficially abject to the most high-minded. Particular attention was given to architecture, and the fictions that sustained its ideas. Modernist architecture and its ambitions were set against perceived failure of those ambitions. The fading of its ideals from the public imagination was in part to do with the expediency of political



6.13.1-3
 Airport (parking lot), c 1965;
 Landscape with trees, 1970; 1642 (Salem), 1970.



ideology and a corresponding withdrawal of institutional support and maintenance. The films were elegiac, and their images sought solace in the very fabric that seemed presently to signify lost ideals. These films were concerned with the utopian project, the hope invested in it, disillusionment, and fates that were reiterated, in different forms, in the streets of European metropolitan centres. Another series of films, *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, bore a similar burden of disappointment, with the additional element of rage, largely due to the waste that came to typify the urban environment under the pressures of neoliberalism.²⁸

My photographs, however, made from the mid-1980s, were unburdened by text, and, in contrast, increasingly hopeful, suggesting that this same debased environment could sustain life, and offer, in its spaces open for reinterpretation, or misinterpretation, different fictions to construct, and freedoms that might come with them.²⁹ The photographs suggested that beauty was to be found “among the garbage and the flowers”.³⁰ I continue to make photographs with an attitude of wonder, finding a world that continuously reveals its thought, or its idea of itself, to my attention. This is an attitude that had been formed when I was a child. My earliest photographs were largely of conditions, from airport parking lots to office buildings, forests, and fragments of historical villages.³¹ Rather than trying to ‘capture’ them, I was conscious of the scenes as they presented themselves; the object of my photography was to hold on to the perception of an appearance.



From the mid-1980s, my attitude to making photographs was affected by urban topographic photography: first, that of photographers of Paris, such as Charles Marville,³² then the later work of Eugène Atget,³³ who seemed to find themselves making work at different moments in the life of the nineteenth-century metropolis: Marville, as the Haussmannian city was coming into being, with its array of figures and equipment; Atget, as the city was losing its remaining idiosyncratic streets, shopfronts, courtyards, interiors and landscapes to encroaching 'renewal' and urbanisation. Both these photographers looked at Paris as an extraordinary artefact, variously made by unseen bureaucratic agencies, or by resolutely human gestures. By 1990, as I had moved into a visual art practice, I found that the work of the so-called Düsseldorf School of photographers who studied with Bernd and Hilla Becher echoed my own ambitions for photography, and pre-dated it by some time. I have written about the position taken by the Bechers in their project of documenting endangered industrial architecture in Germany, but the work of Thomas Struth was particularly striking, in that he photographed streets, ordinary or extraordinary, each with their own specific character, largely without people, and largely taking a point of view suited to one-point perspective. His large-format camera meant that the detail of each photograph was rich, even though the subject might not offer such richness. The photograph *Düsselstraße, Düsseldorf* (1978) was emblematic, and both its point of view and its atmosphere of a silent meeting with its subject rhymed with my own way of approaching the subject.³⁴ My photographs differed substantially, in that I made them with a 35mm camera, a tool of spontaneity, of Cartier-Bresson's 'decisive moment'.³⁵ However, I also used very slow (12 ASA) black and white transparency (dia) film, which demanded long exposures, achieved without a tripod, rather, holding my breath. I favoured the overcast skies of the Bechers and Struth, which allowed the pictured artefacts to appear without drama.

I wanted to hold on to two antagonistic methods of making photographs simultaneously. The first was that which pertained to the snapshot, that informal photograph that one might take as a response to something (or someone) that suddenly appears: a photograph with a particular notion of time attached to it. The second method was germane to the topographic photograph, poised, still, and broad, as broad and as encompassing as one's view. The holding of these two 'opposite' methods together has been characteristic of my photographs since. Typically, the images are very still, yet many suggest that something is about to occur, or has recently occurred. Every photograph is made without plan or anticipation, except for that attached to waiting for the world to appear.³⁶ I was very affected, however, by encountering the work of the nineteenth-century topographic photographer Timothy O'Sullivan, and the particular order of attention in his making of 'views'.³⁷ His affordance of the appearance of the scene in all its strangeness and otherness is a quality of attention I attempted to emulate, as it seemed in direct opposition to the notion of 'capturing' an image, and its implied possession of the subject. This attitude, allowing for an approach to and meeting with the other, became central to the art in architecture projects which were to follow.

6.4 Listening to utterances

In making permanent installations of art tending to the condition of architecture for public urban environments, I recalled that places are made in the world in conditions and moments that are at the threshold of what is known and what is not known, in clearings where the self encounters the world, and where there is a possibility that the self can approach and meet the other.³⁸ In making new work in a given situation, one realises that each addition constitutes a beginning, and so, a recalibration of relations between the elements that are there, contingent and dependent upon each other, and an opportunity to recast relations between people and the world in this place. An order of attention to what one sees, the appearances of the environment, the presence of ideas in its artefacts, the presence of representation, an ear to utterances, is demanded: all these aspects have to be given the opportunity to be present. And in the case of each of my projects for places, I was reminded of the forms of attention in the views of Timothy O'Sullivan, the photographs of August Sander, and the reading of Sander's photographs by John Berger, as well as the histories of what was, what was lost, what is, and what lives. Attention to what has been built requires looking back *through* what is there, to find the various roots or sources of ideas that have established, reinforced, shaped, changed and damaged the situation one encounters. This requires looking, and interpreting the available artefacts of material culture, quite apart from all the other information one can gather about use, demographics, movements, functions, and legal constraints. I have been concerned with those ideas embedded in the making and appearances of buildings, spaces, and equipment, all of which speak of ideals, fantasies, and regrets.

As in facial expressions or those of speech, I regard the features of places, buildings and interiors as utterances—representations—and so, incomplete, or inadequate expressions of meaning. A room is at once itself, and a representation of an idea, such as a memory of another room or indeed of many other rooms. Similarly, a place is at once itself and a trace or many overlapping traces of *elsewheres*, made from the material and properties that have accumulated over time, with contributions of many periods and the ideas of each: an aggregation of representations, a cacophony of utterances of varying currency and coherence concerning ideas of what the place is, what it must fulfil, what it wants to be and what it has wanted to be in the past. It is impossible to avoid association, and memory; it is impossible, furthermore, to avoid the matter of loss, not only in appearances themselves, but in the sense of separation that arises from a place that may have once felt coherent, clear and fundamental, becoming marred, diminished, or, inevitably, ruined.

The idea that things are at once themselves and representations of the idea of themselves has infiltrated my work, whether sculptures, the scenes of my photographs, or my thoughts with regard to the making of places or interiors. One embarks on addressing environments that display the overlapping accumulation of artefacts and a corresponding agglomeration of representations, each striving for a kind of transparency, or ideal, at whose root is an original utterance that speaks of being in the world, as can be found in the origin of places. This is the notion or fiction that I use as I work, as I look, thinking of other places, other people and

other times, interpreting or speculating upon the connections and continuity that exist between them all. This is the juncture one always arrives at in turning from attention to making. The matter of making is one of recognising that one's own contribution—another utterance—is placed amidst all the others that have gone before and all the others that will come after.

6.4.1 La scala

This kind of attention is difficult to sustain in a conventional architectural practice. My work in making real places came about as possibilities through art commissions rather than architectural commissions, and so, they were released from architecture's obligation to instrumentality. The first of two projects I will describe was on an elevated square at a university campus, an ensemble of buildings in Aberystwyth, gathered to produce something like an urban setting for student life. When Sir Percy Thomas and his office designed the Penglais campus at the University of Wales (1969), they imagined a monumental ensemble on an escarpment, overlooking the town and the Bae Caradigion.³⁹ The architects named the open square around which the buildings were gathered the *Piazza*; around it stood the Arts Centre, the Student Union building, and, later, the Library, while a parapet served as a continuous seat on the square's open side. On the *Piazza*, a boiler flu tower was fitted with a bell and called the *Campanile*. The *Piazza* was punctured by a ten-metre square opening for a stair that led down to the town and the sea. The architects had imagined a civic space, one reminiscent of the medieval Italian city, in which significant entities were represented, and seen by the city's citizens as the preeminent figures of their societies: the *Comune*, the prominent family, the Church. In Todi, Umbria, for example, the institutions around the Piazza del Popolo wear their significance in their mass, expression, and outsized affordances, at once rendering a picture of civic order, and inspiring behaviour that reinforces it. The Piazza Grande at Gubbio may have also been a model, its Palazzo dei Consoli a megastructure both creating and framing the square that at once displayed its important protagonists, and set them, and all the citizens that gathered between them, on a stage that looked over the city's landscape in the valley below.

The setting in Aberystwyth was archetypal, opening towards the sea, and one could not help but think of scenes such as that at Epidauros, overlooking a landscape to which it was bound, a complete representation of the world under the heavens. Despite their quasi-civic functions and their names, the buildings around the *Piazza* here were hardly Italianate. They were Brutalist buildings, influenced by Le Corbusier, made in pre-cast and cast *in situ* concrete and bronze-tinted glass.⁴⁰ The message of a democratic space founded on the spirit of the ancients was powerful, and one I wanted to extend, in order that the generosity, nobility and humanity of its idea might articulate itself more clearly and be recognised again by those who used the environment. The project and its representative space had accumulated the negative sentiment that much 60s architecture in Britain had suffered: it was detested. It was clear that this place suffered from a problem that endemic to British popular opinion, namely that the majority refuse to take responsibility for ideas that have emerged, in earnest, from their own culture, and what that culture has



made is rejected as though as was made and imposed upon the unwary populace by someone else. The public place had become, in people's minds, a space disfigured, rather than configured, by 60s Brutalist architecture, an idea imposed by others who had nothing to do with what users thought of as 'us', yet it was an idea that must have been shared with those who commissioned it, and the community who then used it. The adversarial tradition of the British parliament, its judiciary and its public discourse serves some aspects of British life well, but it creates a condition in which blame can be placed on some imagined other, and one's own responsibility can be abrogated. Alison and Peter Smithson spoke of this with some force in their observations on vandalism and disrespect for the urban environment in London, at the time of their work on Robin Hood Gardens. They remarked that European colleagues were appalled by the complete lack of self-respect that was embedded in the vandalism and squalor that greeted the project from its first residents. And this in the face of a development constructed "for the socialist dream—which is something different from simply complying with a programme written by the socialist state..."⁴¹

I wanted to reconcile the moribund present with the rejected past, by not only extending the ensemble, but making it more like itself. My position regarding the reconciliation of time was paramount here, insisting that this 60s place was a product of a generous idea that people had enthusiastically subscribed to, as opposed to being put upon to accept. My strategy was therefore to intensify the idea and its outlet in a particular language of form. I added a small structure on the *Piazza*, an apparently freestanding stair that I called *La scala*, that was placed askew to the geometry of the other buildings, a counterpoint to the stair that was cut into its surface that led down to the town, and of precisely the same dimension

→ 6.15.1



6.15.2-3
La scala, Penglais Campus, University of Wales,
 Aberystwyth, 2003.



in plan. The underside of the stair became a *loggia* that faced the Student Union building, providing an informal shelter from the rain. The stair itself acted as a tribune, leading up to a view over the Piazza, the town, the sea, and the horizon. It became a place to sit, to look at one's friends and colleagues, to celebrate events, to feel where one was in the world, and consider the gathering of buildings around this place and the aspirations that had formed it. *La scala* was made of board-marked *in situ* and pre-cast concrete—like buildings around the Piazza—and so, in a very simple way it joined the idea and the fiction of the ensemble and its place. I wanted to revive a place in which the values invested in the site in the 1960s might present themselves, renewed, in the present; that the place, through another investment in its life, might be repaired, and again afford the possibility of human association and individual freedom. And that this, furthermore, would be situated within not only its theatre of values and ideas, but the visible world, and the cosmos. I hoped that *La scala* would cleave to all the figures drawn around the *Piazza*, and render the narrative that informed their gathering more visible, more palpable.

I hoped that it would, through its presence, create other places within the *Piazza* whose potential appropriation by people had been obscured by time and habit. Through the agency of *La scala*'s presence, I wanted the other elements of the ensemble to either regain their significance, or find their inferred uses revived: the entrance to the Student Union, the steps of the Arts Centre, and the parapet-seat of the *Piazza* and around the void of the stair leading down to the town. Like the architects of the campus, I also wanted to re-iterate the ideas that tied this arrangement to its utterance at other moments in time: from the present—2003, when *La scala* was completed—to the late 1960s when the campus was built; to the mid-1300s in

→6.15.2-3

towns like Gubbio or Todi, or a century later in Pienza; and still much further back, to Greece, in which political life, whether at the Pnyx in Athens or the theatre at Epidaurus, took place against the setting of the world beyond.

The quasi-civic space in Aberystwyth had been made for a specific public of students, teachers, supporting staff, cleaners, repairmen, performing artists, and visitors to the Arts Centre: theatre- or cinema-goers, art viewers. Visitors can either ascend from the town through the broad stair that cuts up through the *Piazza*, or descend from another, between the Student Union and the Arts Centre into the *Piazza*, where they see the figure of *La scala*, framed by the ensemble of buildings. They emerge from the Arts Centre, the Student Union or the Library. All visitors arrive at this metaphysical plain, this significant place, and here, they too, appear, as in a clearing or on a stage, significant, all of them. The elemental character of *La scala* itself, from its rough frame to its steps, was intended to evoke both the ruins of the ancient world and the campus's foundation myth as a civic idea, a social and urbane ideal, and re-present this ideal, revealing it afresh within the buildings of the campus and in each approach to the space they shared. Through this new artefact, whose identity was contingent on its condition and all its figures, I wanted to allow the whole space to become, simply, a theatre for people's relations to each other and to others, to past ideals, represented in the surrounding buildings *re-presented*, made present.

I wanted to renew the idea that this public space—representative, archetypal—would accommodate difference, many-fold-ness, variousness, heterogeneity, otherness. I desired a condition in which people could assemble with purpose. I also desired a condition in which people could be together without purpose, except to appear as themselves, as individuals among others, with their own thoughts; free: free to appear, free to follow their own purpose, free to be anonymous, free to associate, free to see where they were in the world, free to act.

6.4.2 World

A decade later, I was commissioned to design a plaza in central London at the BBC's headquarters, Broadcasting House (2013). The building was very large, a 'ship' built in the 1930s that looked down the length of Langham Place towards Oxford Circus and Regent Street and served as the hinge of John Nash's design extending north to Regent's Crescent and Regent's Park. The building was being extended eastward, and then northward again, incorporating a building that used to host BBC Radio One and bridging over Langham Street to do so. Langham Street had snaked past the back of Broadcasting House and the front of the Radio One building before meeting the eastern boundary of Hallam Street and continuing eastward into Fitzrovia.⁴² The first portion of Langham Street would now effectively be the domain of the BBC, contained and sheltered by 'New Broadcasting House', though it would remain a public pedestrian route, and this was the site set for a competition for a permanent art work. My fellow competitors made objects set around and in the space, while I proposed that the entire surface of the ground contained by the buildings would be the work.⁴³ The containment of Langham Street by the existing Broadcasting House and its extension would create a long courtyard oriented variously towards the new front door of the BBC to the north, and the spire of John Nash's All Souls Langham

Place to the south. Rather than proposing a discrete object for the space, I proposed a surface, an interrupted circle, that would fill it, and spread across the entire site. As in Aberystwyth, as well as in my projects for New Delhi, Montréal, Tokyo, and London, I wanted to make a place in which people, individually and among others, could see themselves 'in the world'.⁴⁴ Very simply, I proposed that the space, slipping under the covered portion of Langham Street, was to be a portion of a sphere, on which one could stand and walk: an idealised landscape, a fragment of the world. Although the perfect form of a fragment of a sphere proved to be impracticable, a kind of map, suggesting the globe, emerged, which I duly called *World*.

A public place, particularly in central London, is rarely designated as such. Most of the spaces thought of as public are privately owned, parts of large estates of the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Westminster, or the Crown. Rather, those spaces are taken to be public by those who use them. I intended this site at the BBC to be a public place rather than a corporate plaza, regardless of the corporation that surrounded it. It was, after all, a public thoroughway, the outflow of a real street, with real people wandering through it on their ways back and forth between Fitzrovia and the West End; a shortcut deeply ingrained in common habit. It is also where people would enter New Broadcasting House: journalists, politicians, academics, scientists and economists, celebrities, musicians, comedians, actors. The place would therefore be somewhat charged, mingling reality with a measure of fantasy: a place for casual and contrived meetings, a place for purposes, a place for waiting, a place for watching, a place for others.

I had recalled the experience of listening to the World Service in the night—which was being broadcast worldwide in over forty languages at the time—and the voices and stories from other places: where they lived, their lives there. I was also a regular listener of the Shipping Forecast, which ended the broadcast of Radio Four at night, with the weather in sections of the seas surrounding Britain and Eire, the litany of their names intoning a concrete poetry: "Viking; North Utsire; South Utsire; Forties; Cromarty..."⁴⁵ I thought about the imagination, and imagining other places, other lives, other histories, other times: a world of events, memories, and associations. The surface would allude to these broadcasts, and to one's imagining of and associations with 'elsewheres'.

I wanted people to feel as though they were walking across a piece of the world as they passed through the site, a fragment that might stand in for or be taken to be the vast domain of other people and other places. I thought about a motif that might represent the whole world, and so 'drew' a globe marked by lines of longitude and latitude in brass and stainless steel, and by the names of places, which would be engraved on the stone flags that made up the surface and set in brass. One would pass over these stones and names as one walked. The surface was to be experienced as real and substantial, in granite, like the pavements of London. It was also to be experienced as a representation of an idea, as something imagined, that one would traverse as though in the air on a great flight. This 'land' that one passed over could suggest that it was inhabited, so that one might consider the lives of others upon it. In the night, the surface was also illuminated from within, as though the places below one's feet were alive, lit up by those who lived there. I remembered the astronaut



6.16.1
World, BBC Broadcasting House,
London, 2013.

The necessity of interpretation

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6.16.2-3
***World*, BBC Broadcasting House,**
London, 2013.

World, BBC Broadcasting House, London, 2013.



and that a gathering of memorials had been set out across the surface of *World*, a cemetery of human ambitions, tragedies, and follies.

On *World*, people appeared to each other in a space that suggested myriad elsewheres, a clearing on which they could have a heightened sense of the lives of others, other places, and other times. This world-place was a textual version of what was experienced at *La scala* in Aberystwyth, where here and elsewhere, present and past were brought together. There and here, a subject could reflect upon their own position in the world, their own condition, see it, and dream of and live another, different, fictional condition. On *World*, the subject could interpret and reassemble the suggested worlds that the names underfoot offered. Freedoms would come through pleasure and the realisation that their own condition was fictional, too. All figures, all times, all places, all lives, were dependent upon each other and all tied together.

I hoped, and continue to hope, that *World* would affect and mirror a public of individuals, temporarily together, imagining their own interior lives, the lives of others, the circumstances of other places and other times; and in their individual states of reverie or reflection,⁵² feeling both humbled and comforted by this substitute world under their feet; on their own, but not alone; free, in themselves. *World* was a modest project of reconciliation, and for my part, a return to the idealistic consciousness of my innocent youth.

6.5 A beginning

The work and projects described in this chapter are not meant to represent a set of instructions about how to work. Rather, they have been offered because of how they have shaped and revealed attitudes towards the conditions I was confronted with as an artist, photographer, and designer, and their emphasis on the problem and act of *beginning*. The work was made in response to existing conditions, and what could be recognised in them: what they were, how they worked, what—and who—they represented, what they revealed about ideas, their cultures, and their affects. My approach originated from a subjective consciousness shaped by the environment from which I came and its effects on subjectivities and notions of freedom within it, which I became both aware and critical of; from an understanding that the artefacts of a given constructed environment contained ideas, and that the material culture of that environment was closely tied to representation as well as ideology; that the gathering of artefacts could be seen as representative of a culture's system of values, to which people were both authors and subjects; that I bore a responsibility to these gatherings similar to that which the poet has to language, culture and poetry; that experience of the constructed environment was not merely a matter of response to phenomena with sensitivity and emotion, but deeply embedded in language, material culture, and representation; that to meet the conditions that one encountered in the constructed environment, one had to develop one's attention and empathy to those conditions and the lives lived within them; and, that in working within them, one had to develop means of recognising that artefacts had interdependent relations, and that interpretation was necessary in order to engage with and add

to those conditions, recognising that one's work in doing so would change them; and finally, that this change should be liberating for the minds and lives of others. My work in this chapter, particularly concerning *La scala*, has been offered as an embodiment of an attitude, more than an enactment of theory. The objective of all the chapters has been to gather a set of associated considerations concerning conditions, experience and 'listening' so that the artist, photographer, designer, or architect may have help in establishing their own attitude towards beginning of their work in the world.

The architect is obliged to make decisions about working with existing conditions—environments, buildings, interiors—in order to achieve positive change for those who use and are affected by them. The architect is presented with all kinds of issues and problems that they must address pragmatically, responsibly, precisely. The architect must listen, and act with honesty and integrity. Their work must be stable, dry and warm, provide safety, and protection from fire, ensure resistance to natural disasters, be careful with the resources it uses, be sustainable, accommodate functional demands and efficient internal relationships, be integrated into the surrounding environment without frictions, and satisfy all the externally-imposed conditions that pertain to its construction from building regulations to local bye-laws, policies, and guidelines. The architect bears many responsibilities, and, admittedly, none of them require the architect to be concerned with greater conditions surrounding the project, ideology, culture, material culture, phenomenology, or meaning. None of these technical issues have been written about in the previous chapters, which come with the territory of being an architect. However, an architect is not merely a technician—although the architect certainly *is* a technician—but works within another context, one in which building is significant, because it is conscious of itself and its acts and conscious of its responsibilities beyond those directly related to its clients and their brief. Those responsibilities pertain to who uses, lives in, are affected by the work they make; they pertain to the environments and conditions in which their work is situated in the present and in the future, and, in my view, in relation to the past and the lives that have come before; they pertain to the quality of life of the society in which their work is situated. On each occasion, the architect should, again, this is my view, provide a model for life.

How are such objectives realised? There are different attitudes one can assume. Students of architecture, the popular press, the specialist press, and the general public are habitually attracted to architecture that announces itself as a kind of spectacle, one that emerges from the creative mind of a singular genius, whose work is always original, surprising, innovative, born from some premise that is derived from other fields of study, perpetually new, different from everything that has appeared before, and projected upon given conditions in great contrast to what is there. A model to be emulated through imitation, ideally reduced to a methodology that can produce its results all by itself and still maintain an aura of individual authorship. This is an attitude, and a very popular one, certainly in the years that followed the Oil Crisis of the early- to mid-1970s, when paper was the only domain in which architects could work, for which *projection* was its most natural outlet. It is an attitude that was immediately felt in architectural education, distanced from

real engagement with the world as it made itself. That attitude, which separated architecture from culture as it is made and lived and placed it in a silo, created a bifurcation in architectural education, which diminished its capacities to benefit culture and understand how culture works as a collective project. I use the word culture not as some elevated, distant phenomenon, but as what a society produces that speaks of itself, its ideas, and its hopes for itself. If one does not know the value of culture, the idea of culture, then one is reduced to following two paths: that of the genius, and that of the technical instrument. Unfortunately, the first path, if it is true, applies to very few individuals, and those very few are dependent upon the collaboration of many. The path is more likely occupied by those who think that the direction that is “always original, surprising, innovative, born from some premise that is derived from other fields of study, perpetually new, different from everything that has appeared before, and projected upon given conditions in great contrast to what is there” will yield career opportunities. It is indeed the path chosen by careerists. The second path often sees technical proficiency transformed into innovations that are necessary but vulnerable to various orders of instrumentality and constructions of power, from the state and its institutions to the service of capital. The instances of this are too abundant to enumerate.⁵³ I shall merely indicate that both paths abrogate responsibility for the idea of life, and celebrate instead the idea of control.

I would prefer the architect, particularly, to ask questions, of themselves and the world they encounter. Where am I? How am I myself here? What is around me? What are all these things, together? How am I and others affected by the environment that is so immersive that one cannot see it? How can I understand what has been made? How can I see the ideas that are embedded within what has been made? How can I begin to understand the lives of others? How can I move closer to that understanding? What can I do, as an architect, to serve culture, the environment that is shared by people and living things? What can I do to serve others, and life, and lives, and freedom, and happiness?⁵⁴ How do I begin?

There is a point at the centre of this writing that concerns representation, and is focused on the moment at which, in William Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*,⁵⁵ Leontes’s supposedly dead queen, Hermione, steps out of the condition of standing as a statue to movement into being, crossing the threshold from representation into reality, the threshold between death and life. That transition, transgression, and transubstantiation of states of being is the essence of the significance of representation. I have regarded the artefacts of the constructed environment, from the most banal to the most sophisticated as being representations: the representations of human ideas, thought, hope, and desire. In such a realisation, the entire environment can be thought of as being alive, as speaking, as looking back.⁵⁶ For the architect, photographer and artist alike, it is a matter of looking, reading, and interpreting those artefacts and their arrangements that provide access to life as it has been invested in them. It is working within the language that those artefacts speak and have spoken that allows the architect to engage with the world in a life-like way, not in the service of oneself, or in the service of systems of power, or in the service of capital, but in the service of a great inheritance, this world that is shared by others, this world that has been invested in by others, and in the service of life.

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- [17] Dirk Somers, ‘A Kind of Picturesque’, in *Sergison Bates architects: Buildings* (Lucerne: Quart Publishers, 2012): 21–26

6.3 THINGS, SITUATED

- [18] Although I was trained as an architect and worked in and in collaboration with several architectural practices as a designer on many projects since 1979, my own work from 1990 onwards has been undertaken at the margins of architectural practice, or in collaborations with other architectural practices, including Tony Fretton, Sergison Bates, Zeinstra Van Gelderen, East, Hoek en de Wit, Büro Krucker, and Witherford Watson Mann. The works or ‘acts’ I refer to in the following passages are either art installations, or permanent art commissions for public places tending to the condition of architecture. They are emblematic of my inter-disciplinary practice in art, photography, and architecture.
- [19] Greg Hilty, ‘A letter’, in Greg Hilty, Tony Fretton, Mark Pimlott, *Studiolo* (London: Todd Gallery, 1995): n.p.

- [20] Mark Currah, ‘Mark Pimlott, Studiolo’, in *Time Out London*, 3–10 January 1996: 45; Mark Gisbourne, ‘Mark Pimlott, Studiolo’, in *Art Monthly*, no. 193, February 1996: 39–40
- [21] To this end, I made a work for the same gallery two years later, called *Bande sonore* (Soundtrack), a sound piece in which a voice tells the story of the space—its story, the gallery speaking of itself—and the various references within the Modernist lexicon that have informed its appearance, over speakers borrowed by the gallery from Brian Eno.
- [22] The operation on the room was inspired by observation of the Rotunda of Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s Altes Museum (1824) in Berlin, where architectural features were enhanced by the addition of painted delineation (see Mark Pimlott, ‘Picturing fictions’, in Mark Pimlott, *Without and Within: Essays on Territory and the Interior* (Rotterdam: Episode publishers, 2007): 16; and the wall drawings of the artist Michael Craig-Martin, whose installation I assisted at Villa Herbst/Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź, in 1994, using Letraset® Letraline®. See Mark Pimlott, ‘Michael Craig-Martin’, in Artur Zagula, ed., *Michael Craig-Martin* (Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki, 1994): 57–75
- [23] After the exhibition, the plasterboard was recycled, and the stretcher, exposed, became a different work, *A scaffold*, exhibited at Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge. A model of this work, *Trompe l’œil*, was later exhibited in the installation *Piazzasalone* in Venezia.
- [24] *Maastricht NL 1993* (1994) was a photograph of a gallery under construction in the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht, designed by Aldo Rossi. Other works were, in the second room were *Grid*, (*Silver*) *Surface*, *Drawing (Dark)*, (*A wall*); and in the first room, *Studiolo*, and *Little Table* (1995).
- [25] See, among many publications, Diane Waldman, *Carl Andre* (New York: Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, 1970); Mark Pimlott, ‘Carl Andre: more like roads than like buildings’, in Ian Cole, ed., *Carl Andre and the Sculptural Imagination* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1996): 44–53
- [26] Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978): 15–16; 79
- [27] Mark Pimlott, 1965, Todd Gallery, London, 1998, a suite of four films: *A stage*, (*streets*), *Kinderszenen*, *World*. See Robert Mahoney, ‘Your Place or Mine’, in *Time Out New York*, 1998/05/21–28: 59; Mark Currah, ‘1965’, in *Time Out London*, 1998/07/15–22: 52; Doris Lockhart Saatchi, ‘1965’, in *Blueprint*, July–August 1998: 46; Dawn Fulcher, ‘1965’, in *Contemporary Visual Arts*, no. 17, 1998: 92–93
- [28] Mark Pimlott, *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* (2005), suite of six films: *Here*, *Elsewheres*, *Hole*, *Flag*, *tombeau*, *Le Feu follet*, Nederlands Architectuurinstituut (Nest), Rotterdam, 2005–2006; Mark Pimlott, ‘Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen’, in *Scroope 15, Cambridge University Journal of Architecture*, 2003: 81–86
- [29] Mark Pimlott, *In Passing: Photographs* (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2010); Mark Pimlott, ‘A World of Others: Pictures of Things’, in Claudia Lynch, Patrick Lynch, eds., *Journal of Civic Architecture*, no. 9 (London: Canalside Press, 2022): 26–37
- [30] Leonard Cohen, lyric to ‘Suzanne’ (1967) © Sony/ATV Music Publishing Ltd.
- [31] Mark Pimlott, 1970, series of eight photographs made between c 1965 and 1970, shown at ‘Nomadia’, De Vaalserberg, Rotterdam, 1996; published in *Tijdschrift 3* (Rotterdam: Salle de bains, 1996); and Mark Pimlott, *In Passing: photographs*, op. cit.
- [32] Marie de Thézy, *Marville Paris* (Paris: Éditions Hazan, 1994)
- [33] Françoise Reynaud, Roger Delpire, ed., *Eugène Atget: Un choix de photographies extraites de la collection du Musée Carnavalet* (Paris: Centre National de la Photographie, 1984)
- [34] Thomas Struth, Ulrich Loock, *Unbewußte Orte/Unconscious Places* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 1987)
- [35] Jean Clair, *Henri Cartier-Bresson* (Paris: Centre National de la photographie, 1982)
- [36] Nick de Ville, ‘Mark Pimlott’, in *Snapshots politics: The Camera as an Instrument of Art* (Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Akademie, 1991): n.p.

[37] TobyJurovics, CarolMJohnson, Glenn Willumson, William F Stapp, *Framing the West: The Survey Photographs of Timothy H O'Sullivan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010)

6.4 LISTENING TO UTTERANCES

[38] Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976)

[39] Architects Percy Thomas and Partners, Penglais Campus, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales, 1969

[40] The monumental Modernist ensemble, and the re-creation ‘the heart of the city’ became an objective of CIAM in the late 1950s, particularly under the leadership of Josep Lluís Sert, and pushed by the plans for post-war reconstructions of cities, notably by Le Corbusier at Saint-Dié. It was the mid-1960s work of Le Corbusier at Chandigarh and La Tourette, however, that gave these ensembles imagery, relating them to historical models, from the Acropolis to the Carthusian monastery Le Thoronet. See, Eric Mumford, Hashim Sarkis, *Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953–1969* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Eric Mumford, *Defining Urban Design: CIAM Architects and the Formation of a Discipline 1937–69* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Jean Petit, ed., *Un Couvent de La Tourette* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1963); W Boesiger, ed., *Le Corbusier et son atelier rue de Sèvres 35, Œuvre complète 1952–1957 volume 6* (Zürich: Les Éditions d’Architecture, 1957); W Boesiger, ed., *Le Corbusier et son atelier rue de Sèvres 35, Œuvre complète 1957–1965 volume 7* (Zürich: Les Éditions d’Architecture, 1965)

[41] Alison and Peter Smithson, ‘Robin Hood Gardens, London’, in Alison and Peter Smithson, *The Charged Void: Architecture* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2001): 296–313

[42] Richard MacCormack, MJP Architects, 2000–2013. The art commission for World came from an invited competition arranged by modus operandi art consultants in 2003.

[43] ‘Mary Beard hops across World with artist Mark Pimlott’, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/broadcastinghouse/newsandevents/world.html>, no longer accessible, Nicola Jackson, ‘Public art’, in *Building the BBC: A Return to Form* (London: BBC Publications, 2013): 140–141; Edwin Heathcote, ‘New vision at the BBC’s heart’, in *Financial Times*, Monday 2003/07/21: 13

[44] Mark Pimlott and Peter St John, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi, prize-winning competition project (1986); Mark Pimlott and Tony Fretton, Place Jacques-Cartier, Montréal, commended competition project (1990); Mark Pimlott and Peter St John, Tokyo International Forum, competition project (1990); Mark Pimlott, *A Higher Place*, Royal Docks, London, selected but unrealised public art commission, 1997

[45] ‘Shipping Forecast’, BBC Weather. <https://www.bbc.com/weather/coast-and-sea/shipping-forecast>; ‘Shipping Forecast’, BBC Radio 4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0006qfvv>; ‘Shipping Forecast’, Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shipping_Forecast The thirty-one sections of sea around Britain and Eire are: Viking, North Utsire, South Utsire, Forties, Cromarty, Forth, Tyne, Dogger, Fisher, German Bight, Humber, Thames, Dover, Wight, Portland, Plymouth, Biscay, Trafalgar, FitzRoy, Sole, Lundy, Fastnet, Irish Sea, Shannon, Rockall, Malin, Hebrides, Bailey, Fair Isle, Faroes, Southeast Iceland.

[46] Buzz Aldrin, in Al Reinert, dir., *For All Mankind* (United States: Apollo Associates, 1989)

[47] ‘The Family of Man’, photographic exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, curated by Edward Steichen, 24 January to 8 May 1955, followed by an eight-year world tour.

[48] ‘Terres des Hommes/Man and his World’ was the theme of the Universal Exposition, expo67, held in Montréal, 28 April to 27 October 1967, inspired by the philosophy of airman Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, arrived at by the Exhibition Committee, Spring 1963. *Expo67: Guide Officiel/Official Guide* (Toronto: McLean Hunter Publishing Co. Ltd., 1967): 28

[49] Glenn Gould, ‘Idea of North’, a documentary and sound piece incorporating music and voices from various recordings, with a layering method he called ‘contrapuntal radio’, for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, broadcast 28 December 1967. ‘Revisiting Glenn Gould’s revolutionary radio documentary’, ‘The Idea of North’, posted 2022/12/12 <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/glenn-gould-idea-of-north-radio-documentary-1.6682765>, accessed 2025/01/06

[50] Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada (1968–1979; 1980–1984). In advocating for immigration and multiculturalism, Trudeau described his vision of Canada as a “cultural mosaic” at the Liberal Party Leadership Convention in 1968. Multiculturalism became policy in his response to the Report of the Committee Bilingualism and Biculturalism, in Parliament, 8 October 1971. See ‘Pierre Trudeau: Multiculturalism’, https://canadahistory.com/sections/documents/leaders/Pierre_Trudeau/On_Multiculturalism.html, accessed 2025/01/06

[51] Sample, from names 721 to 750: ERZINCAN, ETNA, MINIMATA, MURUROA, CERNE, KILAUEA, TEHERAN, KAMCHATKA, BIKINI, KURCHATOV, NEVADA, HIROSHIMA, NAGASAKI, STYX, STROMBOLI, ROCKHALL, SAKHALIN, SHETLAND, VANUATU, BERING STRAIGHT, BERMUDA, CONEY ISLAND, ISLE OF MAN, VIRGIN ISLANDS, MALTA, MILOS, MONTANA, ALTAMONT, ISLE OF WIGHT, ISLES OF THE BLEST.

[52] Georg Simmel (1903), ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’, in Richard Sennett, ed., *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969): 47–60

6.5 A BEGINNING

[53] The latest technology-based path concerns data, artificial intelligence, and ‘smart cities’, apparently with little disquiet about their usage by tech corporations that wish to exploit their concentrations of power to control public opinion and the shape of politics. The service of oligarchs and authoritarian regimes is the ultimate destination. See, among others, Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (London: Profile Books, 2019)

[54] Agnes Martin, ‘The Current of the River of Life Moves Us’, in Dieter Schwartz, ed., *Agnes Martin: Writings/Schriften* (Stuttgart: Edition Cantz, 1992): 135–152

[55] William Shakespeare (1609–11), ‘The Winter’s Tale’, in Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 1997): 2883–2954

[56] Norman Bryson, ‘The Gaze in the Expanded Field’, in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality. Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, no. 2 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988): 88; Gérard Wajcman, ‘Boîte de sardines’, in *Lacan: L’Exposition: Quand l’art rencontre la psychanalyse* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2024): 52–53

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TO BEGIN



0.01
Mark Pimlott, *Tbilisi GE 2004*.

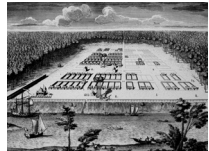


0.02
Giuseppe Mengoni, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milano, 1877. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



0.03
André Malraux in his living room in Boulogne-sur-Seine, choosing illustrations for his book, *Le Musée Imaginaire*, 1953. Photograph Maurice Jarnoux for Paris Match.

1 TERRITORIES INTERIORS SUBJECTIVITIES



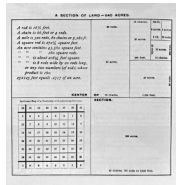
1.01
Peter Gordon, *A View of Savannah as it stood on the 29th of March 1734*. From Malcolm Bell III, N Jane Iseley, *Historic Savannah* (Savannah: Historic Savannah Foundation, 1977).



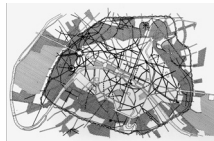
1.02
Mark Pimlott, *Dorval CA 2011*.



1.03
Pianta di Roma, quarto periodo, Città rinascimentale e moderna, secoli XIV–XX. From Renato Bollati, Saverio Muratore, Sergio Bollati, Guido Marinucci, disegnatore E Malle, *Centro studi per un operante storia urbana di Roma* (Roma: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1963).



1.04
Thomas Jefferson, Land Ordinance of 1785. From Leonardo Benevolo (1968), *Architecture of the Renaissance*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978): 1028.



1.05
Scheme of the demolitions and expansion effected by Haussmann on Paris, 1852: existing streets are shown in white; streets in black are those created during the Second Empire, squared areas are new *quartiers*; lined areas indicate green zones. Legado Arturo Soria. <https://legadoarturosoria.es/maure-plan-haussmann>



1.06
Demolitions planned by Haussmann to create Avenue de l'Opéra. Charles Marville, *Between rue*

de l'Échelle and rue St Augustin, 1877. J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Public domain.



1.07
Cross-section of a Parisian *immeuble*. Edmond Texier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1852. Public domain.



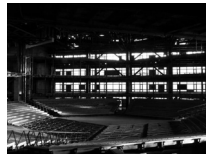
1.08
Gustave Caillebotte, *Jeune homme à sa fenêtre*, 1875. J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Public domain.



1.09
Ildefons Cerdà, *Ensanche de Barcelona*. Plan of the surrounding areas of the city of Barcelona and the project for its improvement and expansion, 1859. Museu d'Història de la Ciutat, Barcelona.



1.10
Lithograph from Guy Debord, *Guide psychogéographique de Paris*. *Discours sur les passions de l'amour* (Copenhagen: Bauhaus Imaginiste, 1957). DMC 2302, Drawing Matter Collections, London.



1.11
Kollektiv der Bauakademie der DDR um Heinz Graffunder, Palast der Republik, Berlin, 1976. Great hall during demolition, 1998. Photograph AGADEZ. Public domain.



1.12
Piano + Rogers. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1977. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



1.13
Pei Associates: Ieoh Ming Pei, Henry Cobb, Vincent Ponte, Place Ville-Marie: Promenade des Boutiques Montréal, 1962. Photograph George Cserna. Pei Cobb Freed Archive, New York.



1.14
Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Sise (ARCOP), Éva Vecsei, project architect, Place Bonaventure, 1967: Interior of the Concordia Exhibition Hall. From "Az Őn építészete rendkívül férfias!"—Vecsei Éva élete és munkássága—Második rész', *Építészforum*, 2025/05/01. <https://epiteszforum.hu/az-on-epiteszete-rendkivul-ferfias--vecsei-eva-elete-es-munkassaga--masodik-resz>

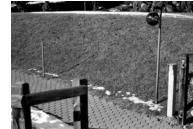


1.15
Victor Prus, Métro Bonaventure, Montréal, 1966. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



1.16
R Buckminster Fuller, Cambridge Seven Associates, United States Pavilion, expo67, Montréal. "On Île Sainte-Hélène is a huge transparent geodesic 'sky break bubble' 250 feet in spherical diameter and 200 feet high. Its exhibits show the creative efforts of man based on a life in a prosperous and automated society." Post card, Plastichrome® of Canada, 1967. Courtesy Mark Pimlott.

2 IMAGES, APPEARANCES, UTTERANCES



2.01
Mark Pimlott, *Flims CH 1989*.



2.02
Advertisement for Panzani alimentary items, 1960s. From Roland Barthes, 'Rhetoric of the Image', in Roland Barthes, trans. Stephen Heath, *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana Books, 1977): plate XVII.



2.03
René Magritte, *La Clef des songes*, 1935. Museum of Modern Art, New York.



2.04
Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, *Signs of Life: Symbols in the American City*, Renwick Gallery of the National Collection of Fine Arts, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, 1976. Photomurals from photographs by Stephen Shore. Venturi Scott Brown Architects, Philadelphia.



2.05
Queen Elizabeth II being shown the model of Place Ville Marie, Montréal, 1959. Vincent Ponte is in the background, wearing sunglasses. Photograph David Bier. Pei Cobb Freed Archive, New York.



2.06
Michelangelo Buonarroti, Ricetto, La biblioteca Laurenziana, Firenze. From Paolo Portoghesi, Bruno Zevi, eds., *Michelangelo Architetto* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi editoriale, 1964): plate 295.

3 CONTEXTS



3.01
Mark Pimlott, *Praha CZ 1991*.



3.02
Diener & Diener Architekten, Administration building Hochstrasse, Basel, 1985–1989. Photograph Diener & Diener Architekten.



3.03
Tony Fretton Architects, Lisson Gallery, London, 1990–1991. Photograph Lorenzo Elbaz.

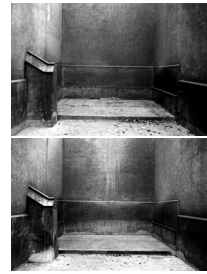


3.04
Tony Fretton Architects, Lisson Gallery, London, 1990–1991. Photograph Chris Steele-Perkins.



3.05
Álvaro Siza Vieira, Piscinas das Marés, Leça de Palmeira, 1961–1966. Photograph Roberto Collovà.

4 THE COMPLEXITY OF EXPERIENCE



4.01.1–2
Mark Pimlott, *London GB 1995 (Eton I); London GB 1995 (Eton II)*.

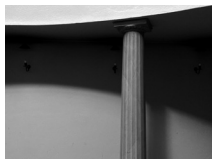


4.02
Peter Zumthor, Bruder-Klaus-Kapelle, Mechernich-Wachendorf, 2007. Photograph Hélène Binet.



4.03
Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.





4.04.1–6
Erik Gunnar Asplund, Woodland Chapel, Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1918–1920. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



4.05
Erik Gunnar Asplund, Sigurd Lewerentz, Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1918–1940. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



4.06.1–2
Sigurd Lewerentz, Meditation Grove, Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1918–1940. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



4.07
Sigurd Lewerentz, Resurrection Chapel, Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1922–1925. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



4.08.1–2
Erik Gunnar Asplund, Woodland Crematorium, main chapel, Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm, 1940. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



4.09
Floris Vos, 1:1 set for Erwin Olaf, Het Nieuw Instituut, Rotterdam, 2014. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



4.10
Gio Ponti, Sedia 699 Superleggera, 1957. Photograph Giorgio Casali. Gio Ponti Archives.



4.11
Mark Pimlott, Łódź PL 1994 (Manhattan).



4.12
William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, 1612. From left to right, Maria Coin,

Diane Lepvrier (Hermione). Still from Eric Rohmer, dir., cinematography Luc Pagès, *Conte d'Hiver* (France: Les films de Losange, 1992).



4.13
Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Oggetti in meno*, 1966. (*Lampada a mercurio a luce gialla*/Mercury Lamp Giving Yellow Light; *Struttura per parlare in piedi*/Structure for Talking while Standing; *Rosa bruciata*/Burnt Rose; *Statua Ligne*a/Wooden Statue; *Quadro di Pranzo*/Dining Room Picture; *Il mobile*/The Piece of Furniture; *Paesaggio*/Landscape; *Foto di Jasper Johns*/Snapshot of Jasper Johns; *Piramide verde con tavolo e sedie*; Green Pyramid with Table and Chairs). Photograph P Bressano. Fondazione Michelangelo Pistoletto.



4.14
Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Sfera di Giornale*/Sphere of Newspapers, 1966. In *Cont-emp-l'azione*, Galleria Enzo Sperone, Galleria il Punto, Torino, 1967. Fondazione Michelangelo Pistoletto.



4.15
Martin Honert, *Foto*, 1993. From Martin Hentschel, *Menschenwelt* (Interieur) (Frankfurt: Oktagon Verlag, 1994): 73. Photograph Nic Tenwiggenhorn.



4.16
Wolfgang Schlegel, *Gate*, 1991. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



4.17.1–3
Richard Artschwager, *Door*, 1987. Edition of 25. Brooke Alexander, Inc., New York.



4.18
Eagles of Architecture, fragment of *Maarschalk Gerardstraat 5*, Antwerpen, coupled with photograph by Filip Dujardin. In architecten de vylder vinck taillieu and Filip Dujardin, curators, *BRAVOURE*/Belgian Pavilion, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016. Photograph Mark Pimlott.

5 THE MATTER OF ATTENTION



5.01
Timothy O'Sullivan, *Sage Brush Desert, Ruby Hills* (Nevada), 1868. From Daniel Wolf, ed., *The American Space: Meaning in Nineteenth-Century Landscape Photography* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983).



5.02
Elliott Erwitt, *SPAIN. Madrid*, 1995. Francisco Goya, *La maja vestida*, 1798–1805; *La maja desnuda*, 1797–1800. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Magnum Photos.



5.03
Albrecht Dürer, *Draughtsman making a drawing of a reclining woman*, 1525. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



5.04
Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.



5.05
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1810. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Public domain.



5.06
Haig whiskey advertisement, c 1970. From John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1974).



5.07
Michelangelo Pistoletto, *The Etruscan*, 1976. Photograph Paolo Pellion di Persano. Giorgio Persano Collection. Fondazione Michelangelo Pistoletto.



5.08
Philip Johnson in his house, Glass House, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1949. From Jeff Wall, 'Dan Graham's Kammerspiel', in *Dan Graham* (Perth: The Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1985).



5.09
Timothy O'Sullivan, *Desert Sand Hills near Sink of Carson, Nevada*, c 1867. From Daniel Wolf, ed., *The American Space: Meaning in Nineteenth-Century Landscape Photography* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983).



5.10
Timothy O'Sullivan, *Section of South Side of Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico*, seasons of 1871, 1872, 1873. J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



5.11
Roger Fenton, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, Crimea, 1855. From Valerie Lloyd, *Roger Fenton: Photographer of the 1850s* (London: South Bank Board/ Yale University Press, 1988). Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



5.12
Timothy O'Sullivan, *Field where General Reynolds Fell, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania*, 1863. From Alexander Gardner, *Photographic Sketch Book of the War*, vol 1 (Washington: Philp & Solomons, 1866): image 80. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



5.13
Timothy O'Sullivan, *Rock Carved by Drifting Sand, Below Fortification Rock, Arizona*, 1871. From Daniel Wolf, ed., *The American Space: Meaning in Nineteenth-Century Landscape Photography* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



5.14
Louis Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple, Paris*, 1838. Public domain.



5.15
Charles Marville, *Rue de Constantine* (rue de Lutèce), 1865. View towards the Palais de Justice; on the left, rue des Deux-Ermites. Public domain.



5.16
Charles Marville, *Châlet de nécessité du marché de la Place de la Madeleine, Paris*, c 1865. View towards rue de Sèze. Public domain.



5.17
Eugène Atget, *Coin rue de Seine*, 1924. From Françoise Reynaud, Roger Delpire, ed., *Eugène Atget: Un choix de photographies extraites de la collection du Musée Carnavalet* (Paris: Centre National de la Photographie, 1984.)



5.18
Eugène Atget, *Magasins du Bon Marché*, 1927. Abbot Levy Collection. Museum of Modern Art, New York.



5.19 Walker Evans, *Houses and Billboards in Atlanta*, 1936. Walker Evans Archive. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



5.20 Walker Evans, *Pennsylvania Steel Mill Town*, 1935. Walker Evans Archive. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



5.21 John Szarkowski, *Guaranty (Prudential) Building, Buffalo*, 1951–1952. Estate of John Szarkowski, Museum of Modern Art, New York.



5.22 Andrey Tarkovsky, *Myasnoye, September 26*, 1981. From Giovanni Chiaramonte, Andrey A Tarkovsky, eds., *Instant Light: Tarkovsky Polaroids* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004).



5.23 Stephen Shore, *West 3rd Street, Parkersburg, West Virginia, May 16*, 1974. 303 Gallery, New York.



5.24 Stephen Shore, *2nd Street East and South Main Street, Kalispell, Montana, August 22*, 1974. Museum of Modern Art, New York.



5.25 Bernd and Hilla Becher, *Zeche Hannover, Bochum-Hordel, Ruhr Region, Germany*, 1973. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



5.26 Thomas Struth, *Düsselstraße, Düsseldorf*, 1979. Thomas Struth/Marian Goodman Gallery.



5.27 Thomas Struth, *Ulica Truda, St Petersburg*, colour photograph, 2005. Thomas Struth/Marian Goodman Gallery.



5.28 August Sander, *Maurerkamerad*, 1928. Die Fotografische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur—August Sander Archiv. Museum of Modern Art, New York.



5.29 August Sander, *Young Farmers*, 1914. Die Fotografische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur—August Sander Archiv. Museum of Modern Art, New York.



5.30 August Sander, *Group of Mayors*, 1928. Die Fotografische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur—August Sander Archiv. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

6 THE NECESSITY OF INTERPRETATION



6.01 August Sander (1914), *Young Farmers*, Die Fotografische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur—August Sander Archiv. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

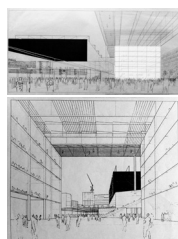


6.02 Mark Pimlott, *Praha CZ* 1991.

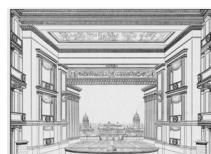
6.03.1 Mark Pimlott, Peter St John, with Tony Fretton, *Neckinger Mills Loft*, London, 1987. Photograph Gareth Winters.



6.03.2 Mark Pimlott, Peter St John, with Tony Fretton, *Neckinger Mills Loft*, London, 1987. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



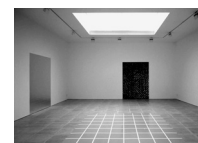
6.04.1–2 Mark Pimlott, Peter St John, *Tokyo International Forum*, 1990.



6.05 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Perspektivische Ansicht aus dem Zuschauerraum auf die Szene, mit der Vorstellung der beim Einweihungs-Prolog aufgestellten Dekoration, in dem Königlichen Schauspielhaus zu Berlin*, 1818–1821. From Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Sammlung architektonischer Entwürfe: enthaltend theils Werke, welche ausgeführt sind, theils Gegenstände, deren Ausführung beabsichtigt wurde* (Berlin: Wittich, 1820–1840): plate 14.



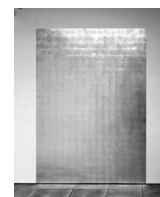
6.06 Mark Pimlott, *Studiolo; Little Table*, 1995. From the installation *Studiolo*, Todd Gallery, London, 1995–1996. Photograph Peter White/FXP.



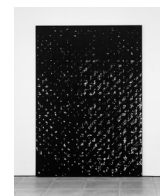
6.07 Mark Pimlott, *Grid, (Silver) Surface, Drawing (Dark)*, 1995. From the installation *Studiolo*, Todd Gallery, London, 1995–1996. Photograph Peter White/FXP.



6.08 Mark Pimlott, *Maastricht NL* 1993. From the installation *Studiolo*, Todd Gallery, London, 1995–1996. Photograph Peter White/FXP.



6.09 Mark Pimlott, *(Silver) Surface*, 1995. From the installation *Studiolo*, Todd Gallery, London, 1995–1996. Photograph Peter White/FXP.



6.10 Mark Pimlott, *Drawing (Dark)*, 1995. From the installation *Studiolo*, Todd Gallery, London, 1995–1996. Photograph Peter White/FXP.



6.11 Mark Pimlott, *(A wall)*, 1995; *Maastricht NL* 1993. From the installation *Studiolo*, Todd Gallery, London, 1995–1996. Photograph Peter White/FXP.



6.12 Mark Pimlott, still from *Flag*, 2005. From the series *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, 2005.



6.13.1–3 Mark Pimlott, *Airport (parking lot)*, c 1965; *Landscape with trees*, 1970; *1642 (Salem)*, 1970. From the series 1970, 1992.



6.14 Mark Pimlott, *Łódź PL* 1994.



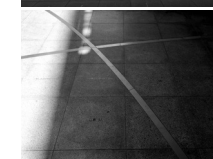
6.15.1 Mark Pimlott, *La scala*, Penglais Campus, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2003. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



6.15.2 Mark Pimlott, *La scala*, Penglais Campus, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2003. Photograph Hélène Binet.



6.15.3 Mark Pimlott, *La scala*, Penglais Campus, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2003. Photograph Mark Pimlott.



6.16.1–3 Mark Pimlott, *World*, BBC Broadcasting House, London, 2013. Photograph Mark Pimlott.

SUMMARY

The dissertation considers attitudes regarding how the architect might begin. The notion of beginning, or finding the means to a beginning, is contingent upon that which presents itself to the architect upon a first encounter. Examinations of urban conditions reveal ideologies and intentions directed towards shaping subjectivities. They also reveal the cultural specificity of appearances, which, as outward manifestations of intent, are utterances, like those of language: imperfect representations of ideas. The central part of the work concerns the approach to the artefact, and proposes a reconciliation between phenomenology and material culture, through consideration of the presence of representation. I contend that appearances are representation's threshold, which, through acute attention, yield access to their essential nature, and to the real. The meeting with the real demands the architect's suspension of the impulse to projection, replacing it with something closer to empathy.

The focus of the dissertation is the human subject who looks, who feels, who is shaped by their environment, who confronts it, who meets it and all its artefacts. It is a focus that arises from an artistic practice—my own—and the obligation of artistic practice to form an individualised position and speak of that position through specific forms of exposure: the picture, the installation, the film, the artefact, the place, the text.

Questions that apply to artistic practice pertain even more so to the practice of architecture, or more precisely, to the attitude the architect assumes in preparing to address the world, its situations and contexts, for others. These questions, developed over time, have concentrated on three major areas: conditions; experience; and 'listening'. These areas inform the main structure of my thesis, which promotes a synthesis of these considerations.

The first section of this dissertation—*Conditions*—consists of three chapters. The first, 'Territories, interiors, subjectivities', concerns questions of environments germane to urbanisation and its processes, and those conditions' effects on the subject and subjectivity, and on ideas that become embedded in and embodied by the experiencing subject, a subject who may become an author, an artist, an architect. The second chapter, 'Images, utterances, appearances', pursues questions regarding the representation of ideas in artefacts, the image as construct, and the matter of appearances. There are questions concerning imagery held within artefacts, and how one might come to know them through methods of analysis in the field of material culture. Practices in the visual arts and photography are helpful in that their imagery invites critical reading and analysis, from which the architect can learn. The distinct appearances of artefacts in the constructed environment are characterised as utterances, incomplete, yet meaningful. In the third chapter, 'Contexts', the issue of context is addressed at some distance from prevailing notions and discourse. If one is to acknowledge conditions as environments in which there are accumulations of artefacts, meaningful constructs, appearances and utterances, then the issue of context can be addressed more profoundly, and can be directed towards significance, learning from the example of T S Eliot's thoughts about tradition and

the literary canon. Models of different approaches to addressing conditions that both render them visible and affect their perception conclude the chapter.

In my view, the constructed environment is not simply an agglomeration of material and effects, but an accumulation of ideas about the order of human organisation and power. It was and remains important for the architect to recognise this in the forms of the city as they appear to them. In 'Territories, interiors, subjectivities', it was important, furthermore, to acknowledge that the urbanised environment transforms territories into interiors both ideological and experiential—creating conditions of interior—in which subjects are formed, and subjectivities are created. In such environments that tend toward the condition of interior, imagery and images play central roles. In this chapter, I ask, how does the constructed environment, in shaping subjects, make itself available for being 're-imagined'?

In 'Images, appearances, utterances', I acknowledge that images, too, are constructs, particular to culture and language, and are created to communicate: to speak, to be read, to be interpreted, and incorporated. Artefacts communicate their ideas, their messages, and to do so, they make their appearances, their ideas are given form. As representations of ideas—whether they are banal objects, functioning equipment, pavements, or buildings—artefacts are utterances that speak of those ideas, with varying degrees of coherence. The constructed environment is full of these utterances, forming relations with each other, creating scenes and contexts. In this chapter, I ask, how might one be able to read the appearances of that environment as fiction?

In 'Contexts', as one approaches a constructed environment, one made of the considered or ill-considered gathering of artefacts, the architect is confronted with the possibility of extending the language of that construct, of deciphering its specific nature, of changing that nature, of enhancing its language. However, this is only achieved through learning that language. How might the architect add to the poetry of this place?

The second section—*Experience*—addresses, through its single chapter, 'The Complexity of Experience', questions of perception and experience; of what it is that one sees when one is looking at something. An expression of doubt about the privileged position of phenomenology is met by the introduction of material culture and the problem of language, set in the gap between utterance and intention, and between signifier and signified. The indeterminate, the difficult, that which is not expressed, the gap or lack between intention and expression, between representation and the real, the matter of intuition, the presence of representation, are all reflected upon as aspects of experience that add complexity and additional obligations upon the experiencing subject, enriching and complicating the consideration of both the architectural artefact and its world. Here, representation is discussed as a significant threshold to the real. Acknowledging its presence in the constructed environment provides the opportunity to see and occupy its narratives, fictions and possible realities. Exemplars are drawn from both the visual arts and architecture.

In 'The complexity of experience', the position of the experiencing subject, the self, is shown to have been called into question by both Sartre and Lacan, so the integrity of an experience centred on the self, and feeling, seems inadequate. The

object of experience central to phenomenological reading—man-made, rather than natural—is similarly de-centred: it is not just a primordial ‘thing’, but an artefact of language, culture, and the register of thoughts, intentions, and projections of others. This leaves the perception of artefacts, such as architecture, to be tentative, uncertain, and, positively, difficult. The perceiving subject is influenced by their situation and experience in culture and in relation to others, while the object of their attention is both itself and a vessel for various impulses. The perceiving subject’s sensitivity to this leads to the possibility of getting closer to the nature of the object of experience. Representation is drawn in not because of its unreliability, but for what it might hold; an awareness of its role may provide access to the real. The question that both begins this consideration and arises from it is, what is it to fully ‘feel’ and ‘sense’ the constructed environment and its artefacts?

The third section—*Listening*—concerns the matter of approaching the other, whether condition, site or subject, and means towards a meeting, demonstrated or exemplified in practices in photography, art, and architecture. The first of its two chapters, ‘The matter of attention’ draws upon topographic and ‘objective’ photographic practices of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to demonstrate the dimensions of approaches that welcome the appearance of the other, as analogies of the conditions and situations faced by the architect in beginning the architectural work. The second, and the last chapter of the dissertation, ‘The necessity of interpretation’, concerns the task of the architect in reading and interpreting those conditions presented to them, acknowledging the investment of ideas that are embedded in them. Examples are drawn from my own practice in architecture, art, and art for places, which embody the concerns developed throughout the dissertation regarding attention to conditions, subjectivities, appearances, imagery, representation, and registers of the other in the constructed environment. The question that pertains to this section is, how can one draw close enough to the world of others and what they have made?

In ‘The matter of attention’, a meeting with the artefact, the constructed environment, and the other involves allowing these ‘others’ to appear as themselves, without the superimposition of one’s own narratives. This requires awareness of what the appearance of the other *is* and being open enough to recognise and accept its significance. It demands a weakening of the boundary of the self in the face of the other. A withdrawal from the projective impulse is exemplified by the practices of certain topographic photographers, who allowed their subjects to appear rather than subjecting them to pictorial tropes. The question pertinent to this chapter is, how does one move towards the world, and so, towards the other?

In ‘The necessity of interpretation’, the movement towards the conditions one meets leads to involvement, and action, in this case, the work of the architect. Again, rather than merely ‘feeling’ the constructed situations the architect encounters, the architect is obliged to read and interpret their utterances, and act with them. As advocated by T S Eliot in the chapter ‘Contexts’, one is obliged to draw very close to those utterances, and to the cultures and embedded ideas from which they emanate, and make work with them, acknowledging that these utterances are co- or interdependent, by design or by circumstance. The architect’s own work, if receptive, can listen to these utterances, continue their ‘speech’, revive it, and make

it available to those who have lived in their ruins. The question that attends this chapter is, how does the architect listen to what the environment offers, interpret its utterances, and speak among them?

All these questions come down to how one finds a position from which to look, and to listen, so that one may approach what one is confronted with, meet it, accept it, and speak. Addressing these questions does not necessarily mean answering them, but rather, opening them for others, and through this, disclosing the possibility of action for others. My experience within teaching and an interdisciplinary practice of art, photography, and architectural design since 1986 has led me to ask these questions of students, colleagues and other architects in various circumstances: first, in the discursive situation of the tutorial; second, in writing and lecturing on subjects such as urbanisation, representation, material culture, and the public interior; and finally, through proposed and realised works around and between art and architecture in the constructed environment.

Dit proefschrift gaat in op mogelijke benaderingen voor de architect om te beginnen. Het begrip van beginnen, of het zoeken naar de middelen om een startpunt te vinden, is afhankelijk van datgene wat de architect tegenkomt bij een eerste ontmoeting. Het onderzoeken van stedelijke omstandigheden kan ideologieën blootleggen, en intenties die bepaalde vormen van subjectiviteit voortbrengen. Zulke ontmoetingen onthullen ook specifieke verschijningen van cultuur, als uiterlijke manifestaties van intenties. Dit soort uitingen zijn, net als taal, onvolmaakte representaties van ideeën. De kern van dit werk betreft de benadering van het artefact: hierbij breng ik de studie van fenomenologie en materiële cultuur samen via het begrip representatie. Ik stel dat de drempel van representatie gevormd wordt door verschijningen (fenomenen), die hun wezenlijke aard en werkelijkheid laten kennen door directe en precieze aandacht. De ontmoeting met de werkelijkheid vereist dat de architect zijn of haar impuls tot projectie opschort, en deze vervangt door iets dat dichterbij empathie staat.

De focus van het proefschrift is het menselijke subject dat kijkt, dat voelt, en dat wordt gevormd door en geconfronteerd met zijn omgeving. Het subject ontmoet de omgeving met al zijn artefacten. Deze focus op het subject komt voort uit mijn eigen artistieke werk en vanuit de verplichting van zo'n artistieke praktijk om een eigen positie te vormen en daarover te spreken door middel van specifieke uitingvormen: de foto, de installatie, de film, het artefact, de plek, de tekst.

Vragen die van toepassing zijn op de artistieke praktijk hebben eens te meer betrekking op de praktijk van architectuur. Meer toegespitst: ze zijn van cruciaal belang voor de houding die de architect aanneemt om te beginnen met het benaderen van de wereld - in de vorm van specifieke situaties en contexten - ten gunste van anderen. Deze vragen hebben zich binnen mijn praktijk in de loop der tijd geconcentreerd op drie belangrijke gebieden: de condities, de ervaring, en het 'luisteren'. Deze drie thema's vormen de hoofdstructuur van mijn proefschrift, dat een synthese van deze overwegingen voorstelt.

Het eerste deel van de dissertatie, *Conditie*, bestaat uit drie hoofdstukken. Het eerste, *Territoria, interieurs, subjectiviteiten*, betreft omgevingen die te maken hebben met verstedelijking. Het hoofdstuk bevraagt de processen die daarmee gepaard gaan, en de effecten van die omstandigheden op het subject en subjectiviteit. Het gaat in op de manier waarop ideeën worden ingebed in en belichaamd door het ervarende subject - dat een auteur, een kunstenaar of een architect zou kunnen zijn. Het tweede hoofdstuk, *Beelden, uitingen, verschijningen*, behandelt vragen over de representatie van ideeën in artefacten. Het bespreekt het beeld als constructie en onderzoekt hoe beelden aan ons verschijnen. Er worden vragen gesteld over de afbeeldingen in artefacten: hoe kan men deze kanalen leren kennen via analysemethoden vanuit het vakgebied van de materiële cultuur? Beeldende kunst en fotografie zijn nuttig omdat hun beelden uitnodigen tot kritisch lezen en analyseren - en daarmee leerzaam zijn voor de architect. De verschillende verschijningsvormen van artefacten in de gebouwde omgeving worden gekarakteriseerd

als uitingen (*utterances*): onvolledig, maar toch betekenisvol. In het derde hoofdstuk, *Contexten*, wordt de kwestie van de context behandeld op enige afstand van heersende opvattingen binnen het architectuurdiscours. Als men condities erkent als omgevingen waarin sprake is van een opeenstapeling van artefacten, betekenisvolle constructies, verschijningen en uitingen, dan kan het vraagstuk van de context diepgaander worden benaderd en meer worden gericht op betekenis. Hierbij kan men leren van het voorbeeld van T.S. Eliot's bespiegelingen over traditie en de literaire canon. Het hoofdstuk besluit met een aantal voorbeelden van mogelijke benaderingen van de condities waarin de architect werkt - benaderingen die deze condities zichtbaar maken en de perceptie ervan beïnvloeden.

Naar mijn mening is de gebouwde omgeving niet simpelweg een opeenstapeling van materiaal en effecten, maar veelal een samenkomst van ideeën over de orde van menselijke organisatie en macht. Het was en blijft belangrijk voor de architect om deze ideeën te herkennen in de vormen van de stad zoals die worden waargenomen. In *Territoria, interieurs, subjectiviteiten* is het belangrijk, om te erkennen dat de verstedelijkte omgeving territoria transformeert tot zowel ideologische als ervaringsgeschiedte interieurs - binnenruimtes waarin subjecten worden gevormd en subjectiviteiten worden gecreëerd. In dergelijke omgevingen die neigen naar de toestand van het interieur, spelen beelden en afbeeldingen een centrale rol. In dit hoofdstuk vraag ik me af hoe de gebouwde omgeving, door subjecten vorm te geven, zichzelf beschikbaar maakt om 'opnieuw verbeeld' te worden.

In *Beelden, verschijningen, uitingen* erken ik dat ook beelden constructies zijn, die eigen zijn aan cultuur en taal, en dat ze gemaakt zijn om te communiceren: om te spreken, om gelezen, geïnterpreteerd en opgenomen te worden. Artefacten communiceren hun ideeën, hun boodschappen, en om dat te doen verschijnen ze, krijgen hun ideeën vorm. Als representaties van ideeën - of het nu gaat om banale voorwerpen, functionele apparatuur, bestrating of gebouwen - telkens zijn artefacten uitingen die iets vertellen over die ideeën, in verschillende mate van samenhang. De gebouwde omgeving zit vol met dit soort uitingen, die relaties met elkaar aangaan en scènes en contexten creëren. In dit hoofdstuk vraag ik me af, hoe zou je de verschijningen van die omgeving als fictie kunnen lezen?

In *Contexten* ga ik in op de situatie waarin men een geconstrueerde omgeving benadert, een omgeving die geconstrueerd is als een hetzij weloverwogen, dan wel ondoordachte verzameling van artefacten. In zo'n situatie wordt de architect geconfronteerd met de mogelijkheid om de 'taal' van die constructie uit te breiden, om haar specifieke aard te ontcijferen, of om die taal te veranderen, of te verbeteren. Zoiets wordt echter alleen bereikt door die taal te leren. Hoe kan de architect iets toevoegen aan de poëzie van zo'n plek?

Het tweede deel, *Ervaring*, behandelt in het hoofdstuk *De complexiteit van ervaring* vragen over waarneming en ervaring: over wat het is dat men ziet wanneer men naar iets kijkt. Vanuit een gereede twijfel over de bevoorrechte positie van het vakgebied van de fenomenologie bij deze discussie, introduceer ik het perspectief van materiële cultuur en de kwestie van taal, die zich afspeelt in het spanningsveld tussen uiting en intentie, en tussen degene die betekenis toekent (*signifier*) en datgene waaraan de betekenis wordt toegekend (*signified*). Het onbepaalde, het moeilijke,

datgene wat niet wordt uitgedrukt, de kloof of het gebrek tussen intentie en expressie, tussen representatie en werkelijkheid, de kwestie van intuïtie, de aanwezigheid van representatie—deze kwesties worden allemaal beschouwd als aspecten van ervaring. Ze voegen complexiteit toe, alsook extra verplichtingen voor het ervarende subject, en verrijken en bemoeilijken daarmee de beschouwing van zowel het architecturale artefact als de wereld waarin het zich bevindt. In dit hoofdstuk wordt representatie besproken als een belangrijke drempel naar de werkelijkheid. Het erkennen van de aanwezigheid ervan in de geconstrueerde omgeving biedt de mogelijkheid om haar verhalen, ficties en mogelijke werkelijkheden te zien en te gebruiken. Het hoofdstuk bespreekt enkele voorbeelden vanuit zowel de beeldende kunst als de architectuur.

In *De complexiteit van de ervaring* toon ik hoe de positie van het ervarende subject, het 'zelf', in twijfel wordt getrokken door zowel Sartre als Lacan, waardoor de integriteit van een ervaring waarin het zelf en het gevoel centraal staan, ontoereikend lijkt. Het object van ervaring dat centraal staat in de fenomenologische lezing - door de mens gemaakt, in plaats van natuurlijk - wordt op vergelijkbare wijze bevraagd: het gaat niet zomaar om een primordiaal 'ding', maar om een artefact van taal, cultuur en om het register van gedachten, bedoelingen en projecties van anderen. Hierdoor blijft de perceptie van architectuur als artefact voorlopig, onzeker en, in positieve gezien, ingewikkeld. Het waarnemend subject wordt beïnvloed door zijn situatie, culturele ervaring, en relatie tot anderen, terwijl het object van hun aandacht zowel zichzelf is als een vat voor verschillende impulsen. De gevoeligheid van het waarnemend subject hiervoor leidt tot de mogelijkheid om dicht bij de aard van het ervaringsobject te komen. Het begrip representatie wordt hier niet bijgehaald vanwege haar onbetrouwbaarheid, maar juist om wat ze zou kunnen inhouden: dat een bewustzijn van de rol van representatie toegang kan verschaffen tot het werkelijke. De vraag waarmee deze overweging begint - en die eruit voortvloeit - is de volgende: wat betekent het om de geconstrueerde omgeving en haar artefacten volledig te 'voelen' en 'aan te voelen'?

Het derde deel, *Luisteren*, gaat over het benaderen van de ander, of het nu gaat om een conditie, locatie of onderwerp, en om de middelen om tot een ontmoeting te komen. Dit wordt aangetoond en geïllustreerd via fotografie, kunst en architectuur. Het eerste van de twee hoofdstukken in dit deel, *De kwestie van aandacht* baseert zich op topografische en 'objectieve' fotografische praktijken van de negentiende en twintigste eeuw om de reikwijdte te tonen van benaderingen die de verschijning van de 'ander' verwelkomen, als analogieën van de voorwaarden en situaties waar de architect mee te maken krijgt bij de start van het architectonische werk. Het tweede hoofdstuk in dit deel, en laatste hoofdstuk van het proefschrift, *De noodzaak van interpretatie*, gaat over de taak van de architect bij het lezen en interpreteren van de condities die worden voorgelegd, waarbij erkend wordt dat de architect zelf ook bepaalde ideeën met zich meedraagt. Ik toon hierbij voorbeelden vanuit mijn eigen praktijk in architectuur, kunst en locatie-specifieke werken, die de aandachtspunten belichamen die in dit proefschrift ontwikkeld zijn: condities, subjectiviteiten, verschijningen, beelden, representatie en registers van de 'ander' in de geconstrueerde omgeving. De vraag die in dit hoofdstuk centraal staat is: hoe kan men dicht genoeg bij de wereld van anderen komen, en wat hebben zij gemaakt?

De kwestie van aandacht draait om de ontmoeting met het artefact, de geconstrueerde omgeving, en de ander. Hierbij is het nodig deze 'anderen' toe te laten om als zichzelf te kunnen verschijnen, zonder de eigen verhalen aan hen op te leggen. Dit vereist een bewustzijn van wat de verschijning van de ander is, en dwingt de architect om open genoeg zijn om de betekenis hiervan te erkennen en te accepteren. Het vereist als het ware een verzwakking van de grens van het zelf ten gunste van de ander. Ik illustreer dit aan de hand van het werk van bepaalde topografische fotografen, die in plaats van hun eigen 'projectieve' impuls te volgen hun onderwerpen juist zelf lieten verschijnen in plaats van ze te onderwerpen aan picturale stijlfiguren. Voor dit hoofdstuk is de vraag relevant hoe men zich naar de wereld toe beweegt, en dus naar de ander?

In *De noodzaak van interpretatie* leidt deze beweging naar de condities die men ontmoet tot betrokkenheid en actie, in dit geval: tot het werk van de architect. Nogmaals, in plaats van alleen maar de geconstrueerde situaties die men tegenkomt te 'voelen', is de architect verplicht om hun uitingen te lezen en te interpreteren, en om ernaar te handelen. Zoals bepleit aan de hand van T.S. Eliot in het hoofdstuk *Contexten*, is men verplicht om heel dicht bij die uitingen te komen, bij de culturen en ingebedde ideeën waaruit ze voortkomen, en ermee aan de slag gaan. Daarbij is het belangrijk te erkennen dat deze uitingen co- of interdependent zijn, door hun ontwerp of door omstandigheden. Het werk van de architect kan, als het ontvankelijk is, naar deze uitingen luisteren, hun 'spraak' voortzetten, nieuw leven inblazen en beschikbaar maken voor hen die in de overblijfselen ervan leven. De vraag die in dit hoofdstuk centraal staat is, hoe luistert de architect naar wat de omgeving te bieden heeft, en hoe kan de architect de uitingen van de omgeving interpreteren en ermee in dialoog gaan?

Al deze vragen komen neer op hoe men een positie vindt van waaruit men kan kijken en luisteren, zodat je datgene waarmee je geconfronteerd wordt kunt benaderen, ontmoeten, accepteren, en ermee in gesprek gaan. Op deze vragen ingaan betekent niet noodzakelijkerwijs ze te beantwoorden, maar eerder, ze te openen voor anderen en daardoor anderen de mogelijkheid te geven actie te ondernemen. Mijn ervaring in het onderwijs, naast mijn interdisciplinaire praktijk van kunst, fotografie en architectonisch ontwerp sinds 1986, heeft ertoe geleid dat ik deze vragen stel aan studenten, collega's en andere architecten in verschillende omstandigheden: ten eerste in de discursieve situatie van het lesgeven en uitleggen; ten tweede in het schrijven en geven van lezingen over onderwerpen als verstedelijking, representatie, materiële cultuur en het publieke interieur; en ten slotte door voorgestelde en gerealiseerde werken rondom en tussen kunst en architectuur in de gebouwde omgeving.

MARK PIMLOTT

Born 30 April 1958, Montréal, Québec, Canada
Canadian & Dutch citizen resident in The Hague, Netherlands

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

MA (Visual Art) Goldsmiths' College, University of London 1990–1992
AADipl (Honours) Architectural Association, London 1983–1985
BSc (Arch) *cum laude* McGill University, Montréal 1978–1981
(J W McConnell Award; Philip J Truman Prize; Wilfred T Shaver Scholarship;
University Scholar; Faculty Scholar)

Mark Pimlott studied architecture at McGill University, Montréal and the Architectural Association, London, and visual arts at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. His doctoral dissertation, 'Means to a beginning' was researched and prepared at TU Delft.

PRE-UNIVERSITY

Marianopolis College, Montréal 1975–1977 Pure and applied science

RESUMÉ

Mark Pimlott is an artist, designer, writer, and educator. His inter-disciplinary practice encompasses architecture and interiors, art for public spaces, installation, film and photography. He has taught architecture since 1986, at the Architectural Association, Oxford Brookes University, Royal College of Art, Kent Institute of Art and Design, and TU Delft.

He was Appointed Professor in relation to practice in architecture at TU Delft from 2002–2005, was senior lecturer 2005–2009 and since 2009, assistant professor in the Chair of Interiors Buildings Cities. He has been visiting critic at many schools of architecture. He is the author of books on architecture, urbanism, and the interior: *Without and within: essays on territory and the interior* (2007), *In passing: Mark Pimlott photographs* (2010), *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (2016, 2022), and *A walk from here to an other* (2024). His articles and essays have been published in many journals of architecture and books, and he lectures widely on matters of the public interior, and architectural, visual and material culture.

Mark Pimlott has had his own practice since 1990. Works from this collaborative, multi-disciplinary practice include Neckinger Mills, London (in collaboration with Peter St John 1988; 1994); Red House interiors, London (icw with Tony Fretton architects 2001; 2004; 2011; 2014); Restaurant Puck, Den Haag (icw Zeinstra Van Gelderen architecten 2007); Apotheek Van Dijk, Bree (icw Hoek en De Wit architecten 2016); *Guinguette*, Birmingham (2000); *La scala*, Aberystwyth (2003); *Railing Hall* and *Cardinal Seat* (icw East 2011; 2013); and *World*, a public square at BBC's Broadcasting House in central London (2013). The installation *Piazzasalone* (with Tony Fretton) was shown in the Corderie dell'Arsenale at the 12th Biennale internazionale di Architettura di Venezia, curated by Kazuyo Sejima (2010).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE POST-MASTER'S DEGREE

studio Mark Pimlott 1998–present
Mark Pimlott 1990–1998
Ian Schrager Design Studio, London 1999–2000 (design coordinator and consultant)
Harper Mackay architects, London 1991–1998 (consultant designer)
Mark Pimlott and Peter St John 1986–1990
Jeremy Dixon/BDP, London 1985–1988 (designer)

EDITORIAL BOARDS, SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES, EXAMINATION BOARDS

Scientific committee, *Glifi* (Napoli: Thymos Books)
Scientific committee, *Designing Interiors* (London: Lund Humphries)
External examiner, BA Interior Architecture programme,
University of Brighton 2019–2023
PhD committee Elias Christiansen, Aalborg University 2020
PhD committee Valérie Mace, University of the Arts London 2024
PhD committee Tine Poot, Universiteit van Antwerpen 2024

COLOPHON

Mark Pimlott, Means to a beginning

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