

A theoretical framework explaining the role of autonomy in the assimilation of architectural ideas into consumer society raises questions for current practice.

Autonomy and commerce: the integration of architectural autonomy

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More than three decades ago, the architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri pessimistically concluded that a revolutionary architecture cannot precede a social revolution. In this comment, he summed up the perceived failure of Modernist architecture to realise a social utopia. The comment implied that the architectural discipline, as part of the superstructure, cannot affect society; rather, it is the means and forces of production which determine society, while architecture only reacts, corresponds and represents these changes.

A generation of architects sharing this bleak conclusion distanced themselves from any social pretension and embraced architectural autonomy as a means of resisting consumer society rather than transforming it. By the late 1990s, however, the discipline found itself enjoying unprecedented popularity, affecting real economic interests: not only in the building industry, but also in areas as diverse as the tourism sector and mass culture. Ideas propagated by architectural autonomy – such as authorship and difference – were the generators of this transformation. Unexpectedly, architectural autonomy, instead of providing resistance to consumer society, brought about the commodification of architecture.

The novelty of the current situation is the assimilation into the market economy not only of the realised building, but of the architectural idea itself. The newly found status of architecture posits the discipline as a participant in affecting society, albeit in a manner which is far removed from the utopian dreams of the Modernists, a manner which is socially complacent rather than revolutionary. In order to explain the recent transformation in the relation of the discipline to society, it is necessary to return to the development of the idea of autonomy in the arts before examining the emergence of autonomy in the architecture of the 1970s.

Autonomy in art

The idea of artistic autonomy was originally derived from Immanuel Kant's seminal *Critique of Judgement*, published in 1790, a work which founded the

philosophical branch of aesthetics.¹ Kant differentiated between a 'lower', everyday, empirical, 'bodily' experience of art and a 'higher', transcendental, autonomous aspect, describing art as purposeless – 'purposiveness without purpose' – and the pleasure in art as disinterested and 'free'. However, Kant ended up subordinating aesthetic values to moral will.

The nineteenth-century art for art's sake movement wilfully read in Kant – as well as in Schiller – an idea of an absolute autonomy, a complete, rather than partial, freedom of art from society.² This specific reading stressed the ideas found in the *Critique of Judgement* which could encourage such an understanding and incorporated certain notions gleaned from Kant's use of the term autonomy in the context of ethics, primarily the freedom of the human will.³

So, the idea of autonomy that began to emerge severed all artistic ties to society, presupposing art as totally 'free', and, while Kant studied the reception of art, art for art's sake stressed the autonomy involved in the creation of art and the autonomy of the artist himself from society. Autonomous art, as understood by the Romantics, was a form of resistance to the rise of utilitarianism, bureaucracy and alienation in society.

The trajectory towards an absolute autonomy was strengthened in the twentieth century by critics such as Clive Bell and Clement Greenberg. Greenberg, in his influential 1939 essay 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', explained modern art by following the autonomous trajectory to its extreme:

*'The avant-garde poet or artist tries in effect to imitate God by creating something valid solely on its own terms, in the way nature itself is valid, in the way a landscape – not its picture – is aesthetically valid; something given, increate, independent of meanings, similars or originals. Content is to be dissolved so completely into form that the work of art or literature cannot be reduced in whole or in part to anything not itself.'*⁴

Here, the artist is elevated to the position of 'creator', on par with God, and art achieves complete freedom from everyday life.

Theodor Adorno also understood modern art as autonomous. In Adorno's aesthetic theory, the partial freedom of artistic autonomy was stressed in a Hegelian opposition. He claimed that 'whereas art opposes society, it is nevertheless unable to take up a position beyond it; it achieves opposition only through identification with that against which it remonstrates'.⁵

By opposing society, by being other than society, modern art criticised society. Whereas nineteenth-century artistic autonomy was related to Romanticism in its rejection of Modernity and opposition to the rationalisation and utilitarian drive of society, for Adorno, as for Greenberg, autonomy was seen as an opposition to the commodification of society. It provided resistance not to Modernity itself but to the excesses of Modernity and capitalism. Both Greenberg and Adorno understood modern art as part of progress, yet their perceptions of progress were disparate; Greenberg's idea of progress was a vague self-evolutionary notion of culture and artistic language, whereas Adorno's was a dialectical progress in which modern art took part in the general advancement of society by negating it.

This concise review of the idea of artistic autonomy demonstrates the variety of understandings available, ranging from a partial to a total freedom, locating autonomy from life and society either in the reception of art, in the artefact, in the creative process or in the artist himself. In architecture, the situation is even less consistent and lucid.

Architectural autonomy

The initial conditions for an emergence of an idea of architectural autonomy were set already in the Renaissance, when, in the struggle to elevate architecture from the status of a craft to that of a liberal art, architecture was understood as a product of the mind, privileging the architectural idea over the reality of the building. Although the Arts and Crafts movement and Modernism shifted the discipline's centre back to building, residues of the idealist worldview subsisted in the gap separating the architectural product – drawings; and the object of desire – the building. The reverence for the architectural sketch as an emblem of authorship, which prevailed throughout Modernism, exemplifies this.

The Viennese architectural historian Emil Kaufmann initially imported to architecture the idea of autonomy in his 1933 *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*.⁶ Kaufmann, in his conception of architectural autonomy, relied primarily on Kant's idea of the freedom of the human will, rather than on the philosopher's writings in aesthetics. The architectural historian described the autonomy of architects such as Ledoux and Le Corbusier as autonomy from the discipline, an autonomy which enabled their creativity, originality and break with tradition.

Kaufmann's influence was primarily felt in the United States; Philip Johnson was introduced to *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier* in 1942, at a presentation by

Kaufmann at the American Society of Architectural Historians in Cambridge.⁷ American Modernism's lack of interest in the social preoccupations of its European sibling could be detected already at this early moment, as a result of the influence of Kaufmann, Greenberg and Johnson, a lack of interest which also reflected the American preference of freedom and individuality to collectivism and state planning.

Yet it was only in the late 1960s that the idea of autonomy moved to the fore of the discourse when two almost contradictory perceptions of autonomy were introduced by Aldo Rossi and Peter Eisenman. Eisenman delineated architectural autonomy as an internal, disciplinary progress via a series of breaks with tradition, 'dislocations'. Rossi outlined an idea of a disciplinary autonomy in the form of ideal types, an idea developed from neoclassicist scholars and especially from Quatremère de Quincy, a formulation similar to the one propagated in the United States during the same period by the British architectural historian Colin Rowe.⁸

Massimo Scolari, a member of the *Tendenza*, the group of architects assembled around Rossi, noted that for 'the *Tendenza*, architecture is a cognitive process that in and of itself, in the acknowledgement of its own autonomy, is today necessitating a re-founding of the discipline; that refuses interdisciplinary solutions to its own crisis; that does not pursue and immerse itself in political, economic, social, and technological events only to mask its own creative and formal sterility, but rather desires to understand them so as to be able to intervene in them with lucidity – not to determine them, but not to subordinate to them either.'⁹

Whereas Rossi's autonomy was a timeless, transcendental architecture of ideal typologies, a disciplinary continuum, Eisenman perceived architectural autonomy in terms similar to those of Clement Greenberg: as an internal, disciplinary progress, a self-evolution of architecture dominated by a constant movement of time and 'free' of interests which are, from Eisenman's perspective, alien to the discipline, such as social concern, ideology or economics. This total disjunction of the discipline from society was cast as a rejection of society's commodification, as a form of resistance and critique.

In the last decades, however, autonomy has been fully integrated into the cycle of commerce and so has lost its impetus as a rallying force. This integration has taken place gradually, during the post-war years, and is linked to a general shift in Western societies and economies from emphasis on production to stressing consumption. It occurred in three major phases: the first regards the status of objects and commodities, and its roots can be found already in the nineteenth century; the second phase was the integration of artistic autonomy, and occurred during the 1960s; the third and most recent phase was the integration of architectural autonomy, and took place in the 1990s. These three phases correlate to each other, and each phase initiated and took part in its subsequent phase.

In order to describe these transformations and explain the current redundancy of the idea of autonomy, the following essay will outline the shifting status of the commodity – whose nature is discussed below – and its value, link the commodity to the integration of artistic autonomy and unfold the third phase in which architectural autonomy has been integrated.

The commodity

The transformations in the status of autonomy in which this paper is interested took place in the post-war years. However, these transformations were the result of certain characteristics of the commodity which were in existence long before. Already in the nineteenth century, Marx, in his attempt to explain the commodity and its value, noticed its fetish-like characteristics:

There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things qua commodities, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.¹⁰

As observant as Marx's comment may have been, he was unwilling to follow it to its logical conclusion due to his materialist disposition. For Marx, fetishism was part of the superstructure, an idealist, mystic belief rather than a material reality, and

therefore more of a result, even a false consciousness, than a determining factor of reality. Consequently, the fetishism of the commodity was a mechanism to obscure and conceal reality rather than an active player in creating it.

Half a century later, Georg Simmel, in his *The Philosophy of Money*, identified two categories of human cognition of objects: one linked to reality, involving perception, the other related to value, and distanced from objective reality:

'At any time when our mind is not simply a passive mirror or [sic.] reality – which perhaps never happens, since even objective perception can arise only from valuation – we live in a world of values which arranges the contents of reality in an autonomous order.'¹¹

Hence, Simmel identified in the social value assigned to objects an autonomy from reality; he went on to outline difference as the fundamental quality which determines the value-order of objects.

Simmel's insights preceded the burgeoning of media and advertising of the mid-twentieth century; subsequently, following these changes, the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard described the socio-cultural function of commodities in his 1968 book *The System of Objects*. In this work Baudrillard outlines the relation of 'the model' to 'the series'.¹² The model, for Baudrillard, is a tangible object such as a luxury product, but it is also an idea, a Model with a capital M, a neo-Platonic idea of an object. Within the world of commodities, the mass-produced, everyday objects strive to reach the status of the model, and the model, in turn, bestows something of its status on the objects produced as mass versions of it.

In their attempt to climb the hierarchy of commodities, the series – the mass-produced objects – slowly approach closer to the model, but can never quite reach it, as the series and the model are

1 Mobile phones at a shop stand in Tokyo, each manifesting its difference within a series



structurally disparate, created by different modes of production. The revered status of the model is a result of its uniqueness, and this status is projected onto the owner or user of the model. Thence, the model becomes a personalised object which conveys individuality to its owner.

The attempt to obtain a higher status by the series demands, therefore, creating an idea of a personalised object in the mass-produced commodity. This is achieved by stressing the differences within the series. Differences which are not related to the utilitarian value of the object, and are thus insignificant from an objective perception – created, for example, by variation in colour or shape – play a central role in the personalisation of the serial commodity. These marginal differences become the most important feature of the mass-produced object, bestowing on their owner a fictional uniqueness and individuality and shifting the entire system to stress the insignificant, which is, in this case, a cultural code [1]. Baudrillard concluded:

*The corollary of the fact that every object reaches us by way of a choice is the fact that fundamentally no object is offered as a serial object, that every single object claims model status. The most insignificant object must be marked off by some distinguishing feature – a colour, an accessory, a detail of one sort or another. [...] The fact is that at the level of the industrial object and its technological coherence the demand for personalization can be met only in inessentials.'*¹³

Baudrillard's description elucidates Adorno's statement, that mass culture sells the same objects as though they were different. The French philosopher remarked that 'all such relative differences refer to all the others, and in aggregate they constitute absolute difference – or, rather, fundamentally, just the idea of absolute difference, which is precisely what the Model is.'¹⁴

The relation of the series to the model expresses the shift from production to consumption, a shift in which 'the cultural' came to dominate society, emphasising everything which is in the territory of idealism – whether in advertising, marketing, lifestyle or branding – at the expense of realist-materialist concerns regarding the product itself: its

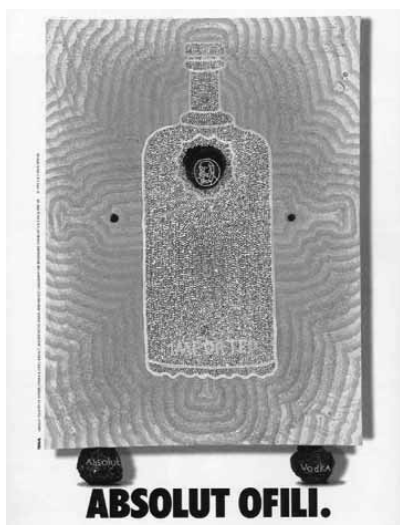
production, durability, utility and its quality. The emphasis on the marginal differences of mass-produced objects and the fiction of uniqueness, originality and personalisation they convey, creates the mystique surrounding the commodity, leading to the fetish appeal of the commodity and its additional value which exceeds the use-value.

The integration of art

One of Baudrillard's observations was that the model, while transferring something of its status to the personalised serial commodity, is never completely absorbed into the series. Here, the resilience of the model to the series is analogous to that of autonomous art to the attempts by the historic avant-garde to integrate it into everyday life. The ambitious assault of the avant-garde presented the mass-produced object as a democratic, non-hierarchical product reflecting equality, thus delegitimising autonomy and depicting it as a bourgeois ideal, whether in the Constructivist and productivist rhetoric or the Dada employment of the readymade, utilising the object's everyday function as a critique of high art's disinterestedness. However, as literature critic Peter Bürger pointed out, the avant-garde's ambitions ultimately failed, '[s]ince now the protest of the historical avant-garde against art as an institution is accepted as *art*, the gesture of protest of the neo-avant-garde becomes inauthentic. Having been shown to be irredeemable, the claim to be protest can no longer be maintained.'¹⁵

The opposite of the desired effect occurred: the avant-garde was integrated into autonomous art. But, in the post-war years, a different type of integration was taking place. Within the field of culture in its broadest sense, 'high-art' began functioning as the model and mass culture as the series. Popular music and cinema cultivated 'artistic' dispositions, for instance, whereas ideas gleaned from performance art found their way into mass spectacles.¹⁶ In this new

2 The adverts of Absolut Vodka, associating the commodity with art and freedom



state of affairs, autonomous art maintained its disassociation from everyday life; in fact, it was precisely this distance which enabled autonomous art to become the model, the object of desire.

The post-war years saw the growth of the middle class, the traditional audience of art and its main supporter. In parallel, the expansion of media in these years – colour magazines, television – enabled art to become a central figure in the growing cultural market, attracting the attention of a media always in need of fresh material, outrage and eccentricities. Art's association with difference, with genius, originality and individualism served well the interests of the media and corresponded with the self-perception of Western society.

Gradually, the mass culture being produced began to imitate autonomous art, just as the series imitates the model, in an attempt to distinguish itself, to highlight marginal differences as significant. This took place in the broadest sense, ranging from the use of industrial design to create differences and personalisation in mass-produced objects to the references to high-art in advertisements [2]. Thus, something of the uniqueness, individualism and originality associated with art could also be identified with the mass culture which imitated high-art. Autonomous art moved therefore from the margins of the consumption cycle to its centre.

The specific peculiarity of these transformations is that they took place at a certain distance from reality, concerning perceptions and beliefs, and therefore idealist constructs, generated by a fiction. The fiction involved is the idea of autonomy itself. Peter Bürger has noted that the idea of autonomy is an ideological category:

*'The relative disassociation of the work of art from the praxis of life in bourgeois society thus becomes transformed into the (erroneous) idea that the work of art is totally independent of society. In the strict meaning of the term, "autonomy" is thus an ideological category that joins an element of truth (the apartness of art from the praxis of life) and an element of untruth (the hypostatization of this fact, which is the result of historical development as the "essence" of art).'*¹⁷

Bürger differentiates between 'the apartness of art from the praxis of life', which is a description of structural autonomy, the result of the changes in the production of art in the eighteenth century, and the idea of absolute autonomy, which is an ideal that originally legitimated these changes by tying them to the idea of freedom. Thus, art has been integrated as an idea, as the Model with a capital M, utilising the ideal of autonomy as an ideological leverage.

Already in *The Philosophy of Money*, Simmel noted that the ideal content, the value, becomes intertwined with objective reality, claiming that '[s]ubject and object are born in the same act: logically, by presenting the conceptual ideal content first as a content of representation, and then as a content of objective reality'.¹⁸

Baudrillard, in his *The System of Objects*, typically stresses the significance of the idealist construct to an extent that the material reality almost completely dissolves. More useful here is Althusser's description

of ideology, in which a balance is struck between the real and the ideal:

*'So ideology is a matter of the lived relation between men and their world. This relation, that appears only as "conscious" on condition that it is unconscious, in the same way it only seems to be simple on condition that it is complex, that it is not a simple relation but a relation between relations, a second-degree relation. In ideology men do indeed express, not the relation between them and their conditions of existence, but the way they live the relation between them and their condition of existence: this pre-supposes both a real relation and an "imaginary", "lived" relation.'*¹⁹

Similarly, the idea of autonomy expresses not the relation between art and life, but the way people live the relation between themselves and the culture or art they consume. The fetishist aspect of the commodity and the autonomous artefact is everything which supersedes the real: its value to individuals by creating a self-image of uniqueness and difference, projecting this imagined value on the owner or user; it is a situation in which the individual, in his imagination, becomes undifferentiated from the object via its significance to his own identity.

The integration of architecture

In architecture, while the Beaux-Arts tradition expressed an understanding of architecture as 'art', it did not explicitly revel in an idea of autonomy parallel to that of its contemporary art for art's sake. Architecture had never experienced the structural changes art had undergone in the eighteenth century, never 'freed' itself from subordination to commissions and thus had never become distant from the praxis of life in the manner art had done. Architectural autonomy, therefore, was never an ideal legitimising existing social structures, and never expressed a lived reality. Rather, it was a longing for freedom, a desire to escape the confinements of subordination to society.

The reason the integration of artistic autonomy took place in the 1960s was, as mentioned above, the growth of the middle class and media in the post-war period, coupled by the general shift from production to consumption which emphasised – explicitly via advertising – the fetishist appeal, the idealist content of the commodity rather than its utilitarian value. All this meant that the desirability of autonomous art, the result of the appeal of art's uniqueness, brought about its integration.

In contrast, Modernist architecture suffered a breakdown which was quite different from the parallel collapse of artistic Modernism. Today, it is common to associate the crisis in architecture of the 1970s with the wider social crisis of that era and its general implications on culture. However, the crisis of Modernist architecture was distinctive in it being, to a certain extent, a crisis of popularity, unlike art.

Evidence of this is the eruption of interest during the 1970s in conferring 'meaning' to an architecture which seemed to many, both inside and outside the discipline, to have become bland, dour and unpopular. Among the propagators of 'meaning'

were figures such as Charles Jencks, Christian Norberg-Schulz and Robert Venturi. The recovery of 'meaning' was believed to offer the discipline an opportunity to regain a wide public approval, a popular embrace from those who shunned the abstraction and impersonality of Modernist architecture.

The overt reaction to the crisis was the populism and kitsch of the Post-Modern style; however, the resuscitation of the discipline took place via autonomous architecture, and began already in 1966 with the publication of Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of*

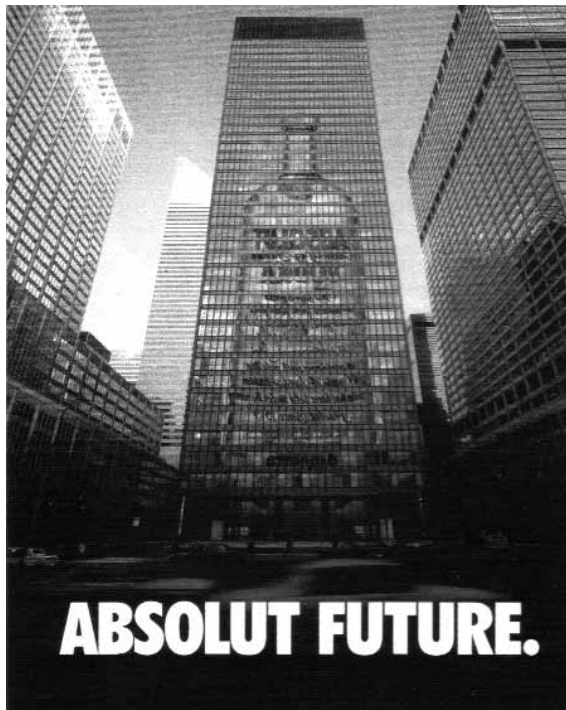
the City and the subsequent ascent of the group of architects surrounding Rossi, the *Tendenza*, comprising of figures such as Giorgio Grassi and Massimo Scolari.²⁰

In the United States, Peter Eisenman became the figurehead of the group of architects known at the time as the neo-avant-garde. Eisenman asserted that his architecture was a critique and a form of resistance to commodification via its autonomous practice. 'Conscious of the initial efforts of Modernism', claimed Eisenman in his *Houses of Cards* publication, 'the houses of this book take up anew the project of autonomy, in a sense, take it up for the first time and use it to dislocate that traditional symbolism of Modernism.'²¹

Autonomous architecture was thus construed of two very different perceptions: that of a discipline based on transcendental typologies, and that of internal disciplinary progress, closely related to the ideas of Clement Greenberg. Both understandings regarded 'society' as outside the architectural discipline.

The idea of autonomy found fertile ground in Italy, in which the post-war building frenzy had dissipated, and in the United States, where, increasingly, only an insignificant percentage of dwellings were being designed by architects, reflecting a marginalisation of the discipline.

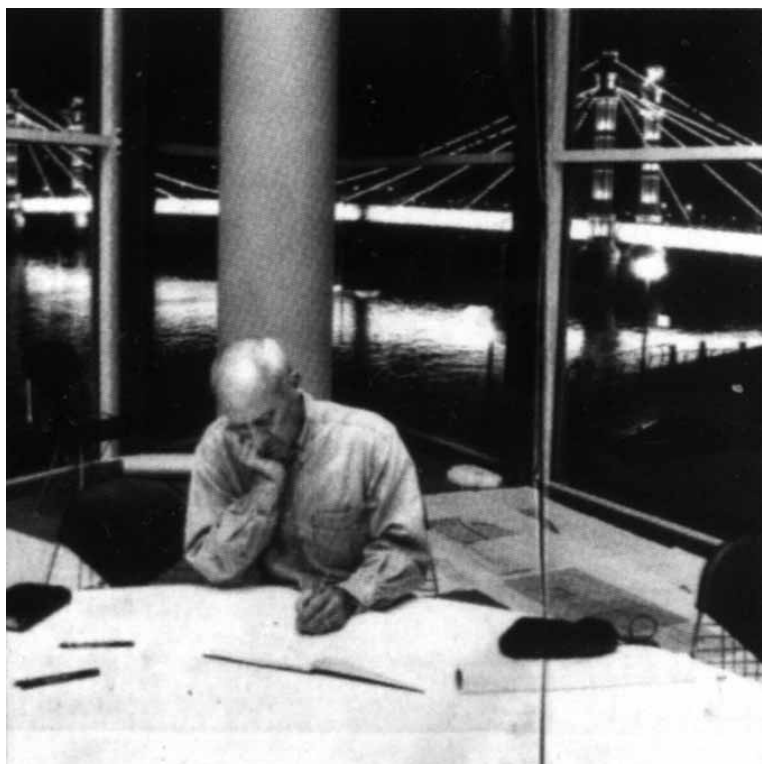
During the 1970s and early 1980s, autonomous architecture took place primarily in architecture magazines and exhibitions, with little implications for society at large; in the most extreme work, such as Daniel Libeskind's 'Chamber Works', architecture



3a

3 Advertisements
featuring
a The Seagram Building
b Lord Foster

4 The Guggenheim
Bilbao by Frank
O. Gehry



3b

completely receded from reality. Succinctly, the architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri called this autonomous practice 'architecture in the boudoir', highlighting its ineffectiveness. The major protagonists included Aldo Rossi, John Hejduk, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Coop Himmelblau and Zaha Hadid.

The autonomous architecture movement, sidelining the utilitarianism and social pretensions of its Modernist predecessor, borrowed from the practices of high-art: Coop Himmelblau's methodology echoed Tristan Tzara's 'automatic writing' and the work of Pollock; Peter Eisenman's practice incorporated aspects of Sol LeWitt's repetition, process and structure; Libeskind's drawings reflected Greenberg's denunciation of representation²² and Tschumi's work embraced various ideas cultivated by Surrealism and Conceptual Art.²³

The motive for architecture's turning to art was similar to the reason the series imitated the Model: a perceived lack of individualism and originality as well as an overdose of utilitarianism in the mass housing of the Modernists. Art, it seemed, could offer an alternative.

The change began once the architects surrounding Eisenman started realising their work, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The buildings produced by autonomous architects emphasised their uniqueness, their originality and individualism; significantly, most of the commissions were public buildings, especially museums.

The new-found popularity of the discipline was reflected in the media coverage, in magazines such as *Wallpaper*, and in the interest of politicians and developers as well as in the use of contemporary architecture as a backdrop, even protagonist, for

advertisements, films and video clips [3]. Much of the popularity of this architecture was the result of its autonomous characteristics, which gave it the status of Model. This status becomes evident in the landmark buildings of the 1990s, such as Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin or Frank O. Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao [4]. The term 'city branding', which was coined in response to the 'Bilbao effect', expresses the implicit relationship between autonomous architecture and the consumer society; it accentuates the image of the architecture and ties this image to the city, creating a relationship which echoes that of the individual and the commodity: the imagined value of the building – hence, its uniqueness and originality – projected back onto the city.

Branding, as an instrument interested in the imaginary rather than utilitarian value of commodities, represents the shift of emphasis from utility and production to consumption and the subjective valuation of objects. 'City branding' does the same with architecture. But it is not only the relationship between landmark buildings and the city which is affected here; autonomous architecture, being the Model, is imitated and used by the series, mass culture. It is also imitated by mass housing: low-end housing intended for the lower echelons of the middle class, realised for commercial purposes, constructed from prefabricated and serial elements yet attempting to achieve something of the status of the autonomous by relying on marginal differences which suggest uniqueness and individualism.

In order to be able to fully comprehend the transformation in the status of architectural autonomy, it is useful to return to the distinction made by Peter Bürger between a structural autonomy – the apartness of art from the praxis of life – and the ideology of autonomy, which postulates an absolute



freedom as a legitimization of the state of affairs.

Architecture cannot claim, currently, a 'structural' autonomy for its realised masterpieces. Rather, the idea of absolute autonomy, via autonomy's association with uniqueness and individualism, has instigated the desirability of contemporary architecture. This desirability, in turn, has influenced the commissioning of idiosyncratic public buildings and seemingly personalised mass housing. Thus, the idea of autonomy has ended up undermining any real autonomy, placing architecture at the centre of the cultural market, in a position of command over real economic interests.

Recently, Han Fengguo, the C.E.O. of a Chinese development company involved in the construction of a mixed-use complex by Steven Holl in Beijing, commented that 'I think the value of the avant-garde will be recognized in the market. Like Picasso's paintings, which were once avant-garde and now they are very valuable'.²⁴ By using the term 'avant-garde', Han was referring to autonomous architecture. The comment of the C.E.O. identifies the architectural idea as a source of profit and implies a direct relation between the degree of architectural creativity and the market value of the architectural product, the building.

Notes

1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 1987).
2. See, for example, the preface by Théophile Gautier to his 1834 *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1932), in which he castigated utilitarian value, or Oscar Wilde, who wrote that '[s]cientifically speaking, the basis of life [...] is simply the desire for expression, and Art is always presenting various forms through which this expression can be attained'; Wilde pursued this idea by subordinating life to art and by describing the process of creation as autonomous. Thus, an emphasis on the artist as creator begins to form. See Oscar Wilde, 'The Decay of Lying', *Intentions* (New York: Nottingham Society, 1909), pp. 49–57.
3. Kant asks '[w]hat else then can freedom of will be but autonomy – that is, the property which will has of being a law to itself?' In Immanuel Kant, *The Moral Law: Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. by H. J. Paton (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1964), p. 114.
4. Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), p. 6.
5. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997), p. 133.
6. Emil Kaufmann, *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier: Ursprung und Entwicklung* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1985).
7. See Detlef Mertins, 'System and Freedom: Sigfried Giedion, Emil Kaufmann, and the Constitution of Architectural Modernity', in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America*, ed. by Robert Somol (New York: Monacelli Press, 1997).
8. See, for example, Colin Rowe, 'The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa', *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), pp. 1–28, in which the critic identifies an ideal geometrical type in the villas of Palladio and Le Corbusier.
9. Massimo Scolari, 'The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. by K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 131–132.
10. Karl Marx: *Selected Writings*, ed. by David McLellan (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 473–474.
11. Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 60.
12. Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. by James Benedict (New York: Verso, 2005), pp. 145–168.
13. Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, p. 152.
14. Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, pp. 154–155.
15. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. by Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 53.
16. 'Progressive' and 'indie' rock in the popular music of the 1970s and 1980s, the New Wave in cinema in the 1960s, or, more recently, the spectacles of Cirque du Soleil.
17. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 46.
18. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, p. 65.
19. Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. by Ben Brewster (London: Allen Lane, 1969), pp. 233–234.
20. Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, trans. by Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman (London; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).
21. Peter Eisenman, 'Misreading', *Houses of Cards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 171.
22. Libeskind's 'Chamber Works' is a project in which the drawn lines do not suggest representation of real, experiential space, and therefore is limited to the paper itself, echoing Clement Greenberg's demand that art refer to nothing besides itself and reduce itself to the canvas. See Daniel Libeskind, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus* (London: Architectural Association, 1983) and Robin Evans, 'In Front Lines That Leave Nothing Behind', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. by K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 482–489.
23. Bernard Tschumi does not fit in comfortably with the autonomous architecture movement; the Surrealist and everyday influences in his early work place him at odds with Eisenman and Rossi, although the formal play and constructivist references in his work associate him with the neo-avant-garde.
24. Arthur Lubow, 'The China Syndrome', *New York Times Magazine*, 21 May 2006, <<http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FooC17FC3E5AoC728EDD4Co894DE4o4482>> [accessed 26 May 2006].

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Biography

Tahl Kaminer teaches at the architecture department of the Technical University of Delft, the Netherlands, where he is currently completing doctoral research. He is a founding member of 66 East, Centre for Urban Culture, an Amsterdam-based foundation involved in the study of the urban environment.

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