

THE FRINGE

The Fringe, by its very definition, is difficult to diagnose accurately. One can never quite say where the non-fringe stops and the fringe begins - much like the rings of Saturn. By The Fringe, of course, we mean the fringe of Architecture or architectural thought. Anything that is not at the heart of the matter, anything peripheral, either in the underground or the suburbia of architecture can be considered fringe whether it is sensible or silly, important or inconsequential, coherent or schizoid, revealing or redundant. However, despite its remoteness, something can be derived and learnt from the Fringe. If the Fringe is like the rings of Saturn, then serious or more central architectural thought is like the planet itself, without which the rings would not exist. The optional complements and enhances the necessary.

There is an inner fringe and an outer fringe. They are differentiated by their relative distances from the centre. Of course to the outer fringe the inner fringe is not fringe at all, but rather part of the establishment, the surface, the core, the conforming majority. This puts the inner fringe on its defensive - quite understandably so. Halfway fringe is not poetic fringe. Alienated from the core and rejected by the edge, the inner fringe stands alone. Since it is alone is it perhaps the only true fringe? In any case there is no unity in fringeland.

The outer fringe, the supposed avant-garde, cocky, arrogant, confident and lunatic looks in from the edge. However everyone sees what the outer fringe does not see: there is no outer edge. Fringeland is infinite and everything is relative. There are sub-fringes and post-fringes....

One thing that is perceived only by the keen-sighted is that the fringe is not really infinite. It does not increase ad infinitum. At a certain distance it actually decreases until it reaches another surface, another centre, another planet. So in fact a belt of maximum fringeness exists and because there are many planets this belt extends into a network. And where does it end, this spider-web intricately woven in the spheres of our minds?

(Georges Bulette)

