THE FIFTH COLUMN

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THE FIFTH COLUMN

The name of the Canadian Student Journal of Architecture, THE FIFTH COLUMN, is intended to be interpreted in a number of ways. First, there is an architectonic reference, the preoccupation with the development of a contemporary order of architecture that is at once respectful of antiquity and responsive to new conceptions of architecture. Second, there is a reference to journalism and the printed column of text. Finally, there is the twentieth century political connotation, an organized body sympathizing with and working for the enemy in a country at war.

These three references essentially define the role of THE FIFTH COLUMN. The magazine promotes the study of architecture in Canada at the present in terms of both the past and the future. It attempts to stimulate and foster a responsible, critical sensitivity in both its readers and its contributors. Finally, THE FIFTH COLUMN provides an alternative forum to established views not for the sake of opposing them, but to make it possible to objectively evaluate them.

Objectives

To promote the study and the appreciation of a sensitive architecture within the architectural community and general population, thereby positively influencing the development of architecture in Canada;
To promote a forum for and to encourage the dialogue between students, academics, professional architects and interested members of the 'lay' population;
To provide a critical alternative to the commercial trade magazines by publishing a journal that originates from the schools, traditionally the vanguard of architectural thought.

Editorial Policies

1. To publish articles by students, academics and professionals and by other interested parties that would otherwise find little opportunity for expression and publication.
2. To publish a series of articles in each issue exploring a specific and relevant theme which contributes to an understanding and a greater awareness of current architecture.
3. To publish articles on the diversity of Canadian architecture as a means of promoting an understanding of these local traditions and their influence on current architectural thought.
4. To publish articles discussing historical influences on the development of architecture.
5. To publish student projects from the various schools in order to stimulate architectural debate.
6. To publish critical reviews of current works of architecture in Canada, as well as outside the country, in order to reflect on and positively influence the development of architecture in Canada.
7. To publish critical reviews of activities, publications, lectures and exhibitions of interest to our readership.

THE FIFTH COLUMN (Canadian Student Journal of Architecture)
published April 1992.

THE FIFTH COLUMN, The Canadian Student Journal of Architecture, is a non-commercial, non-profit enterprise whose principle purpose is the study of architecture. The articles and opinions which appear in the magazine are published under the sole responsibility of their authors. The purpose of reproducing drawings, photographs and excerpts from other sources is to facilitate criticism, review or news journal summary. The Fifth Column is not responsible in the event of loss or damage to any material submitted.

Le titre de la revue canadienne des étudiants en architecture, "The Fifth Column", a pour but d'inviter le lecteur à l'interpréter à plusieurs niveaux. Le premier niveau suggère une référence architectonique, celle consistant à l'élaboration d'un ordre architectural contemporain à la fois respectueux d'un passé antique et répondant aux nouvelles conceptions de l'architecture. Sur un autre plan, "The Fifth Column" rappelle son orientation journalistique par sa connotation avec la "colonne" imprimée d'un texte. Enfin, "la cinquième colonne", c'est aussi, depuis Franco, le nom donné aux partisans clandestins sur lesquels chacun des deux adversaires peut compter dans les rangs de l'autre.

Ces trois références définissent dans son ensemble le rôle de "The Fifth Column". La revue a pour but de promouvoir l'étude de l'architecture au Canada, en terme de lien entre le passé et le futur. Elle tente également de stimuler et d'entretenir un sens aigu de la critique chez ses collaborateurs ainsi que chez ses lecteurs. Enfin, "The Fifth Column" propose un forum où il est possible d'établir différents points de vue, non dans le seul but de les confronter mais plutôt de rendre possible leur évaluation objective.

Objectifs

Promouvoir l'étude et l'appréciation d'une architecture sensible à l'intérieur de la communauté architecturale ainsi qu'à de plus larges groupes, et par conséquent influencer le développement de l'architecture au Canada;
Promouvoir la constitution d'un forum dans le but d'encourager le dialogue et les échanges d'idées entre les étudiants, les architectes et les individus intéressés de toute autre provence;
Offrir une alternative critique aux revues de type commercial, en publiant un périodique ayant ses racines à l'intérieur des Ecoles universitaires, traditionnellement pionnières dans l'évolution de la pensée architecturale.

Politiques éditoriales

1. Publier les articles d'étudiants, de membres du corps académique, de professionnels ainsi que d'autres groupes intéressés, qui autrement ne trouveraient que peu d'opportunités d'expression et de publication.
2. Publier une série d'articles dans chaque numéro explorant un thème spécifique qui contribuera à une compréhension approfondie et à une plus grande conscientisation de l'architecture contemporaine.
3. Publier des articles sur les diverses facettes de l'architecture canadienne dans le but de promouvoir la compréhension de ces différentes traditions locales et de leur influence sur la pensée architecturale contemporaine.
4. Publier des articles traitant des influences historiques sur le développement de l'architecture.
5. Publier les projets d'étudiants des différentes Ecoles dans le but de stimuler le débat architectural.
6. Publier des comptes rendus critiques de différentes oeuvres architecturales au Canada ainsi qu'à l'étranger afin de s'arrêter sur et d'influencer le développement de l'architecture au Canada.
7. Publier des comptes rendus critiques des différents événements, publications, conférences et expositions ayant quelque intérêt pour nos lecteurs.

THE FIFTH COLUMN (La revue canadienne des étudiants en architecture)
publiée à avril 1992.

THE FIFTH COLUMN, la revue canadienne des étudiants en architecture, est un organisme sans but lucratif, dont le but est de promouvoir l'étude de l'architecture. Les articles et opinions qui apparaissent dans la revue sont publiés sous la responsabilité de leur auteurs. Le but de reproduire dessins, photographies et extraits de d'autres sources est de faciliter la critique. The Fifth Column n'est responsable ni des domages subis par le matériel envoyé, ni de sa perte.

Erratum: In the article entitled "Palimpsest: A Trace of the Presence-Absence in Architecture," by Chaiboon Sirithanawat, Volume 7 No. 4, pages 24 and 25 were incorrectly sequenced: the content of p. 25 should have been placed before that of p. 24. We apologize to Mr. Sirithanawat for this error.   -ed.

Architecture

and **Advertising**

Content s

E D I T O R I A L
reflections on the printed page

Even the fringes of publication, where we find ourselves, are implicated in the play between architecture and publicity. In a culture defined by mass media, architecture has come to rely foremost on the magazine for its dissemination. Through periodical publication, this solid discipline distils into a currency that flows through present mechanisms of reproduction and consumption. In the mainstream, professional journals are a tool for promotion, showcasing the current and fashionable. This h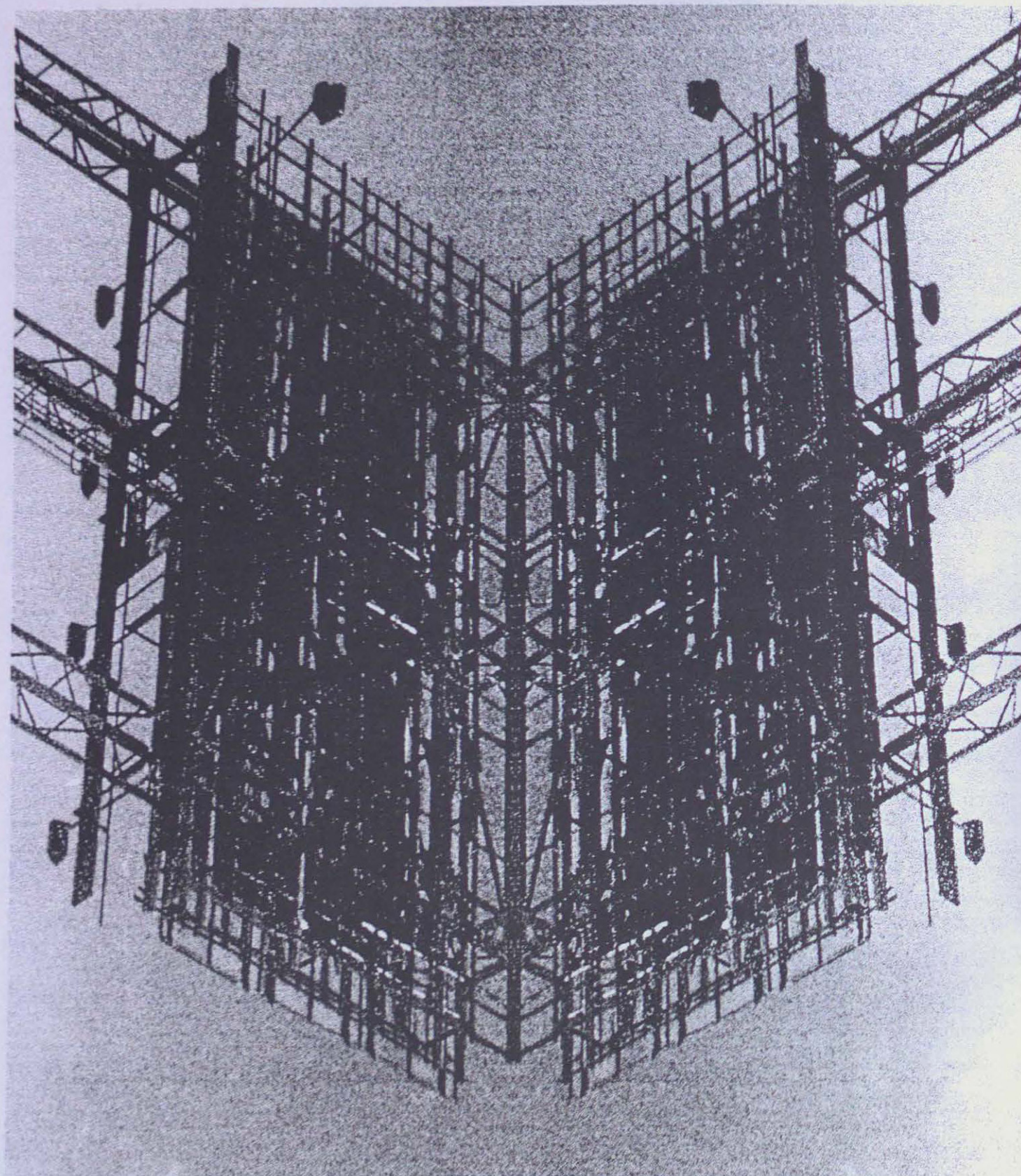as meant that publication is the key to and measure of success in the profession. But magazines are not solely agents of mainstream architectural promotion; their absorbent pages respond equally well to radical theory and technical data. The magazine's role is that of an ephemeral agent that mediates between mute building and a public conditioned by electronic communication technologies. The magazine supplements architecture, lending it the power of ubiquity but at the cost of its solidity. The architectural magazine is, however, directed at the architectural community, making it a medium through which architecture regards itself. The magazine has a privileged role in the perception of architecture, but how much does it reflect back into it's production?

To be viable, a magazine invariably imposes conditions on its content. Mainstream journals are dependent on advertising and must be preoccupied with appealing to a target market. Even magazines funded by institutions have their criteria; the notion of audience is central to all publication. In addressing its audience, the architectural magazine in particular relies heavily on graphic impact. Photography, which possesses an undeniable graphic authority, has, through the proliferation of the magazine, become by far the most prevalent method of representing architecture. Even drawing techniques have become more pictorial and captivating while specifically architectural drawings, such as sections, have declined. In the process buildings become reduced to a series of photo opportunities. The complementary effect is fairly obvious. One need only consider the way that downtown developers' billboards anticipate their labours to see photo opportunities under construction. On the other hand, the magazine as a text could add to architecture a voice and the continuity of periodical publication could propagate discussion. Avant-Garde movements such as Futurism and Constructivism took up the magazine and employed advertising tactics to broadcast their intentions. The possibility of the magazine overtly challenging architecture is heartening, and called upon to counter the pacifying influence of mainstream magazines' hidden agendas. The greatest weakness of the periodical is its predilection for novelty: What it promises is what's new and upcoming. Magazines create and sustain an appetite for innovation, to the point where buildings are consumed before they're built. The magazine becomes the site and threatens to collapse architecture's intention to address the built world. When this occurs architecture is left without weight or bearing. Lost in self reflection, it can assume no more dimensionality than that offered by the page.

Conrad Gmoser

Vickie Vinaric

ADVERTISING

An Architectural Medium

Les valeurs mercantiles, promues par les grandes corporations, dominent aujourd' hui le discours éthique dans notre société. La publicité, instrument par excellence du mercantilisme, tend à absorber au son sein, l' ensemble des activités humaines, l' architecture y compris. L' architecte doit, s' il veut échapper à cet empire, réinterpréter le rôle et les instruments de son travail.

It would be difficult to deny that the current practice of architecture has evolved to a point where the act of designing and building are two entirely different entities. This separation has allowed the architect to create a building based on a two dimensional representation and has ultimately led to the disembodiment of the experience from the act of building. The two dimensional methods of representation used to design and construct buildings have allowed many peripheral factors to influence the physical manifestation of drawing. One of the most overpowering influences is architecture's indoctrination by advertising: image-making which conveys messages without necessarily containing any real meaning.

The recognition of design as a separate activity from building in sixteenth-century Europe constituted a distinct split in the conceptual part of work from the labour process. The term design implied that designing was to be separate from doing.[1] The development of descriptive geometry and the formal rules of perspective drawing revolutionized the way in which a building could be represented in drawing. Orthogonal projections eventually came to represent the built reality of a building as opposed to the idea of the building. In subsequent centuries, a methodology of design was developed, to the point where design could be reduced to a process whereby calculation and prediction, the quantitative, could overrule the intuitive, experiential, qualitative factors.[2] This practice was reinforced by the development of scientific methodology in the nineteenth century and can be seen as a natural progression from the Greek ideology of reason. In the current practice of architecture, the design of a building is, more often than not, generated based on quantifiable factors and is developed through two dimensional media, precluding direct experience, knowledge of construction and consideration of the environment.

Not only have architects' methods of building and design changed, but their goals and values have deviated. At the turn of the century, the primary agenda and one of the main commitments of architects was to develop housing for a growing working middle class and to readapt the structure of cities for the increasing predominance of technology in every-day life. Architects had to overturn a norm which had existed for centuries in that they were now applying their skills to the plebian population and not to the elite upper class. The forerunners of Modern architecture were critical of society, went against the grain and set new standards. There existed a desire to merge a utopian vision with the material object. Architects fought against the established ideology and asserted a critical built form which reflected some social responsibility. It seems today's architect has chosen to ignore the problems and discomforts of society, has ignored social commitment altogether; today's architect has been absorbed by the consumerist ideology of late capitalism. Whereas in the past architecture was based on religion, social needs, or technology, today it is based on advertising. The world of signs and symbols which is the essence of advertising is informing the architect. Within the social structure, advertising has stepped in and, through sheer omnipresence, now informs all other disciplines. "Even the endless grid of the city cannot compare with the astonishing density of the advertising environment. Experience is no longer fabricated from the catalogue of geometry; it is fashioned from the archive of advertising. All messages, all meanings have been invaded by advertising, all realities verge on the stereotypical."[3]

The ideals of our time are clearly based on the production/consumption model of economy. Through the complex workings of the concepts of ideology and the inter-relationship among different practices and institutions there emerges a predominant ideal: money equals success and status; money is power; power is the ultimate fulfilment of one's time on earth; the more a person has material worth, the more he is a worthwhile person; survival of the richest. Since architects, in large part, have adopted the same ideals as all other media, their agenda is the same: profit. Hence, today's architecture, now part of the dominating ideology, expresses the ultimate power structure, the corporation, in its image. " ... architecture has devised the entire urban environment as a rhetorical expression of

the economic and political system. Building and "public space" join to communicate the grandeur and permanence of the corporation, its city and its nation...."[4]

The most effective way to convey constructed meanings of money and power is through marketing and advertising. Buildings are erected and sold based on the prestige and glamour that are associated with them, not because of the quality of design, workmanship or materials used, but because of the market value due to location and prominence (usually translated into height) of the building. These features are then propounded on large bill boards and advertisements which describe the prestige the tenant achieves by occupying the building. Thus the intention of the building, despite its function or actual attributes, is to advertise. Jean Baudrillard takes these ideas to their ultimate limit:

> The body stage, the landscape as a stage, and time as a stage are slowly disappearing. The same holds true for the public space: the theatre of the social and of politics are progressively being reduced to a shapeless, multi-headed body. Advertising in its new version is no longer the baroque, utopian scenario ecstatic over objects and consumption, but rather the effect of the omnipresent visibility of corporations, trade marks, PR men, social dialogue and the virtues of communication. With the disappearance of the public place, advertising invades everything (the street, the monument, the market, the stage, language). It determines architecture and the creation of super-objects such as Beaubourg, Les Halles or La Villette which are literally advertising monuments...not so much because they are centered on consumption, but because from the outset these monuments were meant to be a demonstration of the operation of culture, of the cultural operation of the commodity and that of the masses in movement.[5]

This phenomenon can be clearly understood simply by observing our immediate urban environment: large glass buildings (sometimes pink) communicate nothing to the user/ observer other than the power of the corporation to erect monumental structures; bigger buildings imply more money, which in turn imply power and success. These buildings usually have no architectural merit in themselves. They rarely contribute to innovation in design, materials or construction and exhibit no real quality. In fact, most effort is applied simply to the surface of the building since it is the facade which has the power to convey the desired image. In this way, architecture has bought into the system of signs; the building is an advertisement; it follows the norm and convention, challenges no one and conveys well-constructed images of success and power while having no real worth. In so doing, it completely loses touch with the ideal of creating liveable places for people and does not take into consideration the lived experience. These buildings in no way contribute to the structure or experience of our cities. In fact they detract from the urban fabric by becoming gigantic blank faces gazing at disengaged passers-by. "Architecture strives to
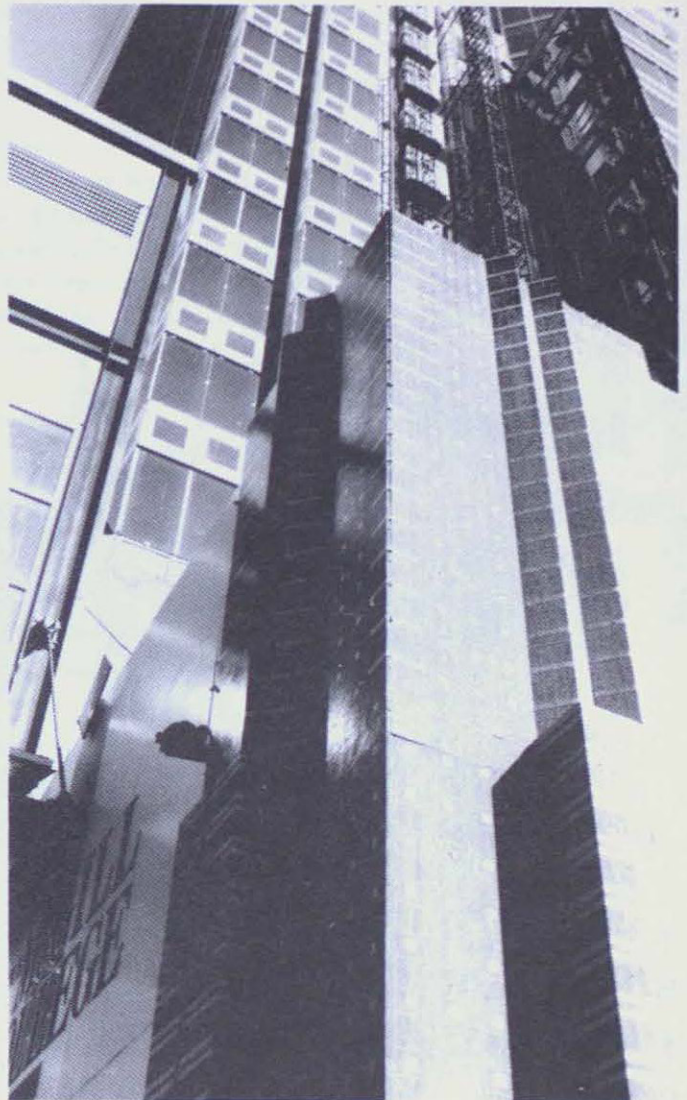
duplicate the construction of sign and object in advertising, borrowing the processes of "advertising-effect". Post-modern eclecticism and pastiche apply interruption to history; the buildings themselves intrude upon urban life, demanding our adaptation. Glamorous signs adorn the surfaces of buildings; high-tech materials and fantastic arcades transform the building into a fantasy of simulation...."[6]

Thus, the separation of the subject and the object, the image from the built reality have greatly facilitated advertising to set current architecture's standards and become its source. One of the results of this mentality is that social responsibility, as well as architectural responsibility, have not been neglected. As a result, architecture supports the corporation, which is at the root of advertising and the effect on the built environment is detrimental. "... Authors are brought to concede the superfluity of architectural

from and ignoring the lived experience, as a practice related to technology and mass production for the attainment of profit, as well as a process which is integrally linked to the present communications network. The CAD system allows the designer to input a building or object which is defined by a three dimensional co-ordinate system into a data structure. The result is an image of a realistic representation of the building as it would supposedly look once it was constructed. The danger, as in all sign systems, is that the reality of the image and the reality of the built form are two distinct entities which are not made readily distinguishable. An illusion of reality is the key reason for this software's success (as previously discussed, success equals profit). Mike Cooley relates an interesting anecdote concerning the uses of the computer: "...the spectrum of problems associated with them (computer techniques) are already becoming manifest, including the spectacular separation of theory and practice whereby some of those who have been weaned on CAD are unable to recognize the object they have designed."[9]

The huge dilemma for architecture which does not exist in advertising is that the images created by the computer will eventually represent a built reality. The built environment will directly reflect any shortcomings of the design. However, the seduction of the image, and the idea behind the image are considered paramount. The experience and the reality of the building are an afterthought in the minds of a majority of today's designers, and this attitude is clearly visible throughout the city. Kenneth Frampton raises the issue of the aesthetic results of this process:"...High-speed photographic and reproductive processes are surely not only the political economy of the sign but also an insidious filter through which our tactile environment tends to lose its concrete responsiveness. When much of modern building is experienced in actuality, its photogenic quality is denied by the poverty and brutality of its detailing...."[10]

design in a society that is exclusively motivated by ruthless economic drives; a society which has nothing of greater significance to represent than the giant neon-lit sky sign of the average strip."[7] Hence, the product of all the aforementioned factors is an architecture which has no goal other than to convey an image, to support the signs and symbols of the infrastructure: "...if there is a general principle that can be said to characterise Post-Modern architecture, it is the conscious ruination of style and the cannibalization of architectural form, as though no value either traditional or otherwise can withstand for long the tendency of the production/consumption cycle to reduce every civic institution to some kind of consumerism ... the imperatives of "monopolized" economy are such as to reduce the practice of architecture to large-scale packaging...."[8]

The use of Computer Aided Design further reinforces the perception of architecture as a manifestation of an image apart

Thus, the experience of the built form is removed further from the realm of reality through a system which simulates a non-existent object. The fact that CAD is becoming a wide-spread tool and is being used uncritically to generate buildings further illustrates the superficiality with which architects are approaching design. Baudrillard expresses these ideas with a brutal clarity: "...Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin in reality: a hyperreal...Perhaps only the allegory of the Empire remains. For it is with the same imperialism that present-day simulators try to make the real, all the real, coincide with their simulation models...The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks, and command models - and with these it can be reproduced an

infinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all...."[11]

It seems that if architecture continues on its current course, it will cease to have any significance or relevance in society. It seems architects are contributing to their future extinction since many members of society view them as purveyors of a built form which not only contributes nothing to the environment but which, in some cases, is actually detrimental to our lived experience. As was discussed, there are many factors which have contributed to this evolution of architecture, namely the schism of the building from experience and of the adoption of profit as a main agenda. The latter factor is a direct result of embracing the ideologies of our time.

Future architects must reverse these trends by reinstating the importance of the embodied experience of the building. The tactile and sensory dimensions, which have been so grossly overlooked, must figure prominently in the minds of designers. For the tactile can only be decoded through experience itself; it cannot be reduced to information, to a code, or to a sign; it cannot be simulated.

Not many people are pleased with the state of our built environment. A change must occur. Architects are vested with the power to create a physical reality and to contribute to the built environment. For urban areas to become pleasing places, experientially and psychologically, architects must re-evaluate their ideological standpoints: are we critical observers and builders or are we cogs in the wheel of the current ideology, where money is the ultimate goal and all efforts serve to reinforce the supremacy of the corporation?

Vickie Vinaric is a fourth year student at the McGill School of Architecture.

Notes:
1. Mike Cooley, "From Brunelleschi to CAD-CAM", <u>Design After Modernism</u>, Thames and Hudson, 1988, p. 198.
2. Ibid., p. 197.
3. Richard Bolton, "Architecture and Cognac", <u>Design After Modernism</u>, Thames and Hudson, 1988, p. 88.
4. Ibid., p. 91.
5. Jean Beaudrillard, <u>The Ecstaty of Communication</u>, trans. L'autre par lui-meme, Semiotexte, 1988, p. 20.
6. Richard Bolton, op. cit., p. 91.
7. Kenneth Frampton, <u>Modern Architecture</u>, Thames and Hudson, 1980, p. 291.
8. Ibid., p. 307.
9. Mike Cooley, op. cit., p. 204.
10. Kenneth Frampion, op. cit., p. 312.
11. Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra", <u>Art After Modernism,</u> Halliday Lithograph Corp., 1984, pp. 253-254.
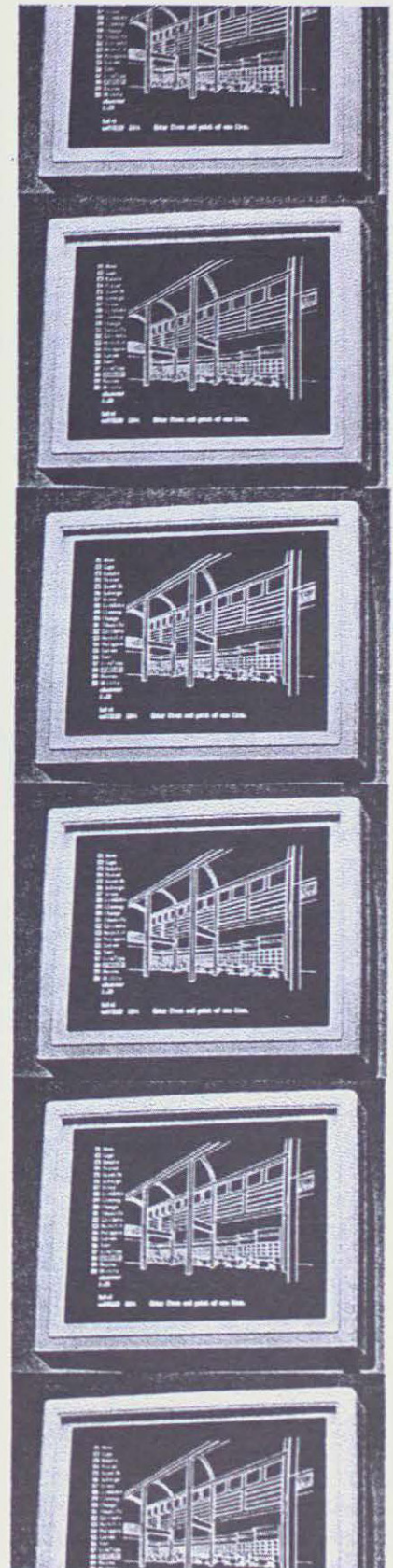
DREAM WORLDS and *Malls*

Le centre commercial est le théâtre d'une société dont la marchandise est le fétiche. Là, le consommateur prend physiquement possession de l'objet du désir créé par les images médiatiques de la publicité. Les vitrines des magasins ne sont que l'ultime représentation de cette manipulation symbolique. L'architecture entière devient un écran où est projetée l'imagination mercantile de notre époque.

Imagine, if you will, the chance to design your own shopping mall. How would you think about the space? What services would you make available to the consumers you wanted to attract? Which stores would you highlight? How would you give the mall a character of its own? Would you make it like a long hallway or give it the qualities of a large and spacious arena? Are you looking for intimacy or anonymity? Do you want people to be able to see each other as they shop? Or would you prefer the kind of space which, similar to a shopping street, keeps consumers on the move and therefore less likely to interact with each other? Would you look for ways of encouraging if not creating a public space, somewhat like a square in the grand European tradition, where large numbers of people could congregate? How would you manage an environment in which the public space might take on more importance than the shops or restaurants within the mall? Should there be parks inside malls? Are they really no different than early twentieth century music halls, places of entertainment and pleasure and voyeurism?

All of these questions circle around another and perhaps more primary one. What theoretical tools will serve us best in trying to understand the mall as a fundamental part of twentieth century life and as a representation of the way in which our culture, our society, thinks about itself?

The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project

Susan Buck-Morss recently wrote a book with the above title on Walter Benjamin's examination of arcades in Europe during the late nineteenth century. She begins with a quotation from Benjamin: "We have," so says the illustrated guide to Paris from the year 1852, (providing) a complete picture of the city of the Seine and its environs, "repeatedly thought of the arcades as interior boulevards, like those they open onto. These passages, a new discovery of industrial luxury, are glass-covered, marble-walled walkways through entire blocks of buildings, the owners of which have joined together to engage in such a venture. Lining both sides of these walkways which receive their light from above are the most elegant of commodity shops, so that such an arcade is a city, a world in miniature."[1]

Buck-Morss talks about Benjamin's desire to examine historical phenomena and make them talk - to bring to life the "everyday" not as text but as subject for conversation and exchange. It is, so to speak, the objects of modern day consumerism which need to be given life, not to overvalue them or even confer upon them a status which they don't deserve, but to uncover in their very existence the way in which mass culture works.

Benjamin saw cities as intensely transient places where spatial and temporal relations undergo non-stop change. The city becomes an environment of traces and memories. No sooner have you moved from one sphere of experience than you encounter another. People are in motion as are cars and trains and buses. Destinations are merely short-term stopovers in the constant flow. This sense of movement transforms reality into a dreamscape. Yet it is a reality which nonetheless services the people who use it. It is this relationship between the functional and the imaginary which I want to explore in the following short piece.

Though he may not have used the term, Benjamin was in fact approaching the analysis of malls and cities as an ethnography. He saw the covered shopping arcades of the nineteenth century as replicas of an internal consciousness, a collective dream dependent on "commodity fetishism". At the same time the malls represented all that was utopian in the projections of a nascent capitalist sphere.

Place Montreal Trust

I walk by Abercrombie and Fitch which is the prestige store of the Montreal Trust Shopping Mall and the first thing to be noted is the way it sits astride a series of escalators which open onto a cavity in the centre of the building. This large open space has a gallery at every floor which allows for and in fact encourages viewing. There are two elevators with glass windows to reinforce the sense that this is an environment where consumers should be able to watch each other. Skylights bring in natural light at a variety of different angles. The cavity is reminiscent of large exhibition halls and many of the stores are designed around the idea of theatrical display, with some storefronts recessed differently from others and with different intensities of artificial light. Artificial versus natural. There is something both strange and wondrous about the mannequins in the store windows. They are meant to stand in for the spectator/consumer. They are dressed in every possible type of clothing and assume many different physical positions. It is their gaze, the stasis in their eyes which interests me most. They simulate the potential look of "everyperson" - a desire to be perfect, to be shaped and formed in a perfect manner which is offset by the knowledge that perfection cannot be attained. The window display must capture the eye before thought - engage that curiosity which comes with watching an image, which perhaps explains why more and more windows make use of television monitors. If the screen can bring you face to face with the image you desire then the store simply becomes a quick stopover, a functional experience designed around service but not around persuasion. Of course that means less and less employees and more merchandise. Racks of goods continue from the monitor into the store which suggests that as you try on a pair of jeans, for example, you are attempting to wear the image.

The continuity between image and consumption is not as direct however, as the above argument might suggest. Window displays are part of a continuum. They are inescapable unless you never go to shopping malls or never walk around the city. Images of consumption begin in the home. The presence of television monitors slips into that continuum. It might be better to say that we are wearing the television set. We may have internalized some of its values but we can also remain resistant. Yet we are also dependent on it as a source of information. This electronic clothing is a sign system which we use to explain the choices we make both to others and to ourselves. What must be understood here is that our very notions of space and time are changed by these processes. And it would be foolish for the architect involved in the creation of a mall

not to be aware of them. "This overexposure attracts our attention inasmuch as it portrays the image of a world without antipodes, without hidden sides, a world in which opacity is no longer anything but a momentary "interlude". It must be noted however, that the illusion of proximity does not last very long. Where the polis once inaugurated a political theatre, with the agora and the forum, today there remains nothing but a cathode-ray screen, with its shadows and spectators of a community in the process of disappearing. This "cinematism" conveys the last appearance of urbanism, the last image of an urbanism without urbanity, where tact and contact yield to televisual impact..."[2]

Abercrombie and Fitch is very conscious of the need to theatricalize and to create a visually rich environment for its products. Its windows are like a "tableau vivant". In the window I examined a hammock with Teddy Bears on it surrounded by an artificial tree. There was a large picture of two wolves with the suggestion of a hunt. Then of course there was Spring clothing, what you might need to relax and be comfortable during the coming vacation. There was also a wooden croquet set along with other such adult games. All of this centred on the notion that the man can be the child - that play is as good as work and both are necessary for each other. The store looks as if it is trying to open its doors to the wilderness which beckons somehow beyond its borders which may explain the Teddy Bears. It does have a lot of hunting gear in the back but that seems to be more symbolic than real which is in fact precisely what the window display is promoting.

Opposite Abercrombie and Fitch is Cafe Les Palmes which takes this notion of the outside to the extreme. The kitchen is visible as are the many palm trees which sit in close proximity to a large number of false columns designed around an Egyptian motif. Thus

you can sit and eat and watch the fountain in the centre of the mall as it shoots water into the air. You can listen to the sound of that water and smell the trees and watch a chef prepare your meal. You can experience all of the elements of an environment from which you are completely detached and if that bothers you, you can go into Abercrombie and Fitch and buy something to bring you closer to the outside.

Now, I don't want to focus too heavily on the motif of inside/outside but as I have mentioned there is a tremendous skylight and it dominates the entire mall. Given the intensity and length of Montreal winters the trees, water and natural light contribute to a feeling of well-being which perhaps explains why the mall is designed as a series of galleries which you have to walk around to enter and exit. The galleries slow down the usual downtown rush and there are strategically placed seats to reinforce the idea that this is also a place of rest. Make this your second home, a place to vacation, even a place to eat. The familiar is mixed with the exotic. This explains why the kitchen of the restaurant is visible. We are at the edge of a beach. We can listen to the rush of waves even as a snow storm batters the outside. We can, so to speak, almost make our own food as we picnic. This is also part of the mentality in the self-serve basement food emporium. Everything is fast and everything is prepared but you still pick up your own food and can, if you're lucky, find a table with an umbrella to sustain the fantasy.

"The covered shopping arcades of the nineteenth century were Benjamin's central image because they were the precise material replica of the internal consciousness, or rather, the unconscious of the dreaming collective. All of the errors of bourgeois consciousness could be found there (commodity fetishism, reification, the world as "inwardness"), as well as (in fashion, prostitution, gambling) all of its utopian dreams. Moreover, the arcades were the first international style of modern architecture, hence part of the lived experience of a worldwide, metropolitan generation."[3]

For Benjamin, although this quote does not suggest it, the new material world of the arcade led to a reenactment of all that was dreary about everyday life. This is perhaps one of Benjamin's most important insights. As cities have become depopulated, the mall in the city centre has become a new public space centred on eating and consuming. This all takes place within the context of the televisual, within the context of images. It is not so much that the images satisfy a fantasy as they fit into a pre-existent set of dreams about money and material wealth. Images transform architectural design into a play with surfaces where stores allow viewers to enter and experience the advertisements which they have seen elsewhere. Malls are like a forest of symbols and signs with direction markers pointing every which way. This in fact may be at the heart of their attractiveness. For as the urban landscape becomes denaturalized our culture will have to find a new way to bring back the natural configurations which it has eliminated. But this new nature will imitate not reproduce, simulate not reenact.


There is a need to see malls not as reflections of some low cultural activity not worthy of comment, but as the very essence of where our culture is defining itself. They are a symptomatic map as much of conscious as unconscious needs and activities. Thus the palm trees at Montreal Trust and the ones in San Diego effectively join together. A picture is assembled which confirms a continuity between the home and the market-place, between various levels of artifice and nature. "The arcades, as houses without exteriors were themselves, just like dreams. All collective architecture of the nineteenth century provides housing for the dreaming collective: arcades, winter gardens, panoramas, factories, wax-figure cabinets, casinos, railroad stations, - as well as museums, apartment interiors, department stores and public spas."[4]

The architectural becomes a scaffolding onto which the body maps itself. And this body of the late twentieth century inhabits a space which is so close to a dream world that as Benjamin suggests, the fantasy needs to be recounted, narrativised, otherwise we will never understand its effects.

Notes:

1. Walter Benjamin, quoted in Susan Buck-Morss, The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press 1989) p. 3.
2. Paul Virilio, "The Overexposed City," in Zone 1/2, p. 23.
3. Susan Buck-Morss, The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project, p. 39.
4. Ibid, p. 271.

Ron Burnett is the Director of Graduate Studies in Communications at McGill University.

LE **680** SHERBROOKE OUEST
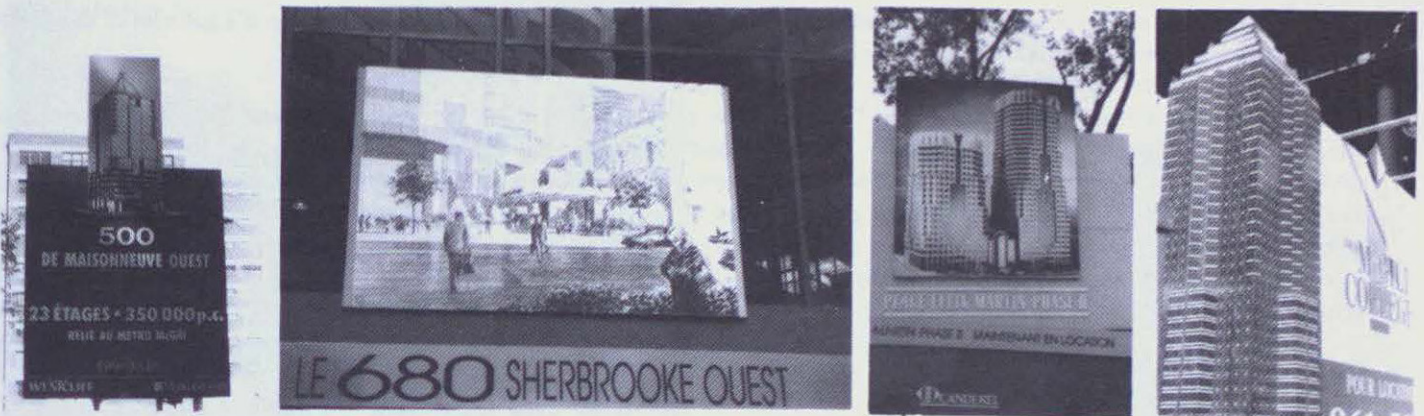
Reflections on the Production of Commercial Office Architecture:

An Interview with Cameron Charlebois

Cameron Charlebois est diplômé en architecture de l'université McGill. Il travaille présentement pour la division immobilière du CN et connait bien le marché de l'espace de bureau à Montréal. Vickie Vinaric et Dave Smythe l'ont interviewé en avril 1991.

Cameron Charlebois holds a degree in architecture from McGill University. He is presently the Senior Director of Commercial Projects at CN and has first-hand knowledge of the market for office space in Montreal. Vickie Vinaric and Dave Smythe interviewed Cameron Charlebois in April 1991.

VV: Do you foresee the possibility in the market for a company to hire an architect with the intention of promoting a building that may be a forerunner in design for office buildings?

CC: Yes, I see that happening but in a long evolution. I don't want to exaggerate, but what you see happening is a very honest and correct reflection of the state of our culture. Our occupying companies are no better than our architects or our developers, they are no better or worse than our city officials or our middle class who chose to live in bungalows out in the middle of nowhere and drive mediocre cars. It's just like that song in the sixties, like ticky-tacky boxes up on the hill, where what was ticky-tacky thirty years ago is just better ticky-tacky now. Maybe that's the way history goes; things just get a little bit better. So I see nothing out of sync between these buildings, the mass of them, and the rest of our society. That is probably where I unhook with the attitude of some academics and the stuff that they write. Wake up and smell the coffee; you know, you produced these guys yourself. They can afford the luxury of sitting in an ivory tower. The fact is that I'd rather see an analysis of what we're discussing now instead of saying that the details on the Maison Ultramar are banal or thoughtless. I think the industry should get into some of this polemic.

Consider the whole debate with the city, for instance: if the city set about giving awards to companies who occupy great buildings [it would have a tremendous effect. By doing this] they would recognize the architect because that would happen by ricochet, then you would recognize the developer, because the developer will be happy if the building gets recognized. But recognize the company, recognize IBM for its contribution, recognize the Maison des Coopérants for having chosen excellence, if you like that building; the effect you'd have on the market would be absolutely dramatic! Companies like that seek recognition, but that never happens. Instead, we focus on the architect, we focus on all the interveners, the doers, instead of the real tug which is the market and tenants that occupy these buildings. They're the ones who drive it. If you miss that mark you can have the most spectacular building in the world and you'll go broke in the process.
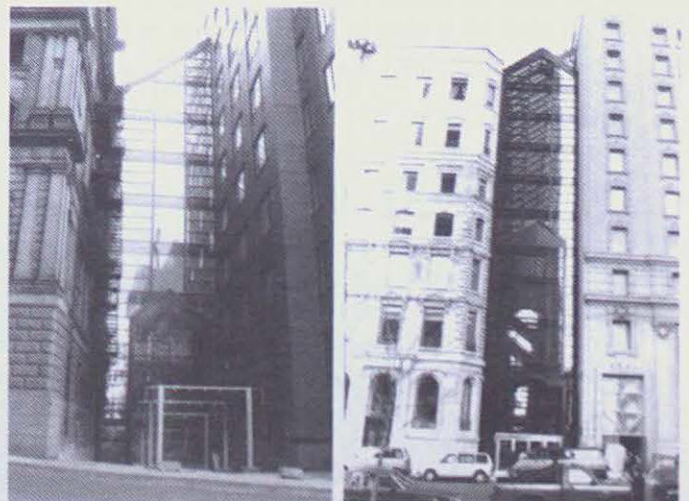
Both ends of the atrium of the World Trade Centre, Montreal

Look at the [new] World Trade Centre [in Montreal]. That is to me the most striking example of this kind of polarity in action. It gets all kinds of accolades, and no tenants. Even the tenants will recognize that it's a really nice building but "It's not what I want...you know it's really not what I want." And so I laud anybody who goes in there and sets up, but don't ask me to go there as a tenant. It's getting all this praise for being a great typology, a great model of building which we should all love because it makes a good city and so on but it doesn't represent the demands of the market.

DS: Why is that? Why is it not a desirable building?

CC: [I would get into the notions of] location and class "A" and class "B" office space and what drives some of these things, but in a nutshell it's [because it is] an atrium building. If I rent on a floor of an atrium building that means half of my offices are looking into an atrium. If you work all day in an office building and are looking into an atrium that's bad news. Even by contrast if you're in an office space like my own here looking out onto a normal street, looking right across the street at another building, it's still preferable because when it rains, it rains, when it snows, it snows, when it's dark, it's dark and you can look out the window and you can see traffic and people and you know that you live in a real world. I don't know the floor plan that well, but I imagine because of that [atrium configuration] you have long central corridors with elevators at the ends; you must have [this arrangement] because you can't have elevators every fifty feet. In a typical floor of an office building of twenty thousand square feet or so you've got offices on four sides and the elevator in the middle which is the ideal model. In an atrium building, which is long and horizontal, you've got windows on two sides but your end walls are blank because you share those walls with the tenants next door. You don't have windows on those walls, so proportionately for each square foot of floor space, you've got half as many windows and half of those you've got are looking onto an atrium.

The next thing is something that's architecturally significant. In most high rise buildings it's important for the tower to be expressed right down to the ground. Towers on podiums are not popular. They're not desirable from the market point of view because when you walk in that door you want to be walking into the building, not the base of the building or a piece of the building. In the case of the World Trade Centre I don't want to seem too critical because I know the developer and he's very adventuresome and courageous, but when a tenant walks into the World Trade Centre, which has ten other entrances, [he asks himself], "Who am I in all this?," and if you're a major tenant, that's disastrous. If you are Canada Trust, you're going to be in the Maison Canada Trust, you're not going to be Canada Trust in the World Trade Centre. What are you going to get out of that? That gives you nothing. It means your whole image is tucked underneath this ambiguous

notion of a World Trade Centre. So it's got a lot of things going against it.

I think the whole community is hoping that it works anyway, but where I get hung up is when I see it touted as the be all and end all of where we should be going when the real industry is not going that way. People can rant and wail and whine and moan about it all they want, and it's not going to change anything. That is not the way the industry is going and if the city tried to make the industry go that way by imposing design controls and so on, I can tell you right now that the industry would leave the city. The tenants that you would try to cram into those buildings would go and set up in exactly the buildings they want in Laval or Longeuil or somewhere outside of the city limits where you don't have to live with that kind of constraint. That sounds drastic, but I'm not exaggerating. That's the discourse of the industry and it's been put together after a good deal of thought. So it's constrained. It's not easy and yet within the kind of dynamic of the industry, the actual forms that you see are produced very quickly and with a view to marketing.

DS :   So how are business projections made in terms of an office building? Does the product have a five year life span?

CC: No, you've got to remember that these decisions are made on a quick turn-around because you are talking about a tenant's market, you're not talking about an owner's market. You're talking about people who are making a five or ten year decision where there's one number that is important: the net effective rent. What's my net bottom dollar per square foot per year? After that you get into the peripherals, like expansion options. If I'm planning to be in this business for ten years, I've got to have room to move.

It's a tenant's market. The tenant is being bombarded with offers. There's not any shortage of desirable developers out there. They're all coming in each one with a better and more seductive offer. The tenant is in a position of reacting to the best of all worlds and choosing the best possible product for the cheapest possible price - very simple operation planning. Sometimes they hire consultants to do the search for them and to engage the developers in a dialogue and come up with the best possible deal, but the process *per se* rarely takes very long. It's very quick for a number of reasons. First of all, tenant's usually start to engage in this process at the last minute. They either engage in it because they need some more space badly because they just got a big contract or because their lease is up in eighteen months. They know that within an eighteen month horizon they can get a pretty good fix on the market. They can make a commitment to a developer and get all the best concessions given all the market conditions. Everything is on a very short temporal horizon because you can't negotiate a deal five years into the future. The whole market could turn around. So you leave the decision quite intentionally often up to the very last

I.B.M. Marathon billboard   I.B.M. Marathon building, Montreal

minute, [leaving] the shortest possible delay in which the developer that you ultimately select can deliver the product in time. If you're a small tenant and there's a lot of space on the market, he can deliver the space to you in six months. If you're a big tenant like IBM it's a two year run out.

IBM was very quick. The deal, the design and everything else were done in six months: city approvals, whammo and then they got into the ground... very quickly... two years to build the building and they took that into account. Their lease is up this year and they've moved in already. The timing was perfect, but they didn't make the decision until they were absolutely up against the wall. The whole situation drives that because it's dealing with a kind of squeeze that gives you on your own part the best possible deal. Knowing all of the parameters and extrapolating from them is the way to get the best possible deal and, as I said, you can't know the parameters in the market place three years down the road but you can certainly know them for next year. The whole thing is geared towards quick and facile decision making, not a lot of agonizing and reflection. I would love to see more understanding of some of this dynamic. I don't think it's without hope because I don't think our downtowns are without hope and I think with some intelligence the whole thing can be moved to evolve in a direction that is much, much more human and much better, but people have to stop denying that the dynamic exists.

VV: But you don't see the fact that the building is an advertisement or part of a corporate image for a company as something detrimental to the architectural intent of the building.

CC: I don't think it's the fact that it is a marketing tool or advertising for the company that is detrimental because this was always the case. When the Bank of Montreal hired McKim, Mead and White on Place d'Armes to do its building with the dome, don't

Maison Canada Trust, Montreal

Bank of Montreal, McKim, Mead and White, Montreal

tell me that the colonnade and the dome weren't part of the marketing of the Bank of Montreal. Of course they were. It's just that they had more time, construction was longer, family attachments and so forth were such that they did it in a somewhat more sophisticated manner, perhaps, and not as glib. Already, I think, we're a lot less glib today than we were ten years ago. I think that that's true in a lot of cases, even a Canada Trust may be better than a 2020 University. I think most people would agree with this. Yet the client bracket is basically the same. At least it's a step in the right direction. I think that if you accept the fact that the building and the architectural design is going to fulfill that role [of a marketing tool], the question becomes, "How do I manage that in a way that produces the marketing desired by the tenant, the client and the developer but also produces good architecture?" I think that's where Kohn Pedersen Fox have got it pinned down.

DS: Is there such a thing as a life expectancy, not of the building itself, but of the prestige image of the building? From the owner's point of view, is there a sort of recognized period of time after which it may not have the status in the city that it did before? I know in Toronto there's a glut of downtown rental space and some owners of older buildings are offering outrageous deals on ten year leases at thirty to forty percent discounts because they're finding out that their prestige tenants are moving to newer buildings. Have they passed that point where the building's prestige image is dated?

CC: Yes, there are some such cases. I think the answer to that is largely location. If you've got a class "A" building today on McGill College it'll be a class "A" building as long as McGill College stays a class "A" address. If you've got a class "B" type, miserable building in a class "A" location, well then you're out of sync and sooner or later, probably sooner, you're going to try to renovate the thing to give it a class "A" image. Likewise, if you're off the class "A" address like Place Ville Marie and parts of René Levesque and McGill College, sometimes there is nothing you can do. You can make it the most beautiful thing in the world and you're not going to change anything. But I'd say that buildings would be referred to as getting tired and losing their sheen and that sort of thing. PVM is a good example. That whole building had to be remarketed and they did. I don't know that they're fully completed yet, but they have set about it. A lot of the tenants for the McGill College buildings came out of PVM. PVM was just being robbed of tenants, so they had to get back into the market place and capitalize on the real value of their location. Yes, buildings do get tired, but in the case of PVM it took 25 years.

DS: So at that point, when that recognition is made and they have to get remarketed, how is that done? Does the developer or owner hire one of these firms to remarket their building?

CC: No, it's deeper than that. A good example of this is the old CIL house. That's a SOM building that was pure within its

universe. It's a good building. It was bought by Royal Trust first, and then sold to the developer Canderel, and then they decided to remarket the building. It's not a SOM lobby anymore. It has got all kinds of stuff in it, it's a remarketed lobby. They made a fairly large production out of the asbestos they took out of the building. They reconfigured floors, they moved tenants around, they remarketed all of the elevator lobbies. That was done as well at 1010 Sherbrooke Street West beside the Four Seasons Hotel; all the typical floor lobbies were redone in marble and so on, where before they might have been carpet and gypsum...

DS: So you say remarket and in a sense it means redesign?

CC: There's no doubt about it. It can be an upgrade in the mechanical system, changing the windows, etc., and then the marketing firms will use that as part of their *schtick*.

VV: Which comes first, do the marketing guys say to the developer, this is what people want?

CC: No, it's the developer that's got a sense of it. The whole process is driven by the developer.

VV: And then the marketing agents take what's there.

CC: Yes. A developer, if he's been sitting on a building for that long, realizes that the building is losing its edge. There are changes in technology, sophistication in communications, the tenants' space requirements are different, not necessarily less, but very different. And so you begin to sense this: "Holy smokes! If this is the coming wave in the market place, this building I've got over here is never going to be able to respond so I either accept it as a second class building, or I'm going to recycle, I'm going to upgrade its market value." You do it in pieces and sooner or later you're finished, and you pay another million bucks for a marketing campaign or whatever and you go through the process.

Renovated entrances to the shopping level and the parking garage of Place Ville Marie, Montreal

VV: What percentage of the building cost goes into marketing?

CC: That depends on the building. If you roll in brokerage commissions and stuff like that it can be a whopping percentage. If it's just the brochures and the advertisements and stuff like that, it's one or two percent.

The other aspect of the trade which will provoke a recycling/remarketing of the building is the sale of the building. These buildings are built to be sold. They're not built to be kept, so you build them, you fill them up with tenants, you get the best possible revenue stream today, then you look for a buyer who has got a lower return expectation than you, which means you put a multiplier on the revenue stream and then you sell it to that person. If it's an older building and it has changed hands a few times sooner or later it is going to hit a point where somebody is going to buy it more for its speculative potential than for what it's actually producing today. They'll say, "Okay. We're going to buy this because we figure its revenue stream is fifty percent what the market would bear in this location for an upgraded product. Change the windows, re-do the lobby , etc. and then get into a process of remarketing and maybe double the revenue stream." That sort of situation will also provoke remarketing.

Remarketing will consist of the whole thing that you would do in a development operation. You get the brokers involved who are the leasing agents who get the tenants, you hire the communications firms, you have public relations activities, you produce brochures, buy advertisements in magazines, the whole *schtick*, just like it was a new building. There's really no difference.

DS: So you know right from the beginning of the project that at a certain point you're going to need to sell that building. Is the life expectancy of the building a quantifiable thing or is that something that the developer realizes after a certain time?

CC: There are different developers. Some developers build to keep, in which case they have a portfolio of assets which represent the asset base or the richness of the company and all those assets are kept up to saleable quality at all times. If you're in New York and you need five hundred million dollars to build Canary Wharf well then maybe you'll sell ten buildings in the United States...or if you're BCED who has a cash crunch but you don't want to have to let go of the project in Montreal or in downtown Toronto, you'll sell three shopping centres in Missouri or something so they have all got to be kept up to that state. There is another class of developers called merchant builders who build facades and they are the dangerous guys because they'll build anything and they'll fill it up and they'll do anything to get rentals coming out of it and then they'll turn around and sell it to a finance company. That's what caused the financial disaster in the States. It happened much less

in Canada but in the States developers would build anything they could get a loan on and since the loans were deregulated, people could lend money to any project.

DS: This is the savings and loans scandal?

CC: That's right. The developers would get a loan for ten million dollars to build an empty building and then when they couldn't get any tenants they all went bankrupt and now 160 billion dollars of real estate has fallen into the bankruptcy process in the States. It has killed the whole real estate market in the States for about ten years.
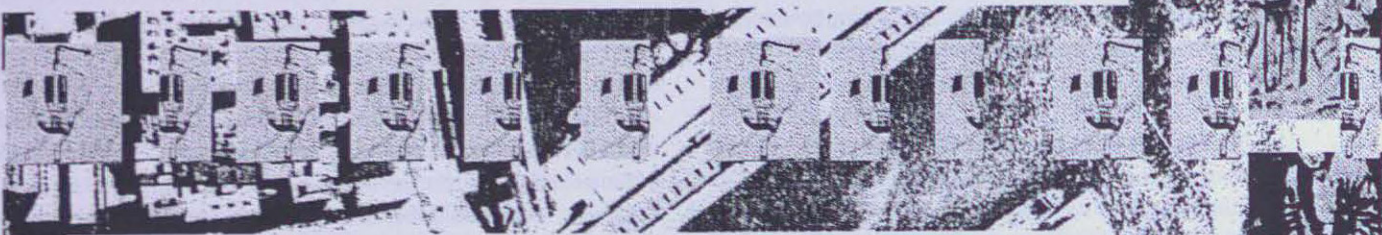
When you look at the developers' operation at that level, there are so many dimensions to a project, from municipal approvals, to securing the land, to getting the tenants interested, to getting the design done and gearing up your contractors, maybe even preordering certain things like elevators and escalators and so on, to most important of all, getting your financing (because a developer tries never to build anything with his own money). With all of that, the design development process is ten percent of the developer's reality, it's a hundred percent of the architect's reality, but it's ten percent of his , and it's maybe fifty percent of the city's reality, so you've got all these people talking to each other but they're in it at different levels. It's a little bit like a tower of Babel. You never really know. You've got one person losing his mind over something and another person who is sitting there, and it's only ten percent of his concern. It happens all the time, it's just amazing and it's exacerbated by the fact that most developers think they do a tremendous benefit to the community.

DS: I'm sure people would say the same thing about architects.

CC: Well it's fun to get into it because I think there's certainly an intellectual level to all this that people tend to ignore and yet it's very rich and there are reasons for everything. Where I disapprove and I get very very frustrated is when I see this whole dynamic which I've just explained summarily ignored. Developers are really killing themselves [trying to build a building of architectural significance]. Some are getting rich, there's no doubt about it but some people are suffering, and some people are doing their best, and we are all human beings. You could question every soul in this industry other than the most slippery land speculators, and they would tell you that they are fulfilling a mission, their integrity is beyond question and they just want to do their best for their society. To see that whole dynamic passed off by certain academics as bad faith or sloppiness just makes my skin crawl.

The text was prepared for publication by Michael Kidd.

Julia Loktev Christof Migone

Excerpts from a recent call-in radio show that sprawled over danger in paradise and curiousear and curiouser on CKUT-Fm in Montreal. Listeners were asked to map the city's body. Callers would describe their location in anatomical terms, and then either make noise with that body part or wax poetic/schizophrenic on their carnal constitution.

..The nervous system is in the electrical and telephone wires, the brain of the city. One is necessary for the body, the other one is metaphysical. The body can harm you; it can dispense with you...

..I work near the penis N.D.G./Montreal West area, but every night I travel back to the socks...

..I'm calling from a lymph node. Actually, it's kinda embarrassing, lymph nodes are boring...

..This little spot is right where all dreams come true in the body, dreams of sunny days, and sunny ways, and walking under the willow trees, right here in the thighs in Pointe Claire...

..Montreal is a photograph of a body doing a bellyflop...

.. As I see it, the center of gravity for this body is right smack at the corner of St. Laurent and Cremazie...

.. We're in the liver?.. I know what happens to the liver when you feed it with corn. When you forcefeed it with corn, the liver gets really big and that's how you get foie gras. We could make a sound by placing a green mud pack over our liver, which would than filter our liver. Homeopathic medicine often does that. The sound of mud placed over the liver would make a kind squelching noise as it filters the toxins...

..I'm calling from a nervous part of the body, in N.D.G.. I tought it might be one of the reproductive organs. Where is the vas, the part you tie up when you have a vasectomy? That's why its's very nervous. I think I'm in the texticle...
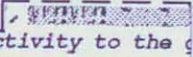
..The river's the skin which protects us from outside infection. It is our urinary tract and our mouth. It is the way we live and the way we dispose of our garbage...
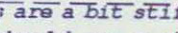
there are atoms of air in your lungs that
were once in the lungs of every one who
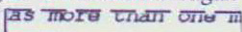has ever lived we are breathing each other

<div align="right">Sharon Gannon</div>

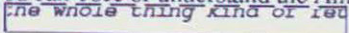## OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND LET THE AIR OUT
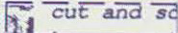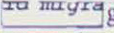
This is the length of a breath _____
_____
_____
_____ at 7 inches per second, cassettes go at
half the speed and hence half the length of the above line would have been
breathing. The other half awaits another's breath. By constructing a sound
we usually mean to capture and record then to reproduce and play.
Recorded sound travels from head to head. Two heads are better than one.
The voice migrates from your head to the record head to the play head to
my head and back again until a bulk head leaves no head at all. One head
is better than none. ⌐ ▓▓▓▓ ⌐ ⌐
ferred textual activity to the ⌐
The technology of entrapment has taken context out of context. 'Is it live
or is it Memorex?' is no longer the question. Or was it ever? The voice
is always cast as a deed. Words are projectiles, projectiles have targets.
Once recorded the sound can be manipulated. It loses authorship. One's
identity is malleable and capable of being reconstructed in innumerable
possibilities. I can exhale without inhaling ⌐ are a bit stiff. I kn⌐
⌐ of a masochist, but I think we should see a chiropract
The tongue of Ronald Reagan touched by the hand of Douglas Kahn
speaks: ⌐as more than one m⌐

-For the first time in man's history I am President, and I can do this with
dash and daring do. ⌐ ⌐
-Ronald Reagan, you can't see or understand the America of dirty streets
and poor people ⌐the whole thing kind of red⌐
-The problem isn't being poor the problem is .....um...um...as a matter of
fact a few Republican panaceas and myself and people like myself
organized a task force of people outside government and inside. Well this
little group gathered and we very carefully would open the car door with
the window rolled down and shove the man's arm across the window and
then break it. The backbone of America ⌐ cut and so⌐ and then break
it over the window, and then the pressure came on, that hidden longing
came out and ⌐to migra⌐ gunshots and so forth. What I'm talking about is
the freemarketplace, free enterprise the regulations that governments have
which are necessary is to ensure that someone can't sell us a can of poison
meat. I think can of poison meat had a problem that I think people must
recognize. The problem is, if you open a can of poison meat hold it in your
hand it gets warm very fast while you're drinking it.

Douglas Kahn, excerpt from the audio piece "Reagan speaks for himself"

Douglas Kahn bespeaks a skillful scalpel, performs the disappearance.
Cuts that tape, and inaugurates the building block of sound. The touch

becomes me. I can exhale without inhaling and still live dead on the air.
This is a series of exhales

_____/_____/_____
_____/_____/_____/ _____

The proper edit is airtight. Take my breath away. And transmit it as a
signal to an aural expanse.

Dead air exhales magnetic mappings of words that never got away. The
radio signal etches maps of (e)motion onto the city/body. Magnetic
mappings of words that never go away. The radio is here and in enclaves
of there. The organs of the radiophonic body are never **station**ary. Though
they are always stationary. Perhaps we are transmitting from your closet
and staging your murder while you're still fiddling with your tuner. The
razor's sharp. Cutting block. Cut you into another, and cast you into ether.
A fine sculpture for the ear. Perhaps the touch of you transmits less
wounding, more dis-ease. The feeling is mutual. I carefully stretch my
skin across your body. If it fits. I am your ventriloquist. If it complements,
I am your seducer. If it jars. I am your dj.

Radio constructs time out of space. When you touch me. my space is no
longer mine. Radio constructs a `node.    Actual` sound out of space.
scream. We move from the   `embarrassing, lymph nodes are`
rooms of production to the rooms of seduction. You take the words right
out of my mouth. I don't like you when you are me. I have digested our
conversation. The dessert traverses the nervous flesh with a profusion of
fine splices, slightly sticky. You're saying things you've never said and
sometimes I like you better that way. You're injuries become you. Do you
`little spot is right w` like the new you?
`days, and sunny ways, and walking under the willow trees,`
Lest you worry. I can splice you back so nicely you won't notice. You're
in my hands and out of your mouth. `Montreal is a pho`   The
interplay between nervous systems can remain playful. The structure
cannot be cemented. Permanently `☐ ☐ ☐`vacant. No definition
is offered but no lack of the act of defining. The body of your city has a
body fondling itself. `smack at the corner of St.`   A moan travels.

If our voices have seduced you. Maybe you would like to come hear us
mouth off more words. First you must insert your fingers into our mouth.
Touch that dial. Now synch your lips to the tune of the tuner. Stretch your
skin across our body. Jacking in or off. Radio artisans, or sound
construction   `squelching n`workers. Announce what you've felt all
along. You've been receiving all stations at all times. That tickling
sensation. Performing the vocabulary of a leap. `☐ ☐ ☐`We ask you
to emit. Hey! Body, sitting with a deafening silence. Open your mouth and
let the air out. This space is yours

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Do something and I'll eat you.

*Christof Migone is a radio/audio
artist obsessed by the aberrations
of language who works out of
CKUT 90.3 FM Radio McGill.*

*Julia Loktev is a radio/audio art-
ist obsessed by the space between
bodies who is currently in transit
between Colorado, the USSR and
Montréal.*

..The stethoscope is the traffic circle...

..We've transferred textual activity to the groin...
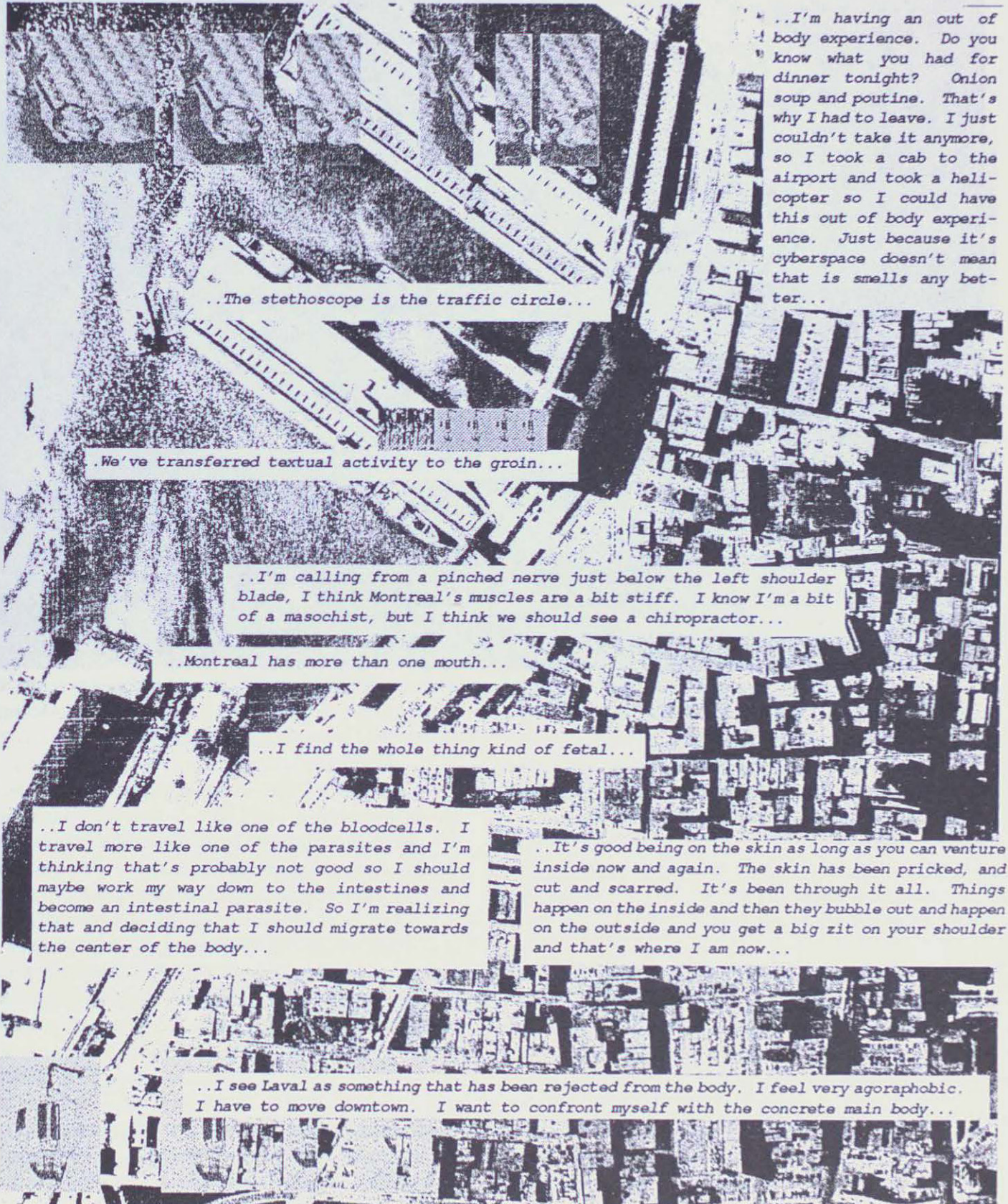
..I'm having an out of body experience. Do you know what you had for dinner tonight? Onion soup and poutine. That's why I had to leave. I just couldn't take it anymore, so I took a cab to the airport and took a helicopter so I could have this out of body experience. Just because it's cyberspace doesn't mean that is smells any better...

..I'm calling from a pinched nerve just below the left shoulder blade, I think Montreal's muscles are a bit stiff. I know I'm a bit of a masochist, but I think we should see a chiropractor...

..Montreal has more than one mouth...

..I find the whole thing kind of fetal...

..I don't travel like one of the bloodcells. I travel more like one of the parasites and I'm thinking that's probably not good so I should maybe work my way down to the intestines and become an intestinal parasite. So I'm realizing that and deciding that I should migrate towards the center of the body...

..It's good being on the skin as long as you can venture inside now and again. The skin has been pricked, and cut and scarred. It's been through it all. Things happen on the inside and then they bubble out and happen on the outside and you get a big zit on your shoulder and that's where I am now...

..I see Laval as something that has been rejected from the body. I feel very agoraphobic. I have to move downtown. I want to confront myself with the concrete main body...

STRATEGIES FOR DWELLING:
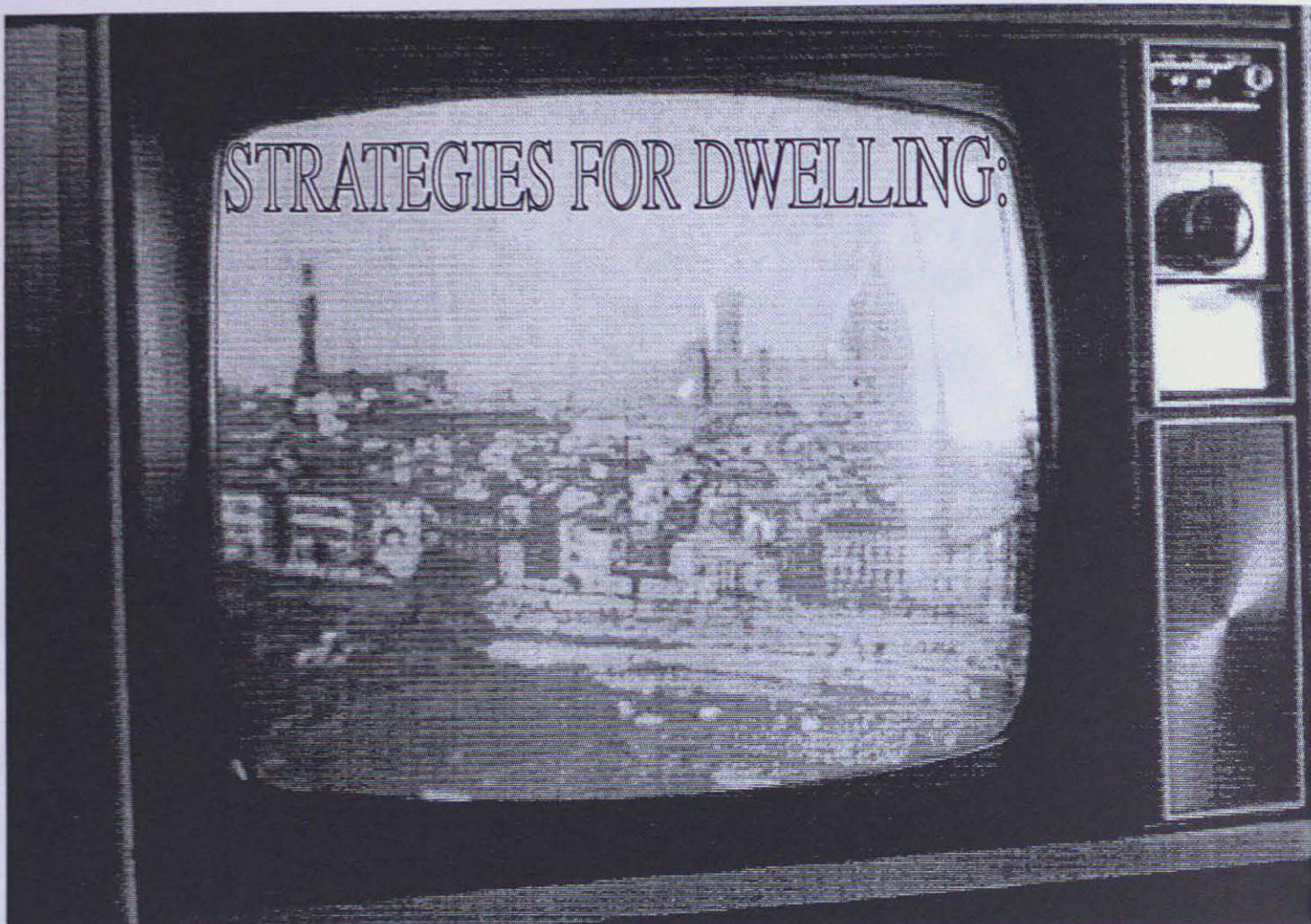
Les médias ont grandement diminué les contraintes du lieu et du temps, nous donnant accès au passé et à l'ailleurs. Cette destruction de la distance et de l'oubli rend impossible l'intimité, l'isolement qui sont nécessaires à l'habitation authentique. Dans ce monde homogénéisé par la technologie, l'architecte a un rôle à jouer dans la reconstruction critique de la distance spatiale et temporelle.

I
ATTACK ON DISTANCE:
INTERTEXTUAL REFERENCE

Karsten Harries, in a brilliant article entitled **The Ethical Function of Architecture,** advocates the reestablishment of the lost ethos, of environments that will make, as he claims, a genuine dwelling possible.[1] "From the very beginning architecture has had an **ethical function**, helping to articulate and even to establish man's **ethos**," contends Harries. This domain, to which the notion of "edifying" or building is akin, has been lost due to a commit-

ment to objectivity on which science and technology rest, accompanied by technological progress. Objectivity demands, argues Harries, homogeneity and indifference of place.

The main action by which modern man has been able to create the current homogeneous world has been by overcoming distance, the consequences of which are still unpredictable. This attack on distance, its conquest, in a word, with the help of various technological devices--radio, tv, high speed vehicles-- has brought about the obliteration of the sense of intimacy. Harries rightfully contends that "intimacy requires distance." He adds, "eliminate one and you eliminate the other." For him " the chaotic state of our architectural environment which yet goes along with a high degree of interchangeability and uniformity is part of our technological culture, which insists not so much on dwellings as on machines for working and living."

Harries concludes with an optimistic remark , pointing out that the architect, even in this desperate condition, is the person best equipped to reestablish true dwelling environments. The corol-

on the recuperation of distance and memory

lary of the message is that in order to decide what is involved in building the architect has to understand first what it is "to dwell." And this demands, of course, the recognition that genuine dwelling without both distance and intimacy is impossible.

2
ATTACK ON TIME:
SPEED AND CONSUMPTION OF IMAGES

Appearing almost simultaneously photographs and trains are among the many inventions we inherited from the nineteenth century.[2] Their repercussions on everyday life have often been taken for granted.

Photography, via advertising, has had a noticeable impact on the environment. Buildings, highway billboards, campaign posters, T-shirts, packages, vehicles printed with any conceivable image, are just a few of the examples that illustrate the continuous change effected by the medium on our visual surroundings.

While the arrival of trains and the subsequent transport revolution helped bring about the attack on distance described by Harries, the invention of photography contributed to a new environmental perception that affected our ways of seeing, communicating and recording the world around us. The past ceased to be distanced from the present as it became possible to capture reality, even the most fleeting moment, with optical and chemical processes. With the aid of photography images of loved ones, exotic places, unusual events could be consumed visually by practically everyone.

Photography made people aware of places that had previously only been in the realm of the imagination, thus contributing to the homogenization of the world. With the emergence of the new medium any location could, no matter how exotic and distant, in a matter of a relatively short time, be recorded and then reproduced ad infinitum. Postcards became a sort of substitute for reality whose three-dimensionality could be explored, at least during the beginning of the century, through stereoscopic viewing devices.

In the area of architecture, the publication of photographs in popular and specialized magazines and periodicals contributed to a faster diffusion of architectural ideas and realizations. This potential was exploited by architects and artists of the avant garde. Suffice it to consider the photographic experiments of the the members of the Bauhaus, and its Russian equivalent the Vkhutemas, the Constructivists, without forgetting the agile manipulation of the medium as a propagandistic tool by such architects as Le Corbusier.

It is also a fact that since the second half of the nineteenth century architectural photography established itself as a genre in its own right, on the way to achieving its current pervasive and sometimes perverse taste-molding role. Consider the endless number of slick architectural periodicals that contribute to the transformation of both laymen's and professionals' taste for buildings, interiors and gardens.

If the invention of the steam engine and its applications to transport led eventually to the invention of other high-velocity vehicles such as blimps, airplanes and high -speed trains, photography paved the way for the invention of the animated image, and, subsequently, movies, television, holography, and more recently the all-pervasive video. Movies made it possible to see history literally unveiled and re-enacted.

With the advent of television and of video technology the immediacy of any event could be appropriated. It was possible to bring it into the home --our most private domain. From this interior vantage point--currently with the help of satellite transmission-- it has been possible to witness the space odyssey with its tragedies and triumphs, to observe any cataclysm, or even to be the detached participant in a royal wedding while sipping Coke and gorging on popcorn. Furthermore we can play back and simulate--re-enact--any historical moment to the point of ludicrous exhaustion. Distance, spatial and temporal, increasingly and paradoxically becomes more distant.

As examples of visual technological progress, photography and its more recent extensions, movies and video, have contributed to demise of forgetfulness. While in spatial terms, as has been shown by Harries, the conquest of distance has meant the loss of intimacy, in temporal terms it would seem that its equivalent, the contraction of the temporal dimension, has meant the obliteration of forgetfulness and with it that of its antipode, memory. This is not unlike the process of losing one's memory for simple arithme-

tic operations such as adding and subtracting, by relying on the powerful capabilities of binary systems which govern tiny computers and calculators.

We seem, thus, to be undermining our own ability to apprehend the real, succumbing to a world of simulation constantly nourished by the advertising world and the new visual technologies. As the present becomes continually registered in the video-strip of ubiquitous security cameras, of anonymous cam-cords, to become a magnetic impulse easily retrievable, our sense of now and then becomes increasingly dulled and with it the notion of memory. If, as Harries contends, it is necessary to reestablish the lost ethos, the lost sense of dwelling, by redefining boundaries, it is also imperative that we reestablish in a critical way our contact with the world around us and its temporal dimension.

Without a critical re-evaluation and recuperation of both temporal and spatial distance we seem condemned to become fictional beings, as the main character of Percy Walker's novel **The Moviegoer**, the successful stockbroker John Bikerson (Binx) Bolling, for whom the reality of a place, the reality of dwelling, could only be accepted after he had seen the place re-presented, hence certified, in a film's moving image.[3]

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Notes

1. Karsten Harries, "The Ethical Function of Architecture: A Philosophical Standpoint on the Anonymity and Homogeneity of Contemporary Architecture," **Journal of Architectural Education XXIX**, (September 1975): 159-65. All citations in the text appear on page 160.

2. The transportation of goods and passengers began in England in 1825, and the birth of photography was marked by the production of the first stable image, a feat accomplished by the Frenchman Joseph-Niécephore Niece, in 1826.

3. Percy Walker, **The Moviegoer**, New York: Knopf, 1961.
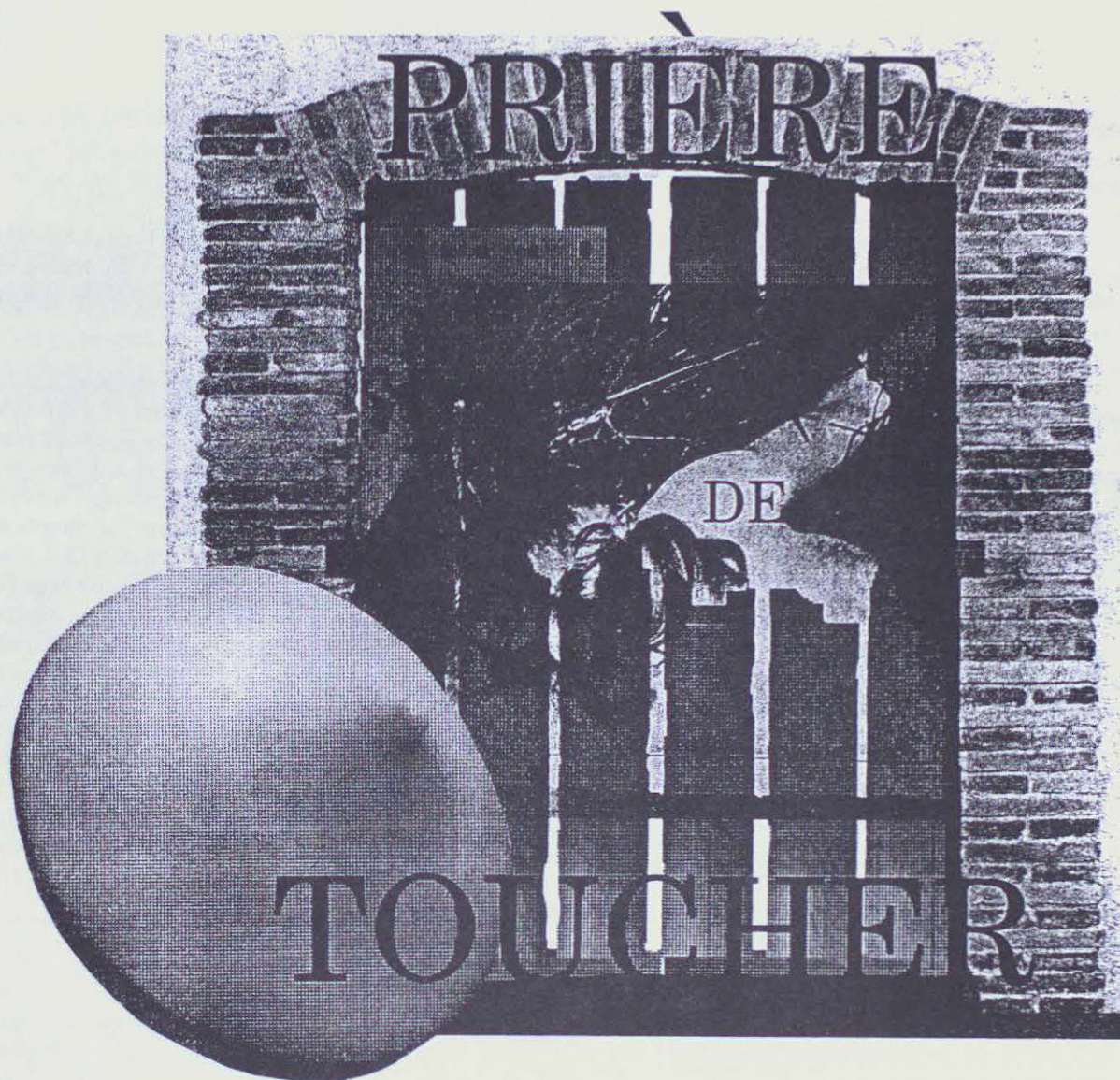
L'architecture et la publicité sont semblables et corollaires. Un survol historique démontre que tous deux fondent sur l'ambivalence du continuum que nous habitons leurs fonctions de symbolisation et de perpétuation de la culture.

In a world where, as Jean Baudrillard diagnoses not without irony, "we no longer partake from the drama of alienation, but are in the ecstasy of communication,"[1] it is tempting to trace analogies between architecture and advertising. In the most simple sense, the technological products of both activities often embrace uncritically the dominating ideology of late capitalism. In trying to sell an image they become repressive tools that curtail, rather than truly enhance, human freedom. As the instruments of technopolitical aims, both the office towers that house the major oil companies in Houston, for example, and the technically sophisticated advertisements that we admire between rather dull television programs, are not very different in their function as transparent signs of a logocentric power structure. Both architecture and advertising are able to use their power of seduction to promote a single idea and sustain the illusion of an absolute order, i.e., the best of all possible worlds which is supposed to be our technologically advanced consumer's civilization, the last, most comfortable and efficient, the latest manifestation of the single historical narrative resulting from the rational and "scientific" exploitation of the world. Thus both advertisement and architecture can generate desires in the masses that result in calculated, preconceived aims, with their usual reward for the manipulator: the control and accumulation of economic means and power.

Many ethical questions arise at this point, questions that for obvious reasons are more obscure for architecture than for advertisement, as this latter activity is at least much more explicit about its aims. And yet, despite the obvious differences between commercial promotion and architecture, it is clear that the political success of an architectural *praxis* is closely related to its public impact, and advertisement is a paradigm of successful communication, one that addresses the social "common ground." In order to grasp the complex ethical questions surrounding this issue we need a better understanding of human action in general. Particularly

important is the distinction that we must recognize between architecture as an art, i.e. a setting-into-work of truth by the embodied imagination, and other technological products.

This problem has been discussed by many eminent philosophers in the recent past. While their interpretations differ in their implications, Martin Heidegger,[2] Hans-Georg Gadamer[3] and Gianni Vattimo,[4] have all recognized the privileged nature of the work of art as the *locus* of being and truth. Vattimo speaks of a being and truth that we may call "weak" to differentiate it from the "strong" transcendental Being of the past: the presumed absolute truth of traditional religion, science or metaphysics. It is nevertheless interesting to remember that Georges Bataille, concerned with the possibility of liberating humanity from the servitude imposed by the same logocentric power structures and the illusion of "absolute" metaphysical truth of science and traditional religions, believed that architecture was the paradigmatic symbol of these repressive powers, one that therefore should be blown to pieces in order to fulfil the promises of individual freedom enshrined by the French revolution. Bataille therefore opposed writing to architecture,[5] the writing of "absence," thus taking to its most radical consequences a belief about the nature of human action as negation.

Given the perennial disproportion between external reality and the mortal human condition, man has always been impelled to transform the world, to fabricate (myths/technology) and thus compensate for his inability to adapt to the environment. This condition has been a fundamental theme of mythical articulations, from the fall of man in the Holy Scriptures, to the myth of Prometheus in the Hellenic tradition, all of which concern the ambivalent and ethical character of the human imagination that generates actions in order to come to terms with this disproportion.[6] Bataille's understanding is that these actions, at all times, have constituted a form of negation of the given reality. This being the case, and agreeing with Bataille's hope for the emancipation of humanity, we would have to accept his wish for the death of architecture, or at best, its transformation into a soft simulation, a cyberspace in our computer terminals that we may at least be able to turn off as we become weary of its seductive appearance, just as we turn off an annoying advertisement on television.

This scenario, we might argue, is not so terrible after all. There are, indeed, numerous television commercials and advertisements in the metro that we admire. Their power of seduction is often so great that it seems to question the productive objective that sponsored them. These commercials, obviously not always efficient, make it to the film festival each year and we even pay a few dollars to appreciate their aesthetic qualities. In this case, it would be possible to claim, again with Baudrillard, that seduction is a new figure of our freedom, truly capable of destructuring production,[7] and we could even imagine, as the best possibility in this framework, an architecture-turned-simulation that through the intentional superficiality of the image and its "glossiness" may produce a giddiness akin to that of a soft drug. Such an "architecture," one

that necessarily bypasses the body, depends for its effectiveness on the very suspension of fulfilment, on the recognition that "meaning," beyond form, should not be intended, and that our only chance, in the era of electronic information, is to hope for a discourse absorbed into its own signs without a trace of meaning. It is of course better to have simulated public space than repressive, "real" public spaces; reduced consciousness is preferable to acute pain....

Let us examine in simple language the fundamental philosophical premises implicit in this position. Perhaps we will then be capable to contemplate other possible options for an ethical practice of architecture, beyond the acceptance of its reduction to a formal game and a simulation. We may start by asking if it is truly a simple matter for man (and architect) to accept that there is no meaning after Nietzsche has reminded us of the death of God. Must our openness to death inevitably result in a deconstructive, negative nihilism? The very premise of human action as negation remains problematic, as does that of the irrevocable demise of the human (individual) imagination, despite our recognition of the absence of an absolute, transcendental ground. Also problematic is the assumtion, fundamental for Gilles Deleuze and other deconstructive writers, that meaning is not given in the pre-reflective engagement of our embodied being in the world.[8] Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty among others, have shown the impossibility of "explaining" meaning in human experience as simply a product of intellectual operations and associations of a Cartesian mind.[9]

Furthermore, if one follows Hans Blumenberg's argument in his recent study on the relevance of myth in Western culture,[10] it is possible to posit that affirmation is always a component of human action as well, operating in the phenomenological, vivid present, enacted by a self, an embodied consciousness, that is indeed not reducible to the Cartesian ego cogito. Blumenberg demonstrates the fallacy involved in the notion that myth, the paradigmatic human narrative that concerns affirmation and reconciliation, is simply "left behind" or transformed into philosophical discourse back in classical Greece. The possibility of myth as a discourse of affirmation, allowing us to account for the fact that meaning is in fact inescapable, is of course the province of literature and, I would argue, also of architecture as a narrative form, the option that I consider preferable and most appropriate to our present situation. This, I must emphasize, does not mean that the "truth" set-into-work by architecture is in any way the absolute truth of the Western metaphysical tradition. And yet, the architect must accept the ethical responsibility that accompanies this expectation.

Already in the 16th century Giordano Bruno observed, in his rather little known work *De vinculis in genere*, that the power of manipulation of the magician was the power of eros.[11] For the magician to exert an effective power it was important that he be a vigorous lover. He had to be able to fall in love in order to seduce

effectively and then maintain the seduced object under control. In other words, despite the precocious recognition by Bruno of the autonomy of this realm of human manipulation from the framework of values of traditional Christianity, one which can be read as a precursor of the modern world of commercial signs and advertisements, he often emphasized that faith was the prior condition for magic. He understood that both the magician (or doctor, or prophet or, we might add, Renaissance artist or architect) and the subject, had to be credulous in order to accomplish anything. Both the architect and the public accepted the primacy of perception and recognized the presence of meaning through a condition that today we would call perceptual faith. At the inception of the modern world, however, the option to engage in either white or black magic was clearly present.

This option, according to mythical narratives, was present since the beginning of human civilization. Man has been impelled to make an ethical choice between action as reconciliation and action as domination, and has recognized the potential dangers of the latter, particularly in relation to a transcendental framework of values. Today it is clear that the transcendental framework is absent. And yet we understand desire as the phenomenological origin of meaning in general. It is the ever present desire in our experience that gives our acts a sense of direction and purpose, that constitutes the first manifestation of the human imagination and demands a narrative structure to articulate our felt sense of temporality, where past and future projections become inescapable dimensions of the vivid present. By fulfilling desires technology controls, but the technological manipulator must not fall in love. In fact, compassion must be excluded from technological action in order to maintain the distance that allows for control. Such an "unethical" attitude goes hand in hand with the embracing of an ego-less consciousness, one which also gives up the narrative structures that constitute our only way to articulate an *ethos*. This is the attitude that can of course be seen as epitomized in advertisement.

Technology, our world, is both an unsurmountable wall between man and nature, and an environment so closely fitted to our needs and desires that it may be possible to say that the initial distance between man and his environment, the condition that differentiated man from animals, has been obliterated. Such is our dangerous and ambivalent reality. We could therefore interpret technology as an accomplished form of black magic, generating its own artificial desires and obliterating the inveterate gap between our embodied consciousness and the world, the very condition of thought, language and human culture. Deconstructive philosophy, as it justifiably argues for the dissolution of the ego in the context of the history of philosophy, often fails to understand the crucial difference between this Cartesian ego and the imagining self which is truly in danger in our technological culture. Do we really wish to become chickens, mindless subjects conditioned by advertisement and technological fulfilment, strictly speaking, leading a life beyond desire?

It could also be argued that, on the other hand, by adopting a critical attitude and withholding fulfilment, the artist-architect also controls. And yet it is precisely the artist's prerogative to intend reconciliation rather than domination. A self-transformation of the architect, perhaps best articulated by Martin Heidegger's notion of *Gelassenheit*, as a possible new relationship between man and the "things" that make up the technological world, is required in order to fulfil this potential of the work of art.[12] An ethical attitude of response-ability, caring and compassion, articulated through narrative, is an important part of this self-transformation.

Over and beyond the well-known perils of self-destruction and ecological disaster that now haunt humanity, the technological enframing has been shown by Heidegger to pose more subtle and yet more grave dangers.[13] The reduction of the external world to a "picture" and the physical reality to a material "standing reserve," underline all aspects of the destructive nihilism at the end of the modern age. Heidegger also warned, however, that a nostalgic escape from technology and its discourse contemplated as an option by architecture critics like Christian Norberg-Schultz and other "post-modern style" architects, is simply not possible. Technology is not a condition that can be criticized by "stepping out," by espousing the values of "traditional" art and architecture, metaphysics or humanism. The "way out" must be sought by acknowledging the mysterious origins of technology itself, through *Gelassenheit*, a "release" of the "things" in the world, a "letting things be" opposed to any will to power (distinct also from the instrumental formulations of being-in-the-world that characterize Heidegger's own earlier philosophical writings), and through *Verwindung*, a strategy of destructuration of the languages of science and technology.[14] Thus it could finally be possible to collapse the difference between technological and aesthetic culture, and with it, the difference between rationalism and irrationalism that has sustained the culture of modernity and its architecture during the last two hundred years.

For architecture, as opposed to advertising, such a revised attitude towards technology is crucial. In order to set truth into work, architecture must accept technology as its world, and yet, it must also twist and overcome it, in a way that challenges the very idea of historical progress (and the avant-garde) inherited from the early modern (17th century) notions of scientific linear history. Thus the architect must establish a different relationship with the artifacts of her/his tradition. The most brilliant philosopher of the early 18th century, Giambattista Vico, had already recognized the privileged status of art as the objects of "concrete poetry", as embodiments of truths otherwise articulated through myth. These objects, the traces of history, can be interpreted as a personal engagement of the embodied consciousness with the "stuff" of the world, a primordial product of the self's imagination. In the context of Vico's rejection of the Cartesian *ego*, his understanding of *verum ipsum factum* (man only knows what he makes), cannot be confused with the products of technology. A key to this distinction is the ethical role of the personal imagination in the act of making, a

careful, thoughtful, and compassionate making. Vico's *New Science*, I believe, can be read as the first instance where this distinction is implicitly articulated, together with the questioning of the grand narrative of Judeo-Christian history.[15] It is paramount that the contemporary architect understand this distinction. In order to carry his/her work beyond mere seductive formalism (the best possible scenario for an architecture that "gives up" meaning), the architect must draw from the works of the past that appear as *loci* of being, and attempt a "translation" of this perception into the works of the present. The best model that comes to mind is the "translation" of James Joyce from the *Odyssey* to *Ulysses*. The being that may thus shine forth in the work is qualitatively different from the absolute truth of science and metaphysics, and can be better defined by the original Greek term *aletheia*, which according to Heidegger implies an unveiling that acknowledges the something that always remains concealed, a "truth" never given once and for all, one which recognizes the absence of God from human affairs and yet, despite Derrida's puns,[16] does not end up in a negative nihilism.

We may believe that we inhabit the homogeneous space of Descartes and that objects do not change their being when they move from site to site. We may therefore applaud an "architecture" of objects or prosthetic projections. The imaginary space of Galileo (indeed, only an imaginary space where the laws of inertia operate!) became the assumed space of modern democratic states and technopolitics. Of course, the "truth as correspondence" of applied science works... In such a world, a "weak" technological world, it is not hard to believe that the television image is more real than the tactile reality that is given to our whole, embodied being, before "stimuli" become differentiated by the senses. All this notwithstanding, space is and will remain different in Montreal and in Toronto, we "understand" Paris by simply stepping off the train, and grasp the absurdity of expressing "aesthetic" judgments about buildings after "decontextualizing" them, as if they could really exist as objects, devoid of any context whatsoever. We know that we all have the potential to perceive differently, that our body "knows," and that mysteries remain on the very surface of our experience. We also recognize that our present "common ground," our glorified bubble diagram of television rooms, is indeed a reduced realm of experience.

This is the ambivalent continuum that we inhabit in this modern/postmodern world, and art and architecture, as opposed to advertising and other technological images, must keep addressing this very ambivalence, in the hope of retrieving the traditional (and crucial) function of symbolization for the perpetuation of culture. The richness of architecture, and our very hope for its survival as space/place, ultimately depends on its rejection of any reduction of the building or construction to the status of sign, meant simply to be "read" by a disembodied mind, regardless of how much more "politically efficient" it may become by adopting the strategies of advertisement and simulation.

Notes

1. Jean Baudrillard, The Ecstasy of Communication, New York: Semiotext(e), 1988, p. 22.
2. Martin Heidegger, The Origin of the Work of Art in Poetry, Language, Thought, New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
3. Hans-Georg Gadamer, The Relevance of the Beautiful, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
4. Gianni Vattimo, The End of Modernity, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1988.
5. This is the reading of Bataille's work by Denis Hollier, Against Architecture, The Writings of Georges Bataille, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988, ch. 1 and 2.
6. See Richard Kearney, The Wake of Imagination, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, ch. 1 and 2.
7. Jean Baudrillard, Seduction, Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1990.
8. See Gilles Deleuze, Différence et Répétition, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, pp. 89-90.
9. For an introduction to the thesis of the "primacy of perception" and the limitations of intellectual reductionism, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1971.
10. Hans Blumenberg, Work on Myth, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT PRess, 1988.
11. In this regard, see Ioan P. Couliano, Eros and Magic in the Renaissance, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
12. I am particularly fond of David M. Levin's interpretation of Heidegger's Gelassenheit and his attempt to see this self-transformation in relation to Merleau-Ponty's late philosophy. See D.M. Levin, The Opening of Vision, New York and London: Routledge, 1988.
13. Martin Heidegger, The Question concerning Technology, New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
14. For an interpretation of the implications of Verwindung that results in a Nietzschean reading of Heidegger's philosophy as a form of "active nihilism" see Gianni Vattimo, The End of Modernity, op. cit.
15. My reading of Vico, obviously at odds with H. Arendt's, would demand a more lengthy treatment. It is of course debatable whether Vico had as much foresight as some commentators (myself included) seem to think. I have been recently inclined to believe that, just as a geometrician like Girard Desargues could conceive of projective geometry 200 years before it became an official alternative to Euclidean geometry, and Nietzsche can be read as a postmodern philosopher, Vico, regardless of his "Christian" context, seems to be articulating a precocious hermeneutic philosophy. See The New Science, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971.
16. I am referring here to Derrida's "atelia," his designation for the ahistorical false god of the tele-era. See La Carte Postale, Paris: Flammarion, 1980.

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architecture as

SLOW HOUSE : screen / horizon disjuncture.
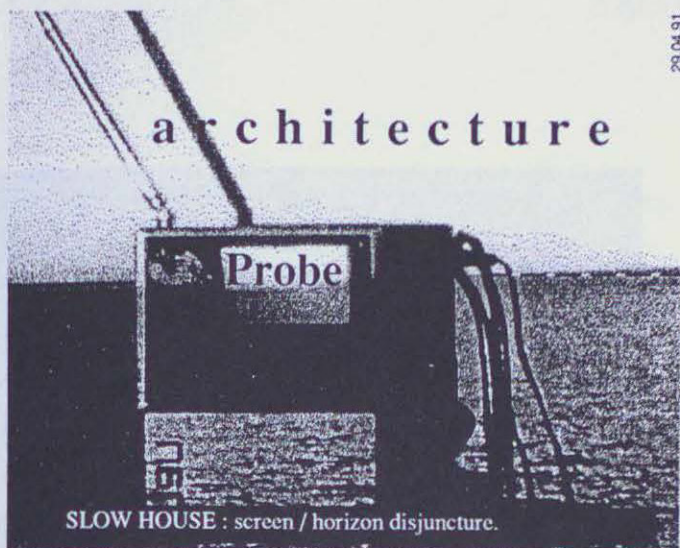
29.04.91

ELIZABETH DILLER

... in conversation with terrance galvin

Le travail de la firme Diller + Scofidio, par la pratique et l'enseignement, traite du problème à faire l'architecture à "l' âge de la reproduction mécanique". Ce travail prend la forme de dessins, de performances et d'artifices. T.G. a rencontré Elizabeth Diller à leur atelier de New York, le 29 avril 1991. Ils ont discuté de conférence, d'installation et de programme en tant que mise en scène.

Elizabeth Diller is an architect in the New York firm of Diller+Scofidio, whose activities include both practice and teaching. Concerned with the three issues of the body as site, the body altered by artifice, and the role of architecture as a modified completion, our conversation focused on the idea of lecture, installation, and conceptual program as staged event. The sophistication of various themes in their projects, culminates to date in the Slow House, *which received a PA Architectural Design Award in 1991.*

Most importantly, their work addresses the problematic of making architecture in the "age of mechanical reproduction", and the concept of the body (and architecture), as de-signed, *which they explore through drawings, artifice and the involvement of performance. We, in turn, are left contemplating architecture as Probe.*

The following interview took place at 36 Cooper Square, in New York, on the morning of April 29th, 1991:

tg   This year, the Montreal Alcan series had a certain emphasis on architectural theory, with lectures by Cornell West, Georges Teyssot and your own which opened the series. I sensed that your lecture, although provocative, left much of the audience scratching their heads. How do you determine in which form to present your work ?

ED   We don't adapt the lectures to the crowd. Ricardo and I have a different kind of lecture that we perform together; very similar in terms of the spoken text and projected images that you just saw, but

Ric draws with phosphorescent chalks on a chalk board in black light, so you can't see his body, but you can see the images appearing - he wears white gloves. He is the hand, I am the mouth.

These three modes of information form a friction against each other. The audience is either looking at images, at drawings and/or listening to the verbal information as the strands weave in and out of each other. Sometimes they're coincidental and sometimes they form a caustic relationship. Since it's impossible to take in all the information at once, your attention wanders from one to another. It becomes entertaining and the audience is quite happy just to look at photo images and drawings and let the text just wash over. The drawings are analytical; they do something that verbal text can't do. In a way that kind of talk is more performative, but at the same time it's explanatory.

tg   I was thinking back on the project you did at the MoMA, where you were able to monitor and record the responses to the installation as the corollary to the performance. By contrast, when you leave a lecture like the one at Alcan, the feedback is often silent, unless people write you or you run into them later.

ED   Right. Well, the only people that usually write are the ones that enjoyed it, or want a job (*laughter*)...but you rarely get critical feedback.

tg   Lecturing must be a different experience than when you're teaching. For instance, if a student asks you a question or if you

present your work in that context, you get to expand on and explain it. That is why I find lecturing a one-way system when you address a series such as Alcan. When lecturing at the AA in London, don't they generally arrange a seminar session where you present work and then discuss it ?

ED   That's happened actually in the past, but not this last trip, where students can come back and grill you, or often I've had experiences opening the floor to questions at the end of a talk. Generally the questions don't really challenge the talk. It was always the intention that we weren't only going to expose and explain (i.e. describe) the work, but perform it. There are certain inherent ironies in the presentation. On the other hand, the opening up to questions involves a kind of earnestness and the earnestness and irony can't coexist. If the questions are really tough, then it overcomes that paradox in a way. It's interesting that at Waterloo, the audience was quite receptive, but at the same time the questions were very sharp and difficult, and I had to really think on my feet.

tg   Well, the University of Waterloo has one of the more critical schools of architecture in Canada, so it isn't surprising that students come prepared to be critical and not just slough off your work. It is a difficulty when an audience doesn't have enough background...

Enter Ricardo Scofidio.
We embark on a Cocteau interlude :

tg   I had first encountered your work after having done a project, inspired by Jean Cocteau's use of mirrors, entitled *Private Acts in Public Places.* I then read the AA files article on your *Rotary Notary and His Hot Plate* [1] project. We were both dealing with scopic instruments, such as mirrrors rotated at 45 degrees, and I realized that our common interest was the act of translation...

phone rrriings.
ambulance siren, evidencing the Doppler effect , pulsates outside the window.

...Cocteau's work also explored the idea of creating illusions and translating his ideas from literary ones into visuals. He had written

DUCHAMP : Mirror (photo : Michael Moran).

Projection of a ghost through mirror at 45 degrees,
(Erik Barnouw: *The Magician and the Cinema*).

the poem *L'Ange Heurtebise* as early as 1925, and still in 1960 he was working through the same themes, which is what we all do. When one looks at the body of your work, there is evidence of this act of translation that is constantly ongoing, which relates a project like the *Bridge* to the current *Slow House*.[2]

Although, there is a major distinction between the two projects. If the

Bridge project was the performance, similar to the lecture becoming an avenue for the performance, then architecture can be seen as an ephemeral event. However, when the *Slow House* becomes built, written about and concretized, isn't it a different form ?

ED   Well, I don't know, how concrete is text ? In the end the *Slow House* is more concrete, it is built ; architecture is connected to the ground, but we see that the work takes on many manifestations along the way, and none of them are the final product. In fact, right now we're starting to put together a book on our work, and the book is a critique of the architectural monograph. It doesn't just present the work that's been done, but it *re*-presents it critically, and then it transmutes into another manifestation of itself. Much of our work is temporary and no longer exists. We take the evidence of that work which is in the form of photographs, and we rework them. We develop deceptions about what it was, and also rethink what it could have been, in addition to explaining it at that stage. In this particular manifestation, which is in the form of text, photographs and drawings, we continue to posit the work. So it doesn't sit still in text - there is a certain kind of activity and transiency in it. It isn't limited only to the body performing it.

tg   That's an important point in relation to your last project, the *Slow House*. You have said that architectural drawings are documents of intent; that the work is a continual recording, which would then critically relate the house to the rest of the body of your work. A question that arises is whether performance art, as evidenced in your early work, can become translated into architecture which is rooted to the ground, and isn't ephemeral in the same way as performance ?

ED   The way that we use the allusion to the drawing, being traditionally thought of as a document of intent, is to absorb certain principles that are in the world of architectural notation directly into the project. I mean, certain kinds of privileges (like seeing), certain kinds of abstraction and syntactical conditions (sections and so forth), become a privilege we draw on. For example, we build projects in section, or through the use of mirrors, etc., we allow

SIREN whirrs by.....................

spaces to be seen in plan. Drawing is a very important part of our work, both as a type of *prequel* and as a *sequel*, so that there is an absorption of drawing principles in the work itself.

But we don't really see the house so much as a departure from the rest of our work. Every project to us starts from '0' and a program. From this point of departure we do research, and we try to look at the evolution of that program. We start by looking back, and by critically rethinking the program within the context of our culture and our time, and then we proceed with it. It doesn't matter at all whether it's a temporary installation, or whether it's a performance, or whether it's something that's rooted. We see the *Slow House* as an apparatus to live in, and in that way the involvement of the body, the subjects that are in that space, the way that they operate that thing and the way that it operates them, is critical. I would be presumptuous to say that, in itself, "living there" is the performance, but there is a certain kind of activity that is very important to the house. The house isn't just meant to be an inert sculptural object. It is something that's activated by the presence of the other irreducible components of domesticity: the bodies that are there, those particular relationships of family, how the vision of those people is being altered and translated by the house, and so forth. So it is very much an active notion, we don't really see the house as still.

tg   That's clear. I see it as analogous to your use of notational drawings which, through their sequence, reconstitute a type of depth in plan and section. This demonstrates that the house is not fixed in TIME, but through this duality of host and parasite, there unfolds a performance. As evidenced in both the *Slow House* and *the withDrawing room*[3], one of the most powerful issues in your work is the body/architectural object relationship. Many contemporary architects have been interested in the relationship between the body and the building. Anthony Vidler's article on the "The Building in Pain"[4] is very provocative, but I think you've actually managed to translate some of the theory into the built work, which is always the most difficult process.

ED We look at the body as a kind of surface...

tg Or as a kind of site...

ED Yes. Site for meanings and for changeable inscriptions. We attempt to work, not with the physical *corpus* (the meat), but rather with the space that it defines and is defined by it. Spaces that are conventions of culture redefine the body - so the body is inscribed; the body inscribes space. And we're interested in the negotiation of that space.

Also, because of contemporary technology, that body has been de-territorialized. In *the withDrawing room* are some allusions to incompleteness. Prostheses take over the incomplete chair, the incomplete table, the incomplete bed. The prosthesis never completely fulfills, but aids and makes an issue of incompleteness, and the body is also a victim of all that. The body takes advantage of that split bed as a possibility of a new program. The occupants could be together, the occupants could be apart, share that split, and so forth. The body occupies that split - it bridges the split, but is vulnerable to it. We see the body as always acknowledging this incompleteness and its own vulnerability.

tg That's where I feel that the writings of Merleau-Ponty on phenomenology deal with the potential for a certain kind of embodiment in the *Bridge*. In that project, inspired by Camillo's "memory theatre", the body could be seen as "becoming" the threshold which crosses the synapse. The *Bridge* project had a certain optimism about the body and memory being reconciled, which is quite different than affirming that we live in a culture that tends towards voyeurism and detachment.

Within the framework of current debate, in literary as well as architectural theory, the dialectic is whether it is possible to find any meaning in this space - this gap, this abyss between the body and what it inscribes or circumscribes. If this void cannot be bridged, aren't we ultimately left with retinal art, scopic devices and a kind of invaginated voyeurism ?

ED We feel ourselves very much inspected from the outside, and we are ourselves voyeurs. The question about the *Bridge* is an interesting one. The project was done in 1986 or so and the way that we described it then was different than we would describe it now. That bridge is only momentarily bridged by the human stride, and it is so tentative, since the anatomy can, in fact, never actually occupy both sides. When one leg is up, one leg is down; it hinges really on a "split" second when the weight changes over. When we staged the *Bridge*, the director posed the character frontally (i.e. perpendicular to the axis of movement on the bridge) bridging- with legs astride holding a glass ball. We absolutely objected to that use, or abuse, because the body could never complete the bridge, it would never finish it. The structure was never meant to be finished; it would occur only at the moment
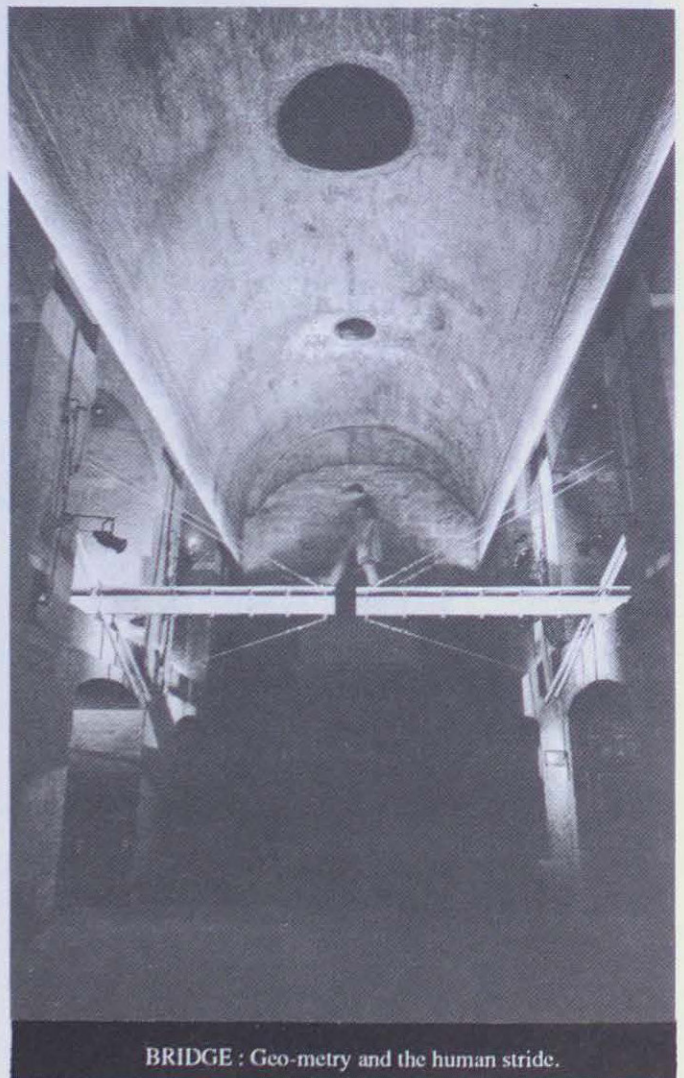
BRIDGE : Geo-metry and the human stride.

of stride because it was fractional.

tg   But that's the optimism ! ..that leap of faith is a kind of 'projection' which leaves one thinking about the potentially powerful symbolism behind architecture.

ED   Well, I would be more on the side of irony. I think our work is always on the side of irony, and maybe not so optimistic. Actually, it's difficult to talk about. I have to contend with this because now we're putting together this book, and we have to figure out how to describe our work rather than just 'represent' it. We're trying to situate our work somewhere between the inscriptive and the prescriptive, and I don't know if that word game is going to work. I'm struggling with having to define this a little more clearly, but the work is never about prescription, it's not about remedy.

We're playing with the notion of script, but description is, by convention, a passive condition. One often recapitulates through description. Our work is somewhere other. It's not a passive description. There's another mode of description that intervenes; description is never objective. It's always edited, uses emphasis, and so forth. Our work is *inspecting* things - describing the work is a *hyper-description*. In that way it makes certain things that are not visible, visible. Not by laying bare the bones, not through a stripping away to some interior, but by looking at the space of surfaces and between surfaces.

tg   Are you referring to the space between surfaces, such as the door which runs along the floor eventually inscribing a groove, or the bed whose dust under it acts a a kind of analogue...?

ED   That's a literal inscription, but also the work reads other inscriptions at the same time; the project constructs its descriptions through read inscriptions. We're just simply reading various texts that are already latent in things.

tg   That interpretation implies an exigesis that doesn't leave the readings so open-ended and pluralistic that the author is relieved from any program of intent. Through your use of drawings as notations, the

intentions in your work are evident, separating it from artists whose work is self-referential.

ED   Certainly, the references aren't internal references, they're all borrowing from a broader vision. You know, more and more we're trying to tackle themes that are tangentially related to architecture, but never really seen as parallel.

tg   In relation to the MoMA project, you asked whether it was possible to be critical about the museum, and work within it at the same time; whether the target and the weapon could be the same. This reminds me of a similar irony, where Libeskind described 'the knife..without the handle..with the blade missing',

cut :   *absent laughter*

..a description that leaves one holding the residue of the simulacrum.

Seemingly comfortable within a framework of irony, you began your career working within the margins, in order to explore the boundaries between architecture, performance, and script. Hasn't your work become, at least in the current *Slow House*, more directly related to Architecture, which implies a very different set of parameters ?

ED   We've always believed in building, it's critical to us; we're never satisfied with solely projecting ideas through drawings and texts. As a result, the work always finds itself built. Sometimes it's temporary, and sometimes not. Building is a very important component, but only one of the manifestations of the work. The difference between our position then and now is that times have really changed over the course of the last fifteen to twenty years. At first we operated in the margins because there was no context for us. We generated our own projects, we generated funding and we built the projects ourselves. Sometimes we worked under the auspices of certain institutions, but these institutions were always marginal, like the *Storefront for Art & Architecture* and *Creative Time*.

In the past years there's been an interesting change. More and more, big institutions like the MoMA or the *Walker Arts Center* have been

interested in our work. We realized at a certain point that we were really crossing a threshold, and we opted to take the position that one has much more power in the centre than in the margins; the margins only attract a very specific subculture. What we wanted was a broad forum within which our work could exist. And so, we took on the responsibility and opportunity of so-called getting closer to the centre. There had to be a trade off, because one can't really speak one's mind at the centre in the same way, so there's a kind of exchange that naturally happens. Of course, we pay to be able to say what we want to say. We put something in the MoMA, it looks very beautiful, it's well designed, and that becomes the way that this particular para-site operates within its host site.

tg   Yes...

ED   Good design actually enables one to do some more subversive things inside of the system. Often, those subversive things aren't ever read by the institutions themselves, but sometimes there is an oscillation which is healthy. We don't do this consciously to make the work acceptable; it's just naturally the way we work, and it just so happens that it pays off. In terms of centrality to margin, the extension of building something that's permanent is not all that different than doing an installation in the MoMA, by appropriating a site like an urban guerrilla. A client or audience program a subculture or the culture at large.

tg   That is a central topic of this interview, since this FIFTH COLUMN is addressing "Architecture and Advertising". The Alcan lecture left me musing about the energy of working in the margins in your early projects, and the trade off involved in making it onto the cover of PA and opening the Alcan series for 1991. Do you think that the broader audience has a certain sympathy and openness to your work, compared to the audience that would show up at *Storefront* in New York ?

ED   Perhaps several years ago, there was much more antagonism between these things that were looked upon as oppositions. Now I think that the gap is closing down, even though *Storefront* shows certain people that haven't had exposure; last year they were showing

PARA-SITE : MoMA installation.

Jean Cocteau (photograph by Philippe Halsman, 1950).
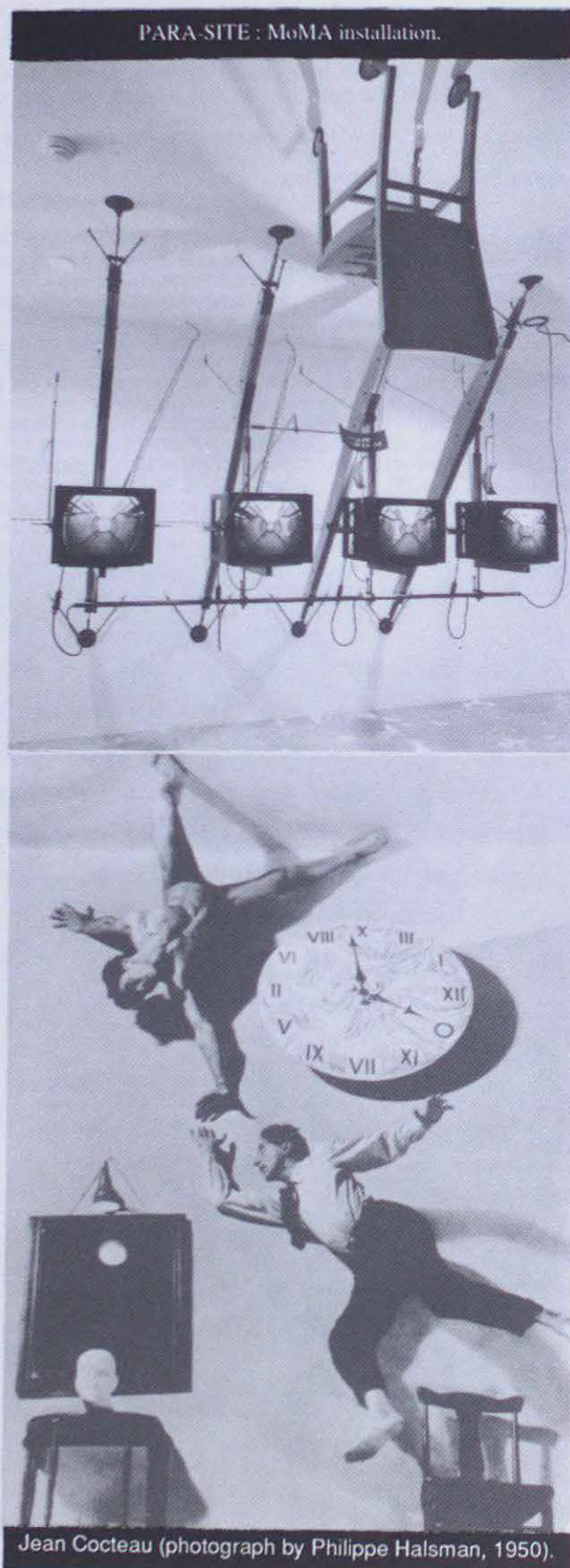
Coop Himmelblau, who was having a simultaneous show at *Max Protech*. The sixties meet the nineties now, and the sixties are dissolving more and more. It's an interesting sign when bigger institutions are seeing certain kinds of work as marketable - although I can never anticipate why they want to show our work. I mean, maybe things are opening up, perhaps the latitude is getting broader. I have no idea; things just contract and expand all the time.

I know that the phone hasn't rung since our work was on the cover of PA. I think we received a lot of exposure, but it doesn't necessarily lubricate us for more professional work. At the same time, it's not like we've created any hostility with our past. I think in many people's eyes it's a natural evolution, although we don't think of it as evolution. We just think of it as an extention of what we do, except that we want a broader audience. It's not about getting bigger and better projects and building up an office. If the next project was small, it just wouldn't matter, as long as we were able to experiment and rethink things. If, in fact, some wonderful cultural institution came to us and said we want a building and we had the opportunity to think through it, then we'd gear up for it. I just don't see the steps as hierarchical, and mounting towards some goal at the end.

tg   I agree with you, it's not as simple as centre or margin. One doesn't stay in the margin, deluding oneself that that's the place to be, when one can have a larger audience while still remaining critical and inspective. That realization is a prerequisite to action, having to do with personal ethics through an understanding of one's intentions. However, one of the trade offs would be that the larger audience doesn't necessarily mean a more prepared audience, or one which is more receptive at large.

ED   What we attempted to do, in the last two museum projects, was to work the project in various strata to be read in different ways. We can't anticipate all readings, but we anticipate that the guy off the street is going to be able to respond to the work, and in fact our shows have been popular in a way that other architecture shows haven't been. Most architecture shows in museums deal with esoteric subject matter through the language of architectural notations, usually dis-

playing models of projects that are unbuilt, etc. Our work has been very well received within the museum context because we don't use the space as a context for our work; our work orients itself around the context of the museum.

tg   The feedback that you receive in scrutinizing the response to your installations, such as the recording of that event at the MoMA, is a very important activity in the body of your work as a whole, is it not ?

ED   Yes, it's very important to us to understand the various readings of the work. We see the work as a kind of apparatus to make meanings from.

tg   Then, what would the equivalent of this recording activity be in the *Slow House* ?

ED   Maybe it's not so explicit, maybe it's just the way lifestyles begin to mutate relative to the house itself, the kinds of oscillations that exist between the domestic construct and the house, and the exchanges that are made. Perhaps it's not in the form of feedback that we can record, but it's the agitation. There's always a response; there's never a comfortable fit. For example, the *Slow House* takes on the view which was not thought of as a sedate thing to contemplate, but as property beyond one's reach. We wanted to thwart the view in a way that creates a certain discomfort . You can never really see the view fully because the TV is always in front of it, so that the line of the horizon is always disturbed. And that becomes a caustic experience.

tg   Continuing this idea of dislocation in *the withDrawing room*, objects like the two legged chair (with its third leg prosthesis, rising up through the middle), force us to deal with the space between the body and the chair. As one 'occupies' the chair, one has to negotiate the prosthesis and the potential for that habitation. Similarly, in the *Slow House*, the way that you constructed the model and the notational drawings through the development of scenarios, one actually sees the house unfolding through the drawings, again producing an

uncomfortable fit coupled with a certain tension.

However, I wonder whether the TV screen on the horizon is not a literal metaphor, compared with some of the ambiguity that you've attained in other projects. For example, in *the withDrawing room*, the convention of unexpectedly seeing the second floor in plan, as if the floor were removed, makes one constantly aware of a subtle disjunctive interruption.

ED Maybe that is true, although the television screen functions in many different ways, between broadcast TV and closed-circuit monitor, so it's...

tg For security ?

ED No, actually closed-circuit. It's looking out there at the view and recording it, although it can be flipped to broadcast TV. So its program shifts - when the TV isn't being looked at as a broadcast medium, it becomes a window superimposed against a window.

tg I think that the aspect of delay between this apparatus and the site is fantastic. The fact that one could replay a different season at another time, or in another place, beautifully reflects this time and space dislocation.

ED The TV is part of many ideas. The way that it's characterized in the text that appears in PA turns it into a cartoon because it makes that the only feature of the house. But the TV has to do with its relationship to the automobile windshield as two modes of movement and stasis. The snout holds a camera that has to do with TV as a kind of focal light and source of heat, like the hearth.

In many of our projects we take apart programs in a more complex way. The *Slow House* is more gestural. Hopefully, the house itself is not a one-liner, but rather a single gesture from which everything evolves, and in that way it's a very simple project. We conceived the snail form at essentially the moment that the program was defined; the conceptual program of door leading to window, of entry to departure, etc. The way the house begins to articulate itself after that becomes

a by-product of the initial decision. In the other projects in which we take things apart like parasites, we disconnect things.

tg The PA jury described the house as 'a free standing object, that is site specific at the same time', which I found an interesting contradiction...*(laughter)*...and not a bad attempt at irony. If we could fast-forward time, as in Greenaway's *ZOO*, the *Slow House* is a project which will physically deteriorate and return to the earth, ironically becoming site specific. Unlike the hermaphroditic snail, from where the *Slow House* borrows its form, the house is not self-contained - it is rooted to its site. All of your projects do have a kind of rootedness or context. Each of them: the prosthesis objects in *the withDrawing room*, the apparatus attached to the characters in the *Rotary Notary*, the body-image that occupies the synapse in the *Bridge*, each of those relationships make the projects non-ubiquitous and quite specific. Earlier I was relating this specificity to 'architectural optimism', which allows your work to be accessible and meaningful. Several artists and architects explore tautological projects, not really attempting to uncover any meaning. In your work, even though the meaning may be pluralistic and ambiguous, I read a lucid program of intention.

ED Right, but we're expecting meanings in the plural sense. I would stop at optimism in that the work is not prescriptive, the work is never about prescribing a role for architecture. It is one of examination.

tg But the examination can still have a critically positive or negative accent, which have quite different implications, although this is sometimes difficult to locate.

ED I would have a hard time locating us in that range. I don't really attribute a positive or negative value to it.

tg Baudrillard, for instance, in writing about simulations, is attempting to be critically aware of the things which control us, but then goes on to say that we must get beyond those mechanisms and be in control of them rather than...

ED I don't think that way, neither of us really feels that way. I mean there is no apocalyptic vision - there is no fear of technology, there is no doomsday. It's about being able to, in an opportunistic way, take advantage of the conditions and the circumstances. I don't think about technology optimistically, toward changing our lives for the better, but I completely take advantage of any technology that I can at a personal level. But, you know, there are different ways that it can be employed. In that way, it's the part of Ballard, and it's the part of Baudrillard that I don't particularly like; the part that questions the role of technology in the end, where one has to make a value judgement. I choose to read them in a different way, I choose to read them without value.

tg Oh ?

ED That's what makes most sense for us in our work.

tg Then, how does one develop an ethics ?

ED I don't know. I really define our work as post-moral and post-ethical.

    insert : p.m. laughter

The ethic is only in the depth of the search and in the rigour of the search and the search itself - not so much about what's at the other end.

tg You seldom speak about your process of making objects which are so expressly tectonic. The quality of design that you mentioned in relation to the MoMA project has inevitably been part of your *ethos*. Can you say something about how you construct the projects - do you make the details yourselves ?

ED Yes, we do a lot of it ourselves, and we work with crafts people, but we don't ever think of materials or details as ends in themselves. Many people fetishize over that part of our work, but we don't .

tg However, this part of the description of your work is curiously absent. I wondered for what reason ?

ED This is part of the earlier argument, that it's what makes our work possible. You know, we love to work materials, but we don't have a romance about it. We love to do it, and it's what allows us to slip in and out of the mainstream when we want to, because people value high design. It's never our intention to make things solely for the design, or to romanticize craft in a nineteenth century way. We're just as interested in the TV as we are in the polished piece of steel. But since craft has a role in the expression of our ideas, we scrutinize over details.

tg Undoubtedly, you have inherited that attitude from your training at Cooper Union. I wanted you to address the formal quality of these objects because the space *in-between* the content and the form - inclusive - is the place that your projects oscillate within.

This same idea, in terms of re-presenting the work, was evidenced in another way when Diller + Scofidio published the Bridge *project in the AA FILES. The photos documented the event, and extending the photos into drawings was a way of translating the architectural project into another form, for another audience. In this act of making and re-making, of presenting and re-presenting, we relocate the contemporary role of the architect.*

Notes :

1 For the *Rotary Notary* and the *Bridge* projects, please refer to <u>AA FILES</u> <u>14</u>, pp. 54 - 61.

2 For a description of the *Slow House*, please refer to <u>Progressive</u> <u>Architecture</u>, January, 1991, pp. 88 - 90.

3 See *the withDrawing room: a probe into the conventions of private rite*, <u>AA FILES 17</u>, pp. 15 - 23.

4 See Vidler's article entitled *The Building in Pain: The Body and Architecture in Post-Modern Culture*, <u>AA FILES 19</u>, pp. 3 - 10.

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J.G. BALLARD'S CRASH: THE MECHANICS OF THE EMANCIPATORY MACHINE

1.
Andy Warhol, Ambulance Disaster.

2.
J.G. Ballard, Re/Search No. 8/9(SF: Re/Search Publ., 1984), p. 15.
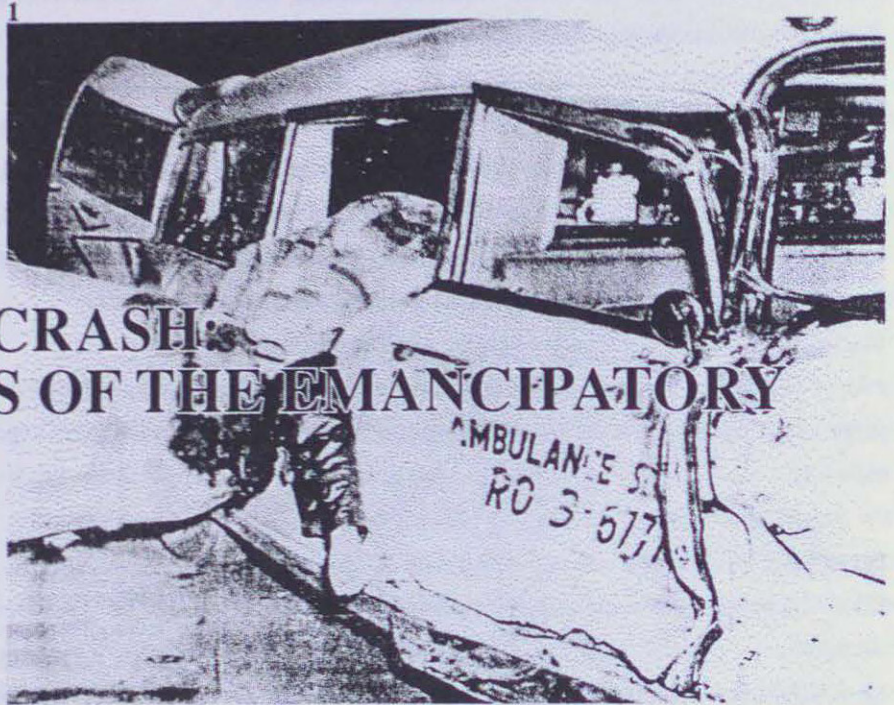
Jean Tinguely on a heap of broken bicycles, Paris 1960, from Jean Tinguely - A Magic Stronger Than Death.

3.
Robert McCarter, Escape from the Revolving Door: Architecture and the Machine in R. McCarter, ed., Pamphlet Architecture No.12(NY: Princeton, 1987).

2

[...] *one's almost got to get up in the morning and make a resolution to perform some sort of deviant or anti-social act, even if its just sort of kicking the dog, in order to establish one's freedom.*

3

The mechano-positivist paradigm has such a stranglehold on the practice of building, that most people take it for granted. Within some architectural circles, the possibility of a meaningful architecture is seen as completely divorced from the business of building as it's practised today. Departures from this paradigm, whether on aesthetic, social, cultural, or environmental grounds, have too easily been absorbed back into the machinations of production and consumption. The imperatives of utility and economy are seen as rational and self-evident, reducing most of these other issues into secondary concerns, as packaging to be added on later. Their credibility as ideas, as germs for alternative paradigms, is destroyed.

4

Under our noses there is a tradition of dissent that is as old as the first machine, science fiction. The poets of the machine understand its logic and language intimately enough to use them as instruments for exposing this paradigm's failings.

5

Labelling J.G. Ballard the machine's conscience would probably make him cringe; loyal saboteur or gadfly might be more apt. Along with William S. Burroughs, he is considered part of science fiction's old New Wave, characterised by a deliberate, almost formal experimentation in style and themes. Trying to link him to mainstream social criticism is a mistake. He is first and foremost a science fiction writer, and as such he

5.

Bruce Stirling, Mirrorshades (The Cyberpunk Anthology)(NY: Ace,1986), introduction.
R. Rucker & P. Lamborn Wilson, Semiotext(e)SF (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1989), introduction.

has been cited as inspiration by the Cyberpunks, science fiction's technically hip, nihilistic, new generation of radicals.

6

Crash is one of Ballard's most extreme and provocative books. He calls it the first pornographic novel based on technology. The main character, an advertising producer named Ballard (coincidentally, we hope), is involved in a car crash, injuring one person and killing another. His own injuries are minor, but as he puts it:
"the sexual possibilities of everything around me has been jerked loose from my mind by the crash."

With Vaughan, a "hoodlum scientist", he goes on a crazed spin across a landscape of exit ramps, cloverleafs, multi-level parking garages and LSD fuelled explorations of the possibilities of sex and violence in an automobile, as rehearsals for Vaughan's fantasy, a car crash with Elizabeth Taylor.

7

In his vision of a car crash with the actress Vaughan was obsessed by many wounds and impacts - by the dying chromium and collapsing bulkheads of their two cars meeting head-on in complex collisions endlessly repeated in slow-motion films, by the identical wounds inflicted on their bodies, by the image of windshield glass frosting around her face as she broke its tinted surface like a death-born Aphrodite, by the compound fractures of their thighs impacted against their handbrake mountings and above all by the wounds to their genitalia, her uterus pierced by the heraldic beak of the manufacturer's medallion, his semen emptying across the luminescent dials that registered for ever the last temperature and fuel levels of the engine.

8

The connection with pornography is much more profound than what at first glance, seems to be some bizarre machine fetish. As Ballard sees it, what links science and pornography is their quality of isolating objects or events from their contexts in time and space. It is the characteristic shared by Newton's First Law of Motion and the extreme close-ups of a porn-flick. The Law ("Every body left to itself moves uniformly in a straight line") takes the ideal abstract state as a norm or building block for further relations. In a similar way, the close-up's high degree of abstraction isolates the act of copulation from reality.

9

This ability to abstract, atomise and recombine is the very basis of our rational episteme. Yet, we often ignore what gives meaning and direction to this methodology. I feel that there is still an implicit ideal of approaching a state of physical and psychological satisfaction. An illusory Eden, that as it is realized for more and more people, proves to be a velvet cage.

10

Our architecture, our media are products/projections of this thought. While most of us block out the airfields, multistory car parks, drained swimming pools, medical laboratories, high-rise blocks, clover-leaf junctions that are the infrastructure of our existence, Ballard amplifies them, revealing them as monuments of our paradigm's landscape. Clinically described, their barren forms reveal their underlying utility as extensions of someone's profit margin, yet also expose their capacity as projections of the psyche, creating the suffocating, overwhelming quality of the urban landscape.

Detail of Dissecting Machine, from Jean Tinguely - Méta.

6.
J.G. Ballard, Crash((NY: Vintage, 1973), p. 29.

7.
Ibid., p. 8.

8.
J.G. Ballard, The Atrocity Exhibition(SF: Re/Search Publ.,1990), p. 36.
Martin Heidegger, Modern Science, Metaphysics and Mathematics in Basic Writings(NY: Harper & Row,1977), pp. 262-5.

9.
Michel Foucault, The Order of Things(NY: Vintage, 1970), p. 53.

10.
David Pringle, The Fourfold Symbolism of J.G. Ballard in Re/Search No. 8/9, p. 132.
Aldo Rossi, The Architecture of the City(Cambridge: MIT, 1982), pp. 57-61 on Monuments and the Theory of Permanences.

11.
G. Ballard, Crash, p. 53.

13.
Ibid., p. 12.
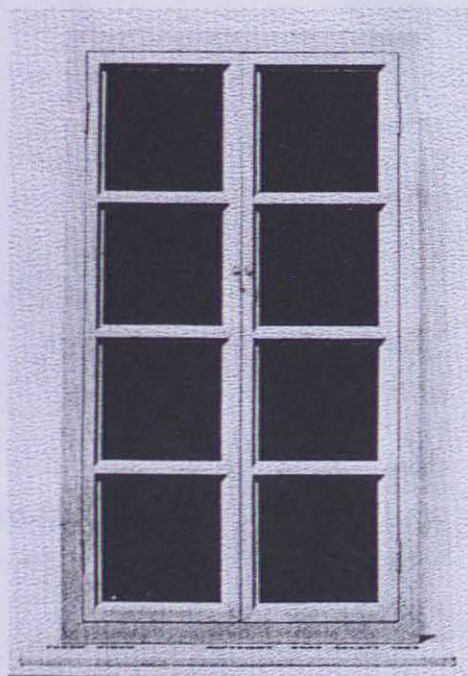
Marcel Duchamp, Fresh Widow, 1920, The title is a play on words on the english name for a porte-fenetre, french window. Duchamp specified that the leather panes should be polished every morning like a pair of shoes: "so that they may shine like real window panes."

14.
McCarter, p. 9.
Lars Lerup, Planned Assaults(Mtl: CCA, 1987), pp. 32-56.

11

A tailback carried three lines of vehicles up the ramp of the flyover, and beyond this on to the new southward extension of the motorway. During my weeks in the hospital the highway engineers had pushed its huge decks more than half a mile further south. Looking closely at this silent terrain, I realized that the entire zone which defined the landscape of my life was now bounded by a continuous artificial horizon, formed by the raised parapets and embankments of the motorways and access roads and interchanges.

12

Ballard elevates these locations, mere markers to most of us, into monuments for the present day. Through their tragic deaths his victims sanctify these places, linking the geometries of man, machine and place in the residues of concrete, metal, plastic and flesh.

13

For Vaughan each crashed car set off a tremor of excitement, in the complex geometries of a dented fender, in the unexpected variations of crushed radiator grilles, in the grotesque overhang of an instrument panel forced onto a driver's crotch as if in some bizarre act of machine fellatio.

14

This strange union opens up some interesting ways of looking at the machine. The car is obviously transformed from being a purely pragmatic vehicle. It even transcends being an extension of its driver's ego. By participating in a *mytho-poetic* act of destruction it approaches Robert McCarter's notion of the useless machine and thus architecture. By being useless and permanent, the machine can become architecture, overcoming its own logic of utility, obsolescence and placelessness. Like Marcel Duchamp's Fresh Widow, the useless machine displaces a convention in our thinking by throwing a monkey-wrench into its own logic.

15

Ballard's architecture is more transitory. The symbolism can be consumed in a few seconds of screaming rubber, smoke and burning flesh. And then its traces are quietly wiped away. Its value lies in being a symbolic event, the irrational union of man, machine and place providing a catharsis for "people who, if at an enormous price, have nonetheless broken through the skin of reality and convention around us ... and who have in a sense achieved - become - mythological beings in a way only attainable through these brutal and violent acts"

16

The underlying logic and rationality behind the stage sets around us make the only rational forms of dissent; irrationality, madness, and violence. Not the mindless brawls the fascists glamourise, but a contemplative, methodical violence directed towards the tools and thoughts that might imprison us. In Crash the logic of utility is perverted, the methodology is redirected towards strange new goals ... experimentation, a process of trial and error, of setting parameters, of assessing the variables that would create a meaningful crash/event:
"Vaughan devised a terrifying almanac of imaginary automobile disasters and insane wounds - variations on these collisions, thinking first of a repetition of head-on collisions..."

15.
J.G. Ballard, Re/Search No. 8/9, p. 47.
Peter Blundell Jones, The Sustaining Ritual in The Architectural Review Nov. 1990 (London: MBC, 1990), pp. 93-5 on architecture without building.

16.
J.G. Ballard, Crash, pp. 13-4.

Freeway signs from *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, Reyner Banham.

18.
J.G. Ballard, Re/Search No. 8/9, pp. 14-5.

Thomas Pushpathadam is expected to graduate from McGill's B. Arch programme in May 1992 whereupon he will be looking for a job. Prospective employers are requested to send inquiries or offers to Thomas Pushpathadam c/o The Fifth Column, 815 Sherbrooke St. West, H3A-2K6.

17

Crash is not a recipe, but for anyone familiar with the actual act of designing it presents fascinating possibilities out of the morass of stultifying logic, reason and good intentions that create our velvet cages. The course of action could range from the "nonsensical" works of Jean Tinguely to the passion of some of Coop Himmelbau"s writings 'Architecture Must Blaze'. The novel's imagery might reek of this decade's fin-de-siècle, fashionably-weird, nihilistic zeitgeist but the possibilities it opens up show a real optimism in the liberative potential of the human imagination. For like any good science fiction writer, Ballard does show the alternative:

18

It suddenly struck me that if I had to put my finger on what the future was going to be like, it wasn't going to be like New York or Tokyo or Los Angeles or Rio De Janeiro.

The future was going to be like a suburb of Dusseldorf that is, one of those ultra-modern suburbs with the BMW and the boat in every drive, and the ideal sort of middle-management house and garden. Immaculate suites - not a cigarette end anywhere, with an immaculate modern school and a shopping precinct; a consumer-goods paradise with not a leaf out of place - even a drifting leaf looks as if it has to much freedom.

19

where (....continued at no. .2..)

*The following student work was received from the **FAKULTA ARCHITEKTURY** in Prague, Czechoslovakia as a result of correspondence with a professor at the university, Tomas Horava. The projects were produced in the studio led by ing.arch. Arnost Navratil, CSc, associate professor of architecture and assisting tutor, ing.arch. Tomas Horava, CSc, assistant professor of architecture.*

Roosewelt Centre, Chrudim
by Radek Sima, 4th year student

The building is located on a highly -frequented pedestrian walk which connects the historical centre of the town to the main bus and railway station. The building is thus divided into two parts by this path and functions as a shopping passage. The first floor of this passage contains a gymnasium, snack bar, restaurant, and shops. The second floor accommodates textile, footwear, sports, and photography equipment shops. The architectonic solution is based on the contrast between simple, white facades, and a metal structure supporting the roof passageway.
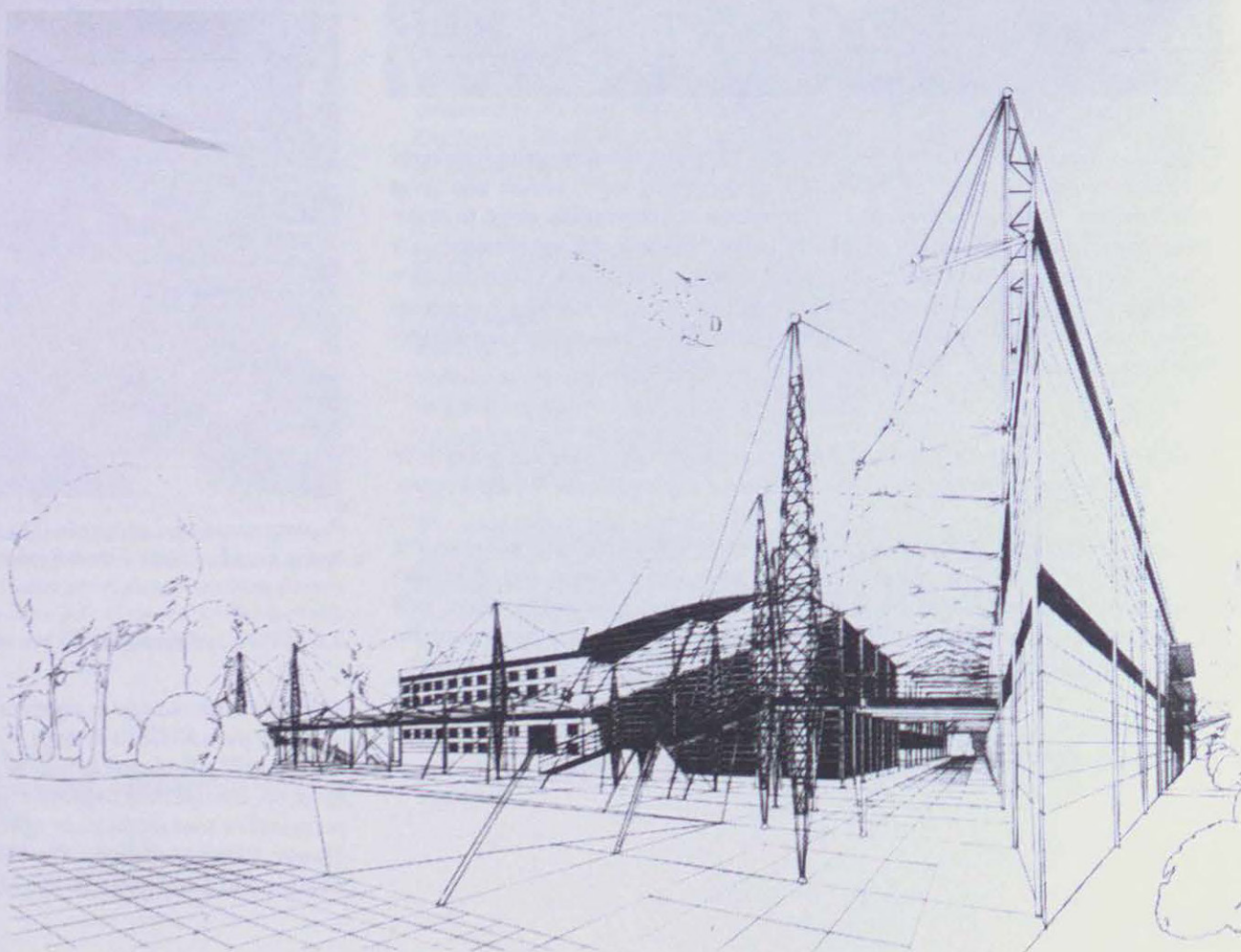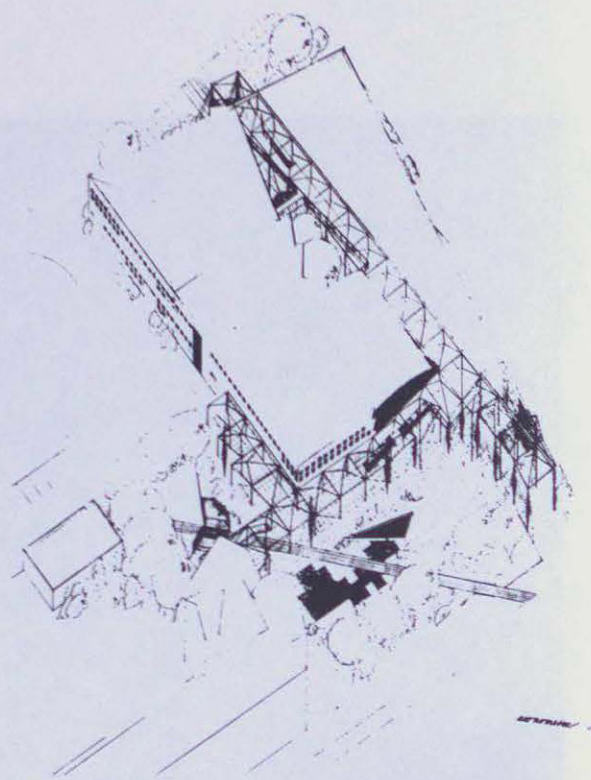
"Leisure Centre", Prague, Strasnice
by Ondrej Moravec and Michal Nekola, 4th year students

The design of the Leisure Centre is an expansion on a large urban concept for this district of Prague. This part of Prague around the underground station 'Strasnice', should be seen as the 'sector centre of Prague east'. The Leisure Centre is located at the northern end of a pedestrian walk which emanates from the underground terminal and ends in a large space which enables the creation of a great building. The building itself is divided into three sections. The first section is the public space, and as such, is open to all visitors. It is a great hall that contains shops, snack bars, restaurants, and a gallery. The second section of the Leisure Centre is the area for all water activities. Indoor swimming pools and a sauna are linked to outdoor swimming pools and green fields. The third section of this building accomodates a variety of other sports such as squash, table-tennis, volleyball, basketball, football, minigolf, and tennis. These two latter activities take place on the roof. The second floor is divided by a passage in order to access the amphitheatre situated at the north end of the building. The three underground floors contain a large garage. The roof is supported by a steel frame and the floors are of reinforced concrete.

The guiding principle for the design of the interiors was to respond, in architectonic terms, to the question of how people would experience the inside of the building and how the users, the subjects of the building, would best be able to utilize the Centre as a creative outlet for recreation.
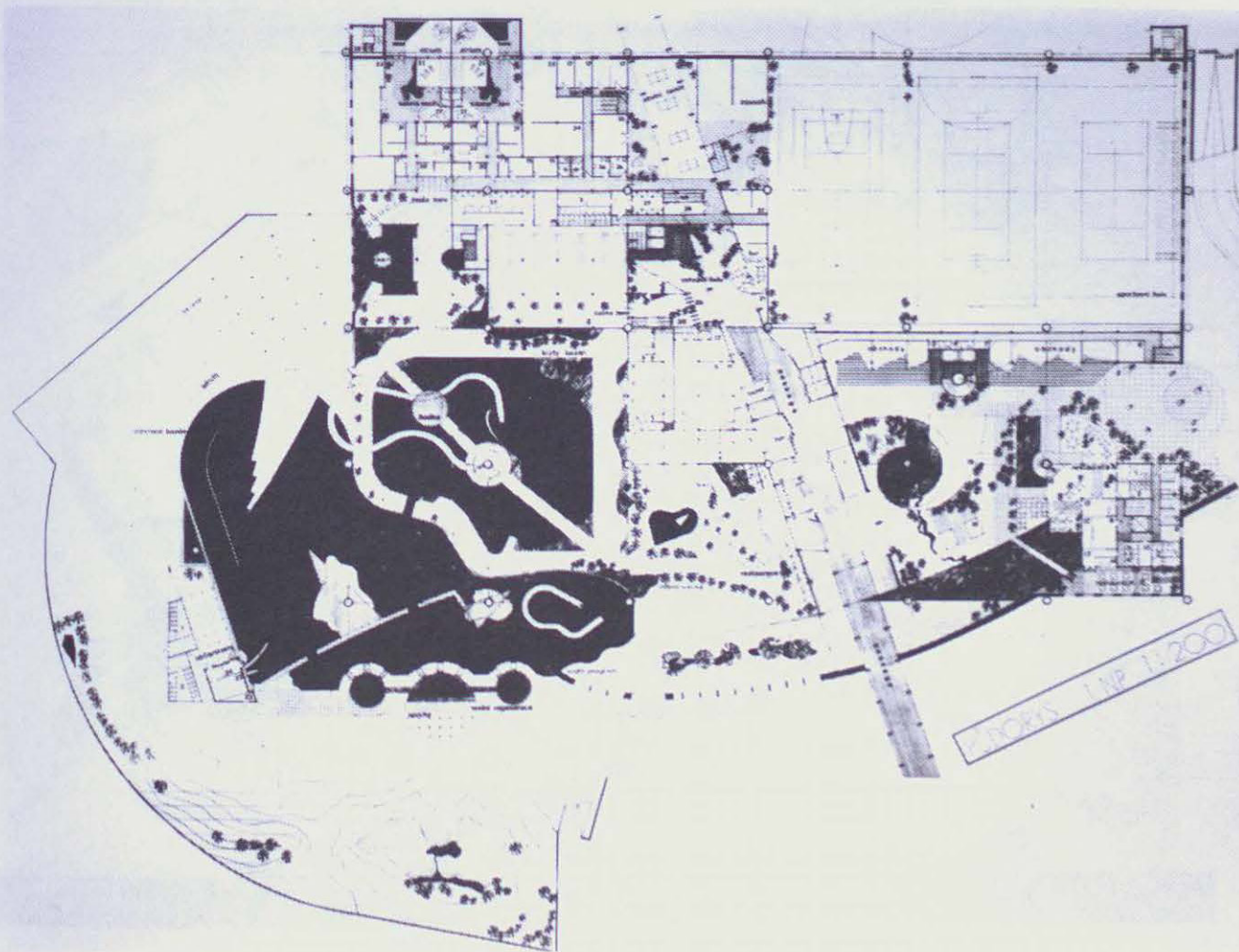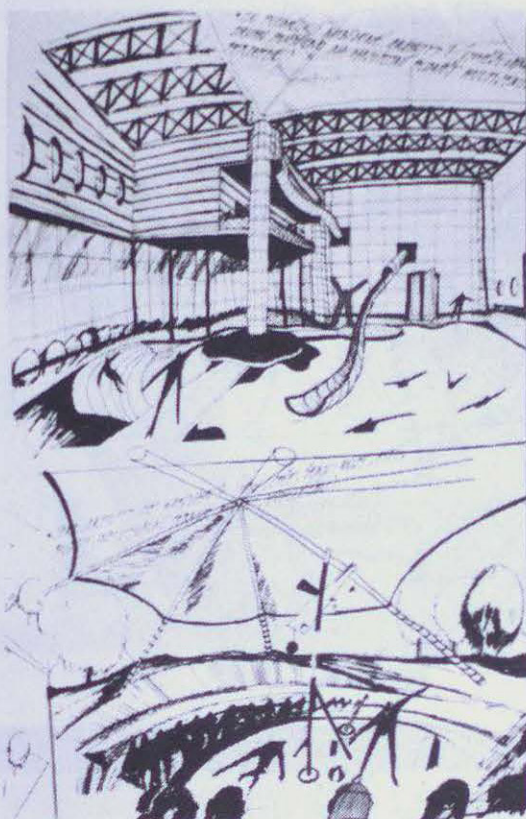
STUDENT WORK - CZECHOSLOVAKIA

NOMETRIE. NÁSTUPU

AXONOMETRIE 1:500
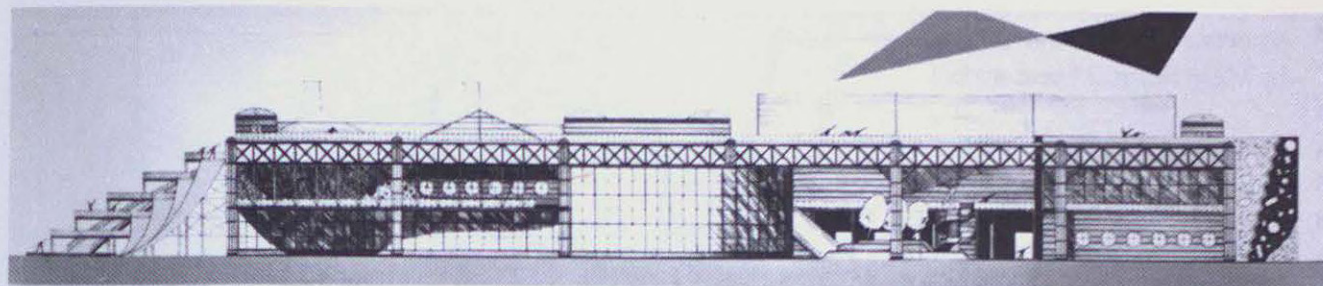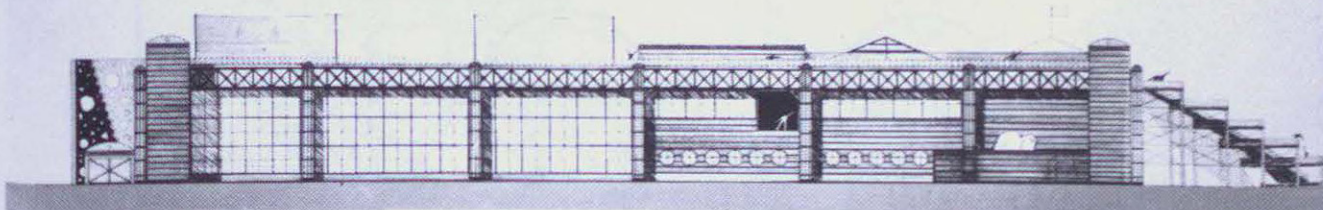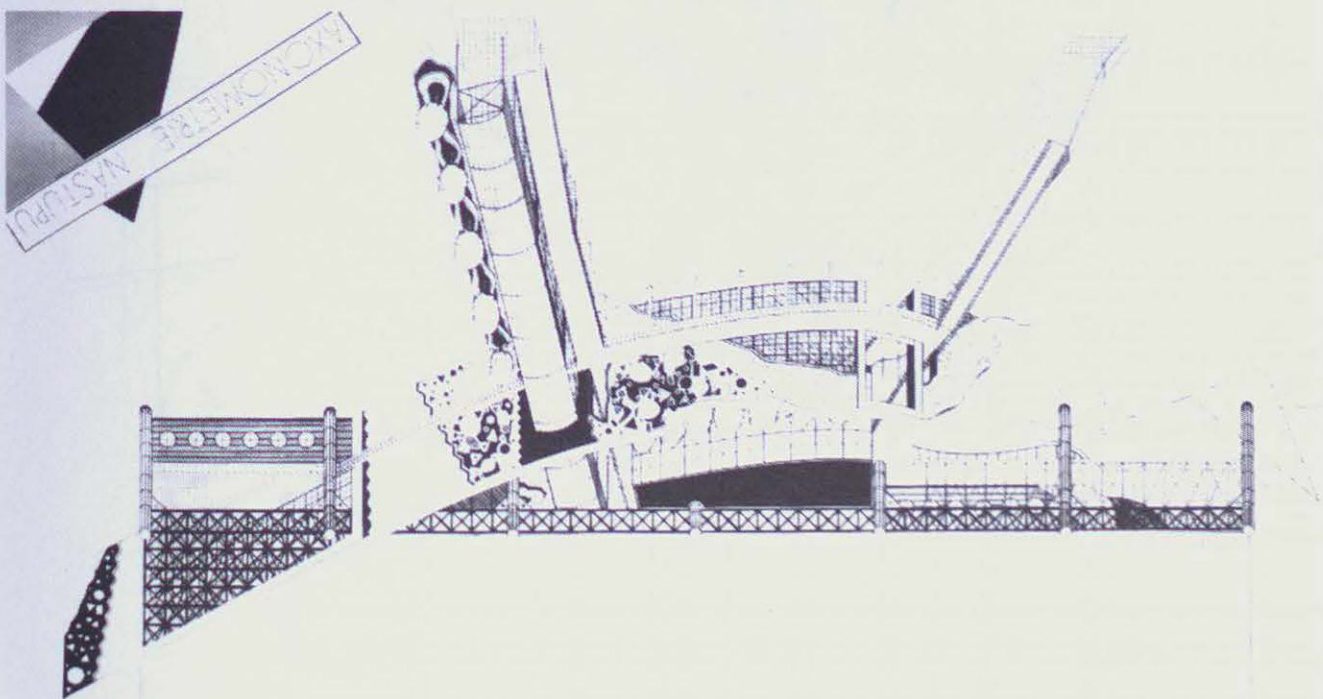
Sports and Cultural Centre
by Milan Suran, 2nd year student

This project is a response to the tutors' question: What does one do with the cooling towers of a demolished, obsolete power plant? The student chose to use the site as a sports ground, vast exhibition space and congress facility.

Rhona Kenneally
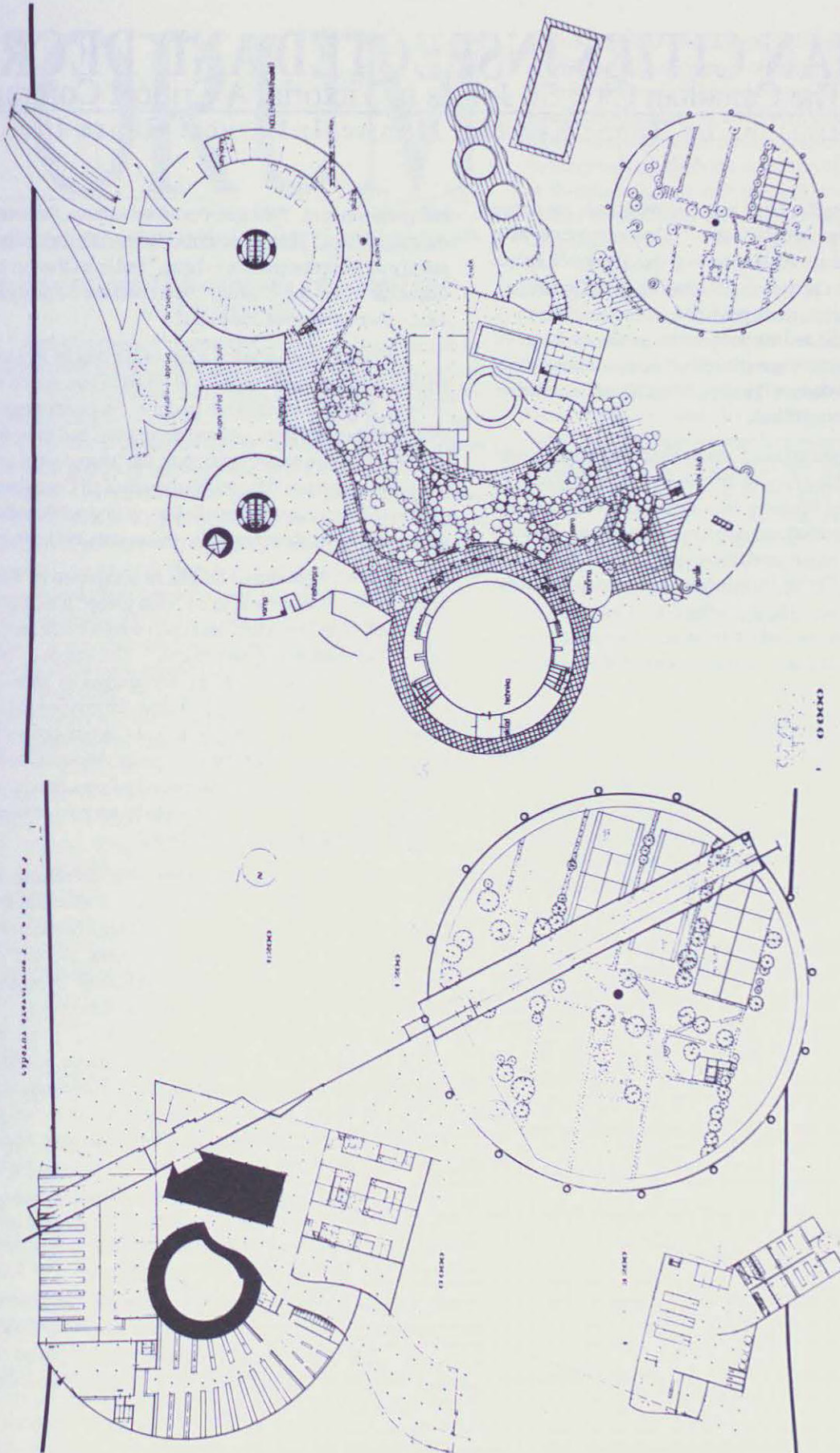
CANADIAN CITIES INSPECTED AND DECRIED
A Review of The Canadian City, St. John's to Victoria; A Critical Commentary,
text and illustrations by Roger Kemble. Montreal: Harvest House Ltd., 1989.

No dry, formal treatise, this! Roger Kemble does not mince words. Canada's cities are "uninhabitable." They are no more than "weak symbols of overpowering, destructive, out-of-control, artless international finance gone berserk." Architecture itself "has degenerated into aimless, formless, mass-produced, all-too-tangible apparitions, rooted in write-offs and tax dodgers, the product of harassed minds clinging tenuously to imagined reality." And in order to clean up the mess, what are needed are "projects of a scale more extensive than those of Haussmann and Nash."

Roger Kemble ought to know. An architect and artist who did graduate work at The University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning, he visited sixteen major Canadian cities, and noted, sketched and measured what he saw. He even walked the streets with a sound level meter and took decibel readings everywhere from Jerry's Coffee Shop in Montreal to under Granville Bridge North in Vancouver. The Canadian City is the result of this odyssey, an elaborate response which presents the problems, points out the inadequacies, praises the (few) successes and offers advice on The Way to Do it Right.

While the book's title implies a general analysis of the Canadian city, in fact the focus is on the cities' public urban spaces -- plazas, squares, malls, streets and so forth -- specifically in the downtown areas. Kemble calls these the "media communication of the city" and argues that they are good indicators of how well the city "responds to our current needs." Through commentary as well as numerous pen and ink drawings, he presents, describes and analyses a series of public urban spaces to substantiate his claims.

Kemble assesses these spaces using various tests. One is based on "imaginary fields of influence" which emanate from their surrounding buildings and form patterns reminiscent of those made by iron filings near a magnet. In the case of Montreal's Place du Canada, for example, "the visual magnetic fields of influence surrounding the buildings are not strong enough to bridge the gaps in between." Moreover, "the fields of influence are inconclusive, contributing nothing to the sense of urban place enclosure." Another test involves the calculation of the height of surrounding buildings as a proportion of the horizontal dimensions between them. Thus it is shown, for example, that the Banque Nationale du Canada tower adjacent to Montreal's Place d'Armes, although "out of place in the Place d'Armes context (as) it is just another listless piece of commercial modernism," nevertheless "actually adds to the ambience of the space; it sets up wide contrasts in height, as well as contrasts in other elements." Collectively these tests are used to evaluate the presence or absence of twelve characteristics which Kemble isolates as "The Elements of Urban Space." They in turn are divided into three categories: Plastique (ambience; propinquity; scale; surface chiaroscuro; metre-proportion; enclosure-vista-view; and icon), Palette (materials; colour; texture; and permeability), and Emploi (ritual;

and grain motion). Plastique describes volume, "the moulding and shaping of form," palettes describes "materials used to construct and modify surfaces that enclose volume," and emploi refers to "activities that occur within the volume." As a checklist for analysing a space, this is quite exhaustive and useful.

Kemble also includes a list of six design requirements, "to guide a series of developments to result in our shared set of urban values." They relate to interim land use, site developments, environment, architectural form, use and occupancy, and movement. Given what Kemble says earlier in the book, the "shared set of urban values" seems not to be intended to reflect the will of all Canadians, since "the collectively expressed vision of a free, voting public today manifests its form in plastic shopping malls, restaurants and heritage bunkers."

Rather, these shared beliefs, as interpreted by Kemble, seem primarily to reflect the will of an "elite group" which is to be called upon to exercise leadership, and upon whom it will be incumbent to "inspire, educate and gently cajole." The inspired, educated and cajoled, on the other hand, are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process, and thus share these visions of urban space. How, in a multicultural country such as Canada, can such a cumulative perception exist? Kemble anticipates the question: although the very idea may "fly in the face of diversity," concern can nevertheless subside since "a shared vision is not to be adopted so rigorously as to exclude cultural variety and diversity."

The Canadian City does have some interesting and informative -- if highly subjective -- things to say. It addresses the layperson more successfully than the professional, in part because of the absence of historic and scholarly references within the text (although a reference list of books appears at its conclusion). Its biggest drawback is an acute loss of credibility due to the shrill and overly dramatic tone that characterizes most of the work. In fact, if Kemble had held a symbolic sound level meter to his own text, he would have noted many readings at the unacceptable level. Moreover, repetition and overstatement are rampant, and there exist numerous grammatical and stylistic errors that a good editor would not have missed. Witness Kemble's criticism of the society in which he finds himself:

Our most dearly held values are manicured, mortgaged lawns, cardboard fronts, mirroring sound sets for the soaps, gluttonous auto ways raked by motorized pesky metal midgets, eating up land and ubiquitous (sic) going-out-of business, hanging on by the skin of their teeth, plastic malls.

Kemble had high hopes for his book. He wanted it to be an "awakening" that would "dislodge the current self-congratulatory smug condition and redefine the national dialogue on the subject." Unfortunately, The Canadian City never reaches the lofty heights for which it aims.

Rhona Kenneally is a student of architecture at McGill University.

Avi Friedman

FORUM

Notes on Architectural Education and Affordable Housing
Dr. Avi Friedman

Architects have yet to respond or adapt to the changes in the home building industry that took place in the first half of this century. I will set out the traditional and current role of the architect in the homebuilding industry, and the means by which architects may redefine architectural education and the profession in such a way as to improve the quality of housing socially and esthetically.

Before the development of the speculative developer as builder, individuals seeking to build on a parcel of land contracted with an architect not only to design the structure, but also to oversee the entire building process. The design of houses was therefore an intricate personal affair between user and master builder, and the result was a profession geared towards "custom" houses. In the first half of this century, the market for freehold housing was expanded to include families living without extended family members. Following the Second World War, the market was expanded further still, and the evolution of speculative development was the vehicle that allowed the rapid growth of freehold family housing.

The "master builder" has no place in mass market housing. He has been replaced by technologists, draftspersons, and general contractors. In addition, the architect resists taking part in this industry, because designers in this area are seldom identified, and because of the risks associated with not being paid royalties on additional units built from an original plan, or of not being paid at all in the event of an economic downturn. In housing design, architects would prefer to continue to design along 19th century lines. Unfortunately, the proportion of the market taken up by project development housing is increasing and is expected to continue to do so in the 1990's. Developers on the other hand are inclined to avoid architects or reduce their involvement, because architects are ill trained to respond to the needs of the homebuilding industry. The only answer to this situation is for the profession to redefine and retrain itself to make a place for itself in the new homebuilding industry. Architects must show developers that their services are not only required, but also advantageous.

In order to redefine the profession, we must first look at the education of the architect. It is my thesis that too few architecture students are given the opportunity, nor are they encouraged to pursue the specific areas of knowledge required for housing design. We must expand the number of disciplines taught to include cost, practicality, planning, economics, sociology, and building technology. No design scheme for housing can be successful if it is not grounded in the workings of both the building industry and society. By giving future architects a complete understanding of the factors that are needed to develop design which are successful for society, we will enable them to develop strategies for design that are not compromised by practical considerations once put into practice.

We must expand the time and effort put into research. If a housing design is to have any chance of success, students must learn to identify both the nature of the potential users (family size, makeup, etc.), their tastes and requirements, and the technological methods available for maximizing the satisfaction of the users. Project lengths should also be extended to include the execution of working drawings. It is only at this level that students can see how decisions about detail can change tremendously the cost of a design. Detail is its own level of design which should not be left untaught.

Related to the teaching of design is the application of technology and materials to the design of structures. Under the current system, technology is taught in a manner that is detached from the design process. Students are then left to combine the two without any guidance as to how best to make the combination. Specific to the design of housing are the needs to develop client profiles, and options based design strategies. By treating clients as a group of persons and families (rather than treating the professor as the client, as is the usual practice) we can explore a vast new area of design: that of creating structures that are flexible in response to the needs of the user.

As a subset of architectural study, we must also consider the specialized multidisciplinary requirements of the teaching of design for affordable housing. Design must be expanded to the urban planning level, because cost saving strategies are far more effective at a larger scale. Building single houses is always expensive, which is why subdivision development has evolved. Designers of affordable housing must look at the larger picture of mass development if they are to integrate their ideas between the level of the family and the community. Sociological considerations must include emerging lifestyle patterns. Design for groups includes the design for the elderly, design for single-parent families, and so forth. By examining the development of societal trends, we can learn to create designs that will be adaptable to such trends over time. The total homebuilding industry should be understood if one is to develop ways of modifying it. A study of economics must examine not only the cost of building, but also the cost of capital, i.e. borrowing. A study of risk analysis for the development of housing is similarly a way in which architects can change design into a positive element for the developer, rather than a necessary evil. Marketing is also an area of specific interest to the designer of housing. We must learn to adapt inexpensive materials and methods into attractive designs. For too long we have assumed that such materials and methods are a compromise, rather than offering potentially new and exciting design opportunities.

These changes in architectural education would go far towards bringing the profession up to the present. But what of the future? Changes are expected on the socio-economic front with the aging and retirement of the "baby-boom" generation. It is expected that housing for seniors will occupy the concerns of government and individuals. It is very likely that affordability will continue to pose a threat to home ownership in North-America in the 1990's and beyond. On the technological front, the development of modular manufacturing and user-computer design may once again threaten the existence of architects in housing. If we are not to give up on the field, we must be active participants in research into developing innovative technologies, and we must shape their development. We must also learn to function in and contribute to the homebuilding industry.

MASTER'S PROGRAM

HISTORY and THEORY of ARCHITECTURE

McGill University

Indra Kagis McEwen

"Socrates' Ancestor; Architecture and Emerging Order in Archaic Greece"

Socrates claimed Daedalus, the mythical first architect, as his ancestor. Taking this as a point of departure, the thesis explores the relationship between architecture and speculative thought, and shows how the latter is grounded in the former. A detailed examination of the Anaximander fragment, the earliest surviving record in Western philosophy, is considered in relation to Anaximander's built work. This three-part cosmic model which included a celestial sphere, the first map of the world, and a sun clock (the gn°om°on), reveals the fragment to be a theory of the work in that the cosmic order Anaximander was the first to articulate was discovered through the building of the model. The model is seen as comparable to a **daidalon**, a creation of Daedalus, whose legend reflects the importance of craft in the self-consciousness of archaic Greece where the **kosmos** (order) of civilization were seen as having emerged with the **kosmos** allowed to appear through the making of the artifact. Archaic self-consciousness is further examined through the emergence of the Greek city-state (the **polis**) and in the building of the first peripteral temples, both of which are revealed as necessary antecedents to the birth of theory, understood as the wondering admiration of the well-made thing.

Helmut Klassen

"Michelangelo: Architecture and the Vision of Anatomy"

Michelangelo considered a mastery of the body and anatomy to be the essential "theory" articulating the practice of architecture. For him, the reality of the moving human figure embodied the supreme difficulty of life as animation. By his architectural appropriation of the figure, human artifice was understood to be circumscribed by the radical intelligibility of the processes of life. This study is an articulation of his vital understanding of the living body and artifice by the "vision" of anatomy, one conceived as necessarily faithful to the radical intelligibility of the processes of life. This thesis is an articulation of Michelangelo's understanding of the living body and artifice by the "vision" of anatomy. The outline of an artifice faithful to the radical life of things is first examined in the thought and practice of medicine in the Renaissance. Upon this understanding, the coherence of Michelangelo's unprecedented emphasis upon the living body for architecture may be articulated, one that discloses important consequences for contemporary architectural practice. The study thus concludes with an elaboration of Michelangelo's "theory"; the vision of anatomy as a dynamic drawing of things as they appear, in the "flesh" of the world.

William Weima

"From Troy Town to Bordertown: A Study of Architectural Limits and the Orientation of Cities in their Place"

This thesis is an investigation of architectural meanings manifested in walled cities and the relationship with their place and their orientation. The walls of Troy, Vitruvius and the walled cities of the Renaissance, and the fortifications in the age of Vauban are the three principal sources of study used for this investigation. This thesis draws upon these three sources to reconsider the possibilities of containment, limits, and the task of the architect through defence, to once again give authentic meaning to the city and its place.

Irena Murray

"Sources of Cubist Architecture in Bohemia: The Theories of Pavel Janák"

The sources of the theories underlying Czech Cubist architecture before World War I have been only sketchily studied to date. To analyze these theories and identify their sources, I focus on the work of architect and theorist Pavel Janák (1882-1956), and early proponent of Cubist architecture in Bohemia. The thesis incorporates my translation of Janák's unpublished journal for 1911-1914, the dominant years of Czech Cubism. Through this journal and Janák's published writings, together with an examination of his own readings, I trace the development of his theories, and situate his sources, within their historical context. Janák was no mere imitator of French Cubism but was concerned to develop innovative architecture that yet possessed both historical continuity and universal validity, thank to its space-creating qualities. The thesis includes a facsimile of Janák's journal with its numerous sketches, a translation en face, and a complete bibliography of his sources.

Richard de la Riva

"Architecture and Music; On Rhythm, Harmony and Order"

This paper examines the relationship of architecture to music in terms of rhythm, harmony and order in both the Greek Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. These basic concepts are crucial because they emphasize "fullness" of experience and demonstrate the extent to which our own regulating experience of the world has become empirical (or formal). The discussion thus places architectural theory within the movement of ideas between mythical thought and metaphysical construct; it places architectural practice within the movement between bodily experience and reasoning.

Louise Pelletier

"L'espace métaphorique du montage cinématographique, vers un nouveau rituel architectural"

Architectural representation is much more than a process of transcription between a concept and the building; it is a tool that determines the very mentality and praxis of the architect. This thesis studies the technique of film montage through the work of Andrei Tarkovsky and the possibilities it offers to the process of architectural conception. A general outline of the development of the perspective tools of representation in architecture lead to an understanding of the significance of the cinematographic image in the context of the history of projection. Montage in the tradition of Surrealism placed an emphasis on the potential power of poetic evocation between its elements. Comparing the narrative forms of three filmmakers, the "surrealist montage" of Luis Buñuel, the "intellectual montage" of Sergie Eisenstein, and the temporal modulation in the films of Tarkovsky, this thesis examines different ways to qualify cinematographic space which affect the spatial and temporal experience of the spectator and offer the possibility of a redefinition of ritual in architecture.

Katherine Fluck

"Medieval Topics; Perception, Rhetoric and Representation in the Middle Ages"

This thesis is an architectural investigation of perception, depth and representation. It explores the changing historical relationship between "two-dimensional" representation and architecture in an effort to understand the effects of modern perspectival depth on the making of architecture. The non-perspectival, medieval representations studied in this thesis are not looked upon as primitive forerunners of Renaissance perspective, but as being expressive of a completely different notion and location of depth. In an attempt to access this "other" depth, the move from non-perspectival to perspectival perception and representation is looked at in relation to the change in perceptual values, brought on by the move from the largely oral culture of the Middle Ages, to the increasing textual culture of Renaissance and Modern ages. Perhaps without the fixity, neutrality and disengagement inherent in both perspectival and textual perception, architectural depth might return to the active world of human experience.

Jean-Pierre Chupin

"De Philibert, De L'Orme et De Rabelais. Analogous Treatises: A Companion"

This thesis analyzes the corporeal origin of theoretical works in XVIth century French architecture. A comparison of Philibert de l'Orme's treatises and François Rabelais' work allows for a dynamic awareness of materiality to emerge. During the Renaissance, this awareness was based on analogical relationships and Hermetic texts. However, whether one looks at the theory of the Elements, the concept of Proportion, the microcosm-macrocosm interplay, or even the Cardinal Virtues, it appears that the references were always traced back to the everyday experience of the body. Confronted with the mechanistic and objectifying conceptualizations that dominate today, this thesis supports the crucial role the architect must play in the bringing forth of places that allow for a perception of the body closer to apprenticeship than to domination.

Terrance Galvin

"GRAVITY AND LIGHT: looking through the architecture of Jean Cocteau"

This thesis examines a select amount of *poésie* by the artist Jean Cocteau, and through interpretation, explores the *architecture* of his work. This process of interpretation poses two questions: What is the role of the architect today, compared with our role as understood throughout history? How does the production of architecture today reflect the mechanisms of capitalism with its division of knowledge and labour, compared with an architecture which is inclusive and reconciliatory? A clear message emerges from Cocteau's *poésie* as a response to the two aspects of Orpheus: the first is represented by the processes of individual creativity, and the second by the collective realization of a project, whether it be a work of theatre, the production of a film, or the design and realization of a building. A work does not end in handing it over for someone else to finish.

Natalija Subotincic

"THE ANAMORPHOSIS OF ARCHITECTURE: A co-incidence of desire and embodiment (An excursion into the world of visual indifference)"

This thesis has been considered from the outset as a "project" which primarily focuses on an interpretation of Marcel Duchamp's works. More specifically, the project revolves around his writings on perspective and the fourth dimension by examining the Large Glass (Bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even... 1915-1923) and the Given... (1946-1966). The procedure follows the medical process for an aesthetic induction leading to exploratory surgery. Among the topics which co-incidently emerge are: "illuminating" Ether gas, "falling" water and "releasing" anamorphic intuitions. What results from this series of operations is an "unconscious" perceptual awakening revealed through an extended experience of embodiment. This "space of desire" is the space where Architecture dwells.
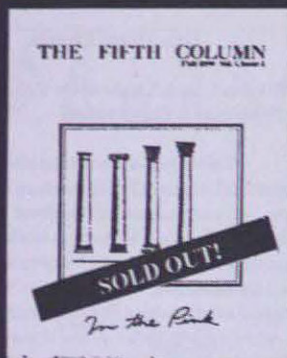
James M. Splawn

"Under the Oak Tree; The Mythical Intentionality in Le Corbusier's Le Poème de l'Angle Droit"

This paper is an investigation of Le Corbusier's Le Poème de l'Angle Droit (The Poem to the Right Angle). In this work, Le Cobusier creates/discloses a "mythical" order which is grounded in the architect's perception of the modern condition. Through the Poème an understanding of mans' place in the modern world may be found. Thus, this piece is revealed as perhaps the most significant piece in the articulation of Le Corbusier's theoretical intentionality. Through this making of order, Le Corbusier was able to create a geometric "language" in both the physical and meta-physical sense, i.e., the making of form was based on his "found" measure of the world. This language of a present day order was developed in his writings and painting and, ultimately, provided the fundamental principles for the creation his built work.
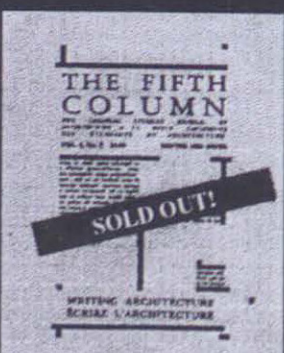
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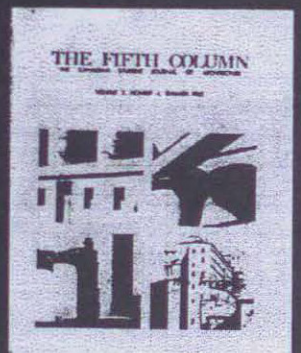
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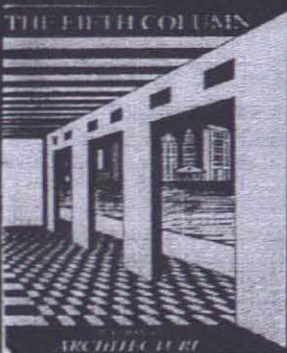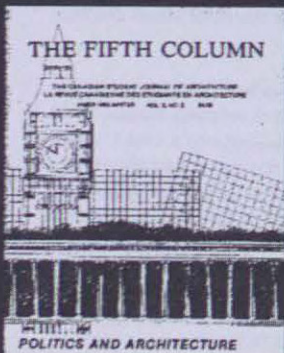
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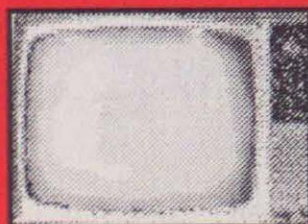Josef Zorko, Westmount
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