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I, Adam James Koogler, hereby submit this work as part of the requirements for the degree of:
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This work and its defense approved by:

Chair: George Thomas Bible
       Rebecca Williamson
OPTIMAL (The White House Complex)

a thesis submitted to:
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ADAM KOOGLER
committee chairs:
TOM BIBLE
REBECCA WILLIAMSON
The late-capitalist society is driven not by production but consumption, not the material but the digital, not services. Within this system, every aspect of culture is subjugated to capitalism’s doctrine, even art. Of all of the arts, architecture is the most directly dependent upon these external forces. Many theorists and practitioners have addressed this obligatory relationship, forming two major camps: those that reject the external and those that willingly embrace it. However, both sides still conceive of architecture as an object, an image, or a spectacle, making the debate futile. Thus, the process of commodification continues to compromise architecture. In opposition to the monological force of commodification are “fields,” inclusive conditions capable of accommodating architecture’s need for an “autonomous ideology,” as well as society’s desire for a “cultural commodity,” compromising neither. Is it possible that in considering architecture as a “field condition,” this atrophied debate could be avoided, enabling a return to an architecture of performance rather than appearance? The most fertile ground in which to explore the deflection of market forces is America’s greatest landmark, a capitalistic icon, The White House Complex.
Thing—how can we name it? The puzzle of this carcass of signs and flux, of networks and circuits... the ultimate gesture toward a crowd? One more thing undermines Beaubourg's cultural project: the very mass of an order of Nothing. Emptiness would signify the complete disappearance of a culture of meaning and of aesthetic sensibility. But even this is too romantic and agonizing; this empty symbolic exchange, highly ritualized and restrained. It can't be helped. Too bad for populism. Tough on Beaubourg. What, then, should have been put inside Beaubourg? Nothing. The only temporal mode is that of the accelerated cycle and of recycling: the time of transistors and fluid flow. Our only culture is basically that of pavilion, with its (calculated?) fragility that argues against traditional mentality or monumentality, this thing openly declares that our age will no longer be one of duration, but of the crum of cultural values is undermined from the very outset by the architectural shell. For, with its armatures of tubing and its look of a world's fair, Beaubourg is - in total contradiction to its stated objectives - a brilliant monument of modernity. There is pleasure in the realization that the idea for this was generated not by the technological inanity, in its time, of the Eiffel Tower. A monument to total disconnecti- on, to hyper-reality, and to the truth, capable, in their very obstinacy, of setting up a basically uncontrollable mechanism, which even by its success escapes them and offers, through its very contradictions, a strategy of deterrence. (It is the very same model that serves to regulate us globally under the sign of peaceful coexistence and the simulation of atomic peril.) With allowances made for scale, the same model is developed through the Centre: the archaic solution of escalators moving in plastic tubes... they should have used suction, propulsion, or what have you, some kind of motion, emulsion, and fallout in the image of that science-fiction mechanoid. Yet, within this carcass, which looks, in any event, neutralized at the same time: Tinguely is embalmed in the museological institution and Beaubourg is trapped within its so-called artistic contents. Happily, this whole simula- tion merely functions to refer to the defunct culture. Within this carcass that might have served as a mausoleum for the hapless operation of signs, Tinguely's ephem- eral work of art is cut to the geometric measure of the smallest possible space. So culture at Beaubourg is crushed, twisted, cut out, and stamped as the phallic inanity, in its time, over the entire terrain—a technical, ecological, economic, geopolitical buffer zone. What does the nucleus matter? The center is a matrix for developing a model of deterrence, subject to generalization on all social levels, one that is most pro- foundly a model of deterrence. (It is the very same one that serves to regulate us globally under the sign of peaceful coexistence and the simulation of atomic peril.) With allowances made for scale, the same model is developed through the Centre: the archaic solution of escalators moving in plastic tubes... they should have used suction, propulsion, or what have you, some kind of motion in the image of that science-fiction mechanoid. Yet, within this carcass, which looks, in any event, neutralized at the same time: Tinguely is embalmed in the museological institution and Beaubourg is trapped within its so-called artistic contents. Happily, this whole simula- tion merely functions to refer to the defunct culture. 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An earlier stage in the economy’s domination of social life entailed an obvious downgrading of being into having that left its stamp on all human endeavor. The present stage, in which social life is completely taken over by the accumulated products of the economy, entails a generalized shift from having to appearing: all effective “having” must now derive both its immediate prestige and its ultimate raison d’etre from appearances. At the same time all individual reality, being directly dependent on social power and completely shaped by that power, has assumed a social character. Indeed, it is only inasmuch as individual reality is not that it is allowed to appear.¹

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*

In *The Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord builds upon the writings of Karl Marx, criticizing the shortcomings of capitalistic societies. While Marx was mostly concerned with labor issues, Debord focuses more on the effects of commodity culture within contemporary media or mediums. The above quote from Debord, captures the dominant zeitgeists that have given commodities form throughout major historical eras. He begins in the pre-modern era with, “being,” referring to the pre-enlightenment era. With enlightenment comes the second phase, “having,” which relates to the era of modernity, specifically the Industrial Revolution and its emphasis on production. The third phase, “appearing”, speaks about the post-modern era, which signaled the failure of modernity and called into question existing structures of authority. Since the release of Debord’s book in 1967, a fourth phase has emerged that emphasizes the re-synthesis of post-modernism’s disparate parts through “experiencing.” In the words of historian Tom Turner:

“The modernist age, of ‘one way, one truth, one city,’ is dead and gone. The postmodernist age of ‘anything goes’ is on the way

¹
out. Reason can take us a long way, but it has limits. Let us embrace post-postmodernism - and pray for a better name.”

The premise of this thesis is built upon Debord’s classification of the commodity. While using this approach is obviously broad, the phases serve well as framework. Perhaps more interesting than the middlegame of these phases, are the transitional phases between them that have often brought predictions of architecture’s demise. Despite the skepticism of theorists, critics and practitioners, architecture has persevered. It has adapted like an organism, by necessity of sustenance. For “when architecture resists, when it attempts to reassert its own disruptive voice, capitalism simply withdraws it from service.”

This section is a brief recapitulation of architecture’s recent history. It is an attempt to demonstrate the relation between pre-modern and ‘being,’ modern and ‘having,’ post-modern and ‘appearing,’ and ‘post-postmodern’ and experiencing. In each era, the modern, post-modern and post-postmodern, architecture has been reduced to a sound-byte, the object, image and spectacle. Furthermore, this section attempts to show that as a result of architecture’s commodification, its ‘exchange value’ has become inflated and its intrinsic values deflated.
Having

The elk portrayed by the man of the Stone Age on the walls of his cave was an instrument of magic. He did expose it to his fellow men, but in the main it was meant for the spirits.⁴

Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*

The very essence of the pre-modern era as a non-selfconscious time makes writing about it very difficult, much like the paradox writing a history of pre-history. Furthermore, its implication on the discipline of architecture, are distant from contemporary society and therefore, less relevant to the focus of this thesis. While it is not necessary to write extensively on “being,” it is important to acknowledge the era. Thus, in absence of a thorough analysis, the words of historian Edward Hallett Carr are sufficient:

“The cult of individualism is one of the most pervasive of modern historical myths. According to the familiar account of Bruckhardt’s *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, the second part of which is sub-titled, *The Development of the Individual*, the cult of the individual began with the Renaissance, when man, who had hitherto been ‘conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation,’ at length ‘became a spiritual individual and recognized himself as such.’ Later the cult was connected with the rise of capitalism and of Protestantism, with the beginnings of the industrial revolution and with the doctrines of laissez-faire.”⁵
The man who acquires the ability to take full possession of his own mind may take possession of anything else to which he is entitled.6

Andrew Carnegie

In 1896, Louis Sullivan wrote an article titled *The Tall Building Artistically Reconsidered*. In this article, he announced his credo; “Form ever follows function”7 exemplifying the modern era’s attitude. This application of rational thought stems directly from the era’s predilection of efficiency both in terms of use and production. A little more than ten years later, Adolf Loos’ essay, *Ornament and Crime*, furthered this agenda by declaring the use of ornamentation a degenerate act for architects and designers. Those continuing to use ornament would do so with a guilty conscience, knowing they had impeded architecture’s progress. This stripping away of ornament allowed for architecture’s standardization, increasing its ability to be produced in factories. Critics of his position have cited that the removal of ornament and subsequently craftsmen, lead to the externalization of the subject from the object. In the words of Karl Marx:

“The commodity is first of all, an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind. The nature of these needs, whether they arise, for example, from the stomach, or the imagination, makes no difference. Nor does it matter here how the thing satisfies man’s need, whether directly as a means of subsistence, i.e. an object of consumption, or indirectly as a means of production”8

The distinction between the subject and the object signifies an important shift in the understanding of the world. One is no longer a peasant; but now an agriculturalist, a merchant of crops. With new efficiencies in production, concerns of personal sustenance gave way
to strategies for reaping profits from surplus. This understanding of oneself as a creator of objects is defining of modernism’s zeitgeist, having. Commenting on this shift, Hannal Arendt wrote in *The Human Condition*:

“As far as homo faber was concerned, the modern shift of emphasis from the ‘what’ to the ‘how’, from the thing itself to its fabrication process, was by no means an unmixed blessing. It deprived man as maker and builder of those fixed and permanent standards and measurement which, prior to the modern age, have always served him as guides for his doing and criteria for judgment. It is not only and perhaps not even primarily the development of the commercial society that, with the principle of interchangeability, then the relativization, and finally the devaluation of all values.”

Michael Hays has written on the importance of this concept within the writing of Manfredo Tafuri, for whom:

“The entire cycle of modernism as a unitary development in which the avant-gardes’ visions of utopia come to be recognized as an idealization of capitalism, a transfiguration of the latter’s rationality into the rationality of autonomous form - architecture’s ‘plan’, its ideology.”

The emphasis placed on having is a direct result of these developments, all of which come out of the Industrial Revolution. Since there is no lack of scholarship exploring its impact on architecture, reiterating this is not necessary. It is however, important to extract two aspects of particular importance to the commodification of architecture. The first aspect is modernism’s emphasis on the production of objects and the second is the inclination to accumulate these objects.
If the reduction of architecture to the status of an object makes any sense, it is of course insofar as it corresponds to an aestheticization of life.¹¹

Alain Guiheux, *Systems in Reading MVRDV*

The Industrial Revolution belonged to the masses, mass production, mass consumption and mass appeal. It was a unifying time according to Manfredo Tafuri, that had the tendency:

“To reduce the structure of artistic experience to the status of pure object, to involve the public, as a unified whole, in a declaredly interclass and therefore antibourgeois ideology: such are the tasks taken on, as a whole, by the avant-gardes of the twentieth century.”¹²

Society’s increased interest in production coincided with the disregard of cultural and historical contexts. The Industrial Revolution was a time for looking forward, a futuristic period in which the lessons of the past seemed irrelevant. Within architecture there was an:

“Absence of historical concerns in favor of attention to the autonomous architectural object and its formal operations—how its parts have been put together, how it is a wholly integrated and equilibrated system that can be understood without external references, and as important, how it may be reused, how its constituent parts and processes may be recombined.”¹³

Equally as influential in architecture’s objectification, were the means by which architects conceived of their architecture. The shift toward using physical models rather the architecture’s conventional drawings further removed the subject from the architectural object.
Archetypal photographs of the architectural master standing over their model, illustrate the architect’s possession of the architectural object. Once scaled to full size, they contributed to a landscape of autonomous objects, devoid of consideration for their context or subject. “The context which gave ideas and objects their previous significance is gone,” according to Peter Eisenman, “there is now merely a landscape of objects; new and old are the same: they appear to have meaning but they speak into a void of history.”

Architecture’s focusing on its objecthood was not limited to negative results. This introverted approach allowed the architecture to develop itself and its language by being self-critical. As a result, architects developed a more complete language, allowing them to more sophisticatedly talk about form. Thus architecture could be pushed places, under the guise of an art form that it could not have gone by limiting itself to its functional requirements.
Someone who collects keychains that have recently been manufactured for the sole purpose of being collected might be said to be accumulating the commodities indulgences...\textsuperscript{15}

Guy Debord, \textit{The Society of the Spectacle}

In the twenty-first century, the United Arab Emirates has become one of the greatest hotbeds for innovative architecture. Demonstrative of the UAE’s belief in architecture is their proposal for a “world-class” cultural center on Saadiyat Island to be completed in 2018. To design the key institutions of this “world-class” tourist destination, they have commissioned four “world-class” architects: Tadao Ando, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, and Jean Nouvel. Each architect was asked to design a cultural institution on a waterfront site. “The result of [this] simultaneous exclamation is white noise, not significance.”\textsuperscript{16} Despite their impressive lineup of architectural celebrities, it cannot be long until Saadiyat Island itself is submerged.

Collecting architecture is not an endeavor limited to cities; universities are taking part as well. With the increased competition in attracting prospective students, universities are operating more like corporations than institutions. In the eighties, corporation’s relied heavily on architecture as a marketing tool, a decade later universities followed suit. The scale, density and political structure of these institutions contributed to their success in implementing ambitious building projects. As campuses become intense collections of architectural follies, there is a very real danger of that the atmosphere will be closer to that of a world fair than academia.

At the forefront of this trend is the University of Cincinnati, having launched their signature architecture program in 1989. In-
cluded in the master plan are buildings designed by the Cambridge Seven, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Michael Graves, Gwathmey Siegel, Leers Weinzapfel, Moore Ruble Yudell, Morphosis, Pei Cobb Freed, David Childs of SOM and Bernard Tschumi. These signature projects are all sited within a landscape masterplanned by Michael Hargraves. As the buildings compete for attention, as “each individual commodity fights for itself, [it] cannot acknowledge the others and aspires to impose its presence everywhere as though it were alone,” overwhelming the campus’s collective quality. Even the landscape springs forth from the background, competing for position in the foreground.

Large concentrations of outstanding architecture are not a new phenomenon. In the fifteenth century, Florence certainly built its share of landmark buildings. The little town of Columbus, Indiana has been adding to its collection for decades, now containing over seventy notable works of modern architecture and public sculpture. However, in both of these cases, the architecture was commissioned out of a patron’s enjoyment of architecture, not in hopes of financial gains. Much of Florence’s great Renaissance architecture was commissioned by Lorenzo Medici, whose motivation stemmed from an appreciation of art and architecture at least as much as his interest in displaying his power.

Columbus’s rich collection of architecture is largely thanks to the former chairman of the Cummins Engine Company, J. Irwin Miller. Miller made an offer to the city, to cover the cost of the architect’s fee for any public project, if the city hired an architect from his list. To this day, despite Miller’s death, Cummins and the city still honor the deal. It has resulted in projects designed by renowned architects
such as I. M. Pei, Cesar Pelli, James Polshek, Kevin Roche, SOM, Venturi Scott Brown and many more. Unlike UC’s campus or the UAE’s new cultural island, Columbus is not a spectacular amalgamation of architectural styles. Rather, it is a collection of late-modernist buildings that strike a balance between the identity of each object and that of the city as a whole. In comparison, UC’s collection of late-postmodernist sign-buildings lacks coherence, either conceptually or practically. As a telling sign, the university required the final three projects of their masterplan to all use gray zinc siding. This eleventh hour effort was too little too late, revealing that the university lacked a critical understanding of their venture.
The essential element of architecture for our time is no longer space, it’s no longer abstract form in industrial drag; the essential architectural element is iconography.\(^\text{18}\)

Robert Venturi, *Re-learning from Las Vegas*

Among theorists, the existence of a postmodern or post-modern era has been heavily debated. However, regardless of whether it is a separate phase or merely an extension of modernity, in the post-industrial era, capitalism ceased to be driven by production. In what is sometimes referred to as the Information Age, the consumption and manipulation of data replaced the production of material goods. Production did not stop entirely, with advances in technology allowing the unimaginable to be produced and with increased efficiency. Thus, consumer’s choices could no longer be driven by the intrinsic qualities of the product, as there were too many products to choose from, most of which were indiscernible. Instead, they looked to imagery, in hopes that it may provide the answer.

The building industry surpassed architecture’s ability to build quickly and cheaply. Thus, “architecture became more and more reliant on the production of signs and images,”\(^\text{19}\) replacing the architectural object with the architectural sign. “Symbol [now] dominates space. Architecture is not enough. Because the spatial relationships are made by symbols more than by forms, architecture in this landscape becomes symbol in space rather than form in space.”\(^\text{20}\) This era has been referred to as the Information Age, a time characterized by the circulation of information, not objects. Exploring the architectural implications of these circumstances has been a crucial aspect of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown’s writings. In 1972, they published their seminal book, *Learning from Las Vegas*, in which they...
state their intentions:

“We shall emphasize image over process or form - in asserting that architecture depends on its perception and creation on past experience and emotional association and that these symbolic and representational elements may often be contradictory to the form, structure, and program with which they combine in the same building. We shall survey this contradiction in its two main manifestations:

1. Where the architectural systems of space, structure and program are submerged and distorted by an overall symbolic form. This kind of building-becoming-sculpture we call the duck in honor of the duck-shaped drive-in, ‘The Long Island Duckling,’ illustrated in God’s Own Junkyard by Peter Blake.

2. Where systems of space and structure are directly at the service of program, and ornament is applied independently of them. This we call the decorated shed”

Penelope Dean has observed this shift in Alessi’s shift from household objects to collectible pieces. In 1980, the Italian company commissioned eleven renowned architects to design a Tea & Coffee Piazza. The design brief asked for the architects to use “style” and “expression” in their designs. Thus, objects of mass production were replaced by expressive, limited run pieces, signaling Alessi’s transformation from a company manufacturing objects to a producer of art.
Architecture seems to be no longer an object of close attention, that is, it has become very much like media: it is about image, sound byte, branding, etc.\textsuperscript{23}

Peter Eisenman, *Hunch 11: Rethinking Representation*

The information age is characterized by an increased access to and manipulation of information, rather than the production of goods. In this era, images are the predominant form of information and images are everywhere. It is a world of analog and digital pop-up windows. Graphic designer, Bruce Mau, refers to this condition as the “Global Image Economy.”\textsuperscript{24} He suggests it is supported by a multiplicity of influences such as:

“Surfaces of inscription, the unstable image, circulation, surveillance, new image infrastructure, camouflage industries, tourism, Postscript world, freeway condition, franchise, celebrity, cinematic migration, electronic media, violence, aura, and spin.”\textsuperscript{25}

Photography has been the main source of the abundance of images. Every aspect of contemporary life has been affected by its invention and much of what people know about the world is known only through photographs. For instance very few people have seen the earth from space, yet most know its appearance because of the “Blue Marble” photograph, taken by the Apollo 17 crew in 1972. Thus images collapse space, giving people access to that which they have never seen firsthand. This accessibility is not without side effects, as images also replace the tactile and phenomenological experience with the visual and perspectival. In the words of art historian Steve Edwards:

“Photographs have made many things seem ordinary, bringing distant places or unusual things closer to us, but, at the same time,
our reliance on them has been at the cost of making much of our experience seem second hand.”

Images have thrived in part because of the ease with which they may be produced and reproduced, consumed and re-consumed. In the 1970’s, John Szarkowski noted that the number of photographs in the world had come to outnumber the bricks. With increased access to digital resources such as the internet, the circulation and replication of these images has become astronomical.

Architecture by most definitions exists materially and requires being experienced in person to truly be comprehended. However, the recent surge in media attention on architecture has brought its awareness to an audience often far removed from experiencing it first hand. Architectural imagery attempts to collapse the experience and aura of architecture into a two-dimensional medium, namely photography. However, “in the process of reading an object as a mere image, that object is emptied of much of its original meaning.” Such are the workings of the capitalistic machine that Guy Debord wrote about, declaring “the spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image.” Recently, Hal Foster has suggested this statement should be inverted to more accurately read, “Spectacle is an image accumulated to the point where it becomes capital.”
A specter is haunting the global village, the specter of the iconic building.\textsuperscript{31}

Charles Jencks, \textit{The Iconic Building}

Within a society of leisure and an increasingly globalized world, cities have become competitive with one another to attract tourists. Many new forms of tourism have emerged like “eco-tourism,” “wine-tourism,” and with the success of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain “archi-tourism.” Since it opened in 1997, second tiers, post-industrial cities across the globe have commissioned architectural icons in hopes of reviving their economy. As a result, the built environment has become increasingly populated by architectural follies, whose “form accommodates functions.”\textsuperscript{32} “The misunderstanding of our time,” according to the Dutch architect, Willem-Jan Neutelings, “is to think that all buildings should be icons...A building should only be an icon when its nature allows it. The reason to actually want iconography is, because it is an important building, you think it could have a specific expression, and should not conform to anonymity.”\textsuperscript{33}

In previous times, religion functioned as the overriding belief system responsible for constructing monumental icons. Postmodernism however, lacked an “overriding direction to global culture,” according to Charles Jencks, and as a result, “the market prevails and demands continuous differentiation.”\textsuperscript{34} The skylines of church spires were passed long ago by the bar graph like modernist boxes of corporations. Now the bland boxes of business are quickly giving way to an assemblage of new expressionistic cultural icons. Art museums and the “innovative” or more often “intervenient,” corporations that sponsor them, are shaping today’s permissive cities. Along with all of these museum commissions, came an increase in competitions. Dutch architects, Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos have observed that:
“Everyone is more preoccupied by the image [and icon] than ever before. Almost every single competition requests an iconic building. Today, from the moment you begin to practice as an architect you are aware that your work must communicate, must present, and convey the right imagery.”

The designs architects produce for these iconic competitions, tend to be like the explicit signs of commerce rather than the implicit symbols of art or religion. Perhaps this is the result a society that is no longer responsive to nuances. Jencks, troubled by this condition, calls for a return to iconographic buildings, suggesting that “enigmatic signifiers that can be used in an effective way to support the deeper meaning of the building.”

He champions the work of Enric Miralles as best exhibiting these characteristics, specifically his elaborate design for the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. Another example of iconographic architecture is Norman Foster’s Swiss Re tower in London, which evokes numerous forms: a cigar, torpedo, gherkin and penis.

In addition to the enigmatic icon, there are at least two other significant approaches to creating the contemporary icon. One is the iconography pursued by Foreign Office Architects in their Yokohama Terminal project. In the design of the terminal, they sought insight from the Japanese painter, Hokusai’s iconic print, *The Great Wave*. The concept of the Hokusai wave became integral to every aspect of the building, redefining architecture’s most basic components such as handrail, door or column. In this instance, iconography has a “double agenda” as it represents the building’s organizational system in addition to conjuring up imagery.

A third type of icon can be seen in the work of the Dutch firm Neutelings Riedijk. They apply an iconography to their architecture
that operates separately from the pragmatic aspects of the building. The iconography works as a dress, cloaking what are sometimes the banal aspects of architecture. Their use of iconography relates their buildings to its context and contents, but not its function. This thin, singular layer of iconography ensures that visitors can easily understand the project. In a candid interview on his firm’s work, Neutelings has said:

“It is true that some of our buildings are a bit too...thin, in the sense that they don’t succeed in touching all those layers. Sometimes that is because the commissions are just too limited to live up to that ambition, but sometimes it is also just because we can’t do better. That’s the way it is.”

These culturally derived icons have been an important aspect of architecture’s resurgence at the beginning of the twenty-first century. As already mentioned, it has become common practice to collect these architectural icons. These icons rarely stand alone, as a single landmark building is not enough to maintain substantial tourism. Even in Bilbao, as hype from the Guggenheim began to diminish, the city was compelled to add the work of other world renowned architects to their collection. Among the many new projects, meant to maintain Bilbao’s tourism market, were a footbridge by Santiago Calatrava, a light rail system by Norman Foster and a master plan by Zaha Hadid. What had originally started as a museum to house works of art from regional artists, has instead turned into an international museum of architecture. In the words of Jencks, this “Hyper-inflation of expression devalues urban currency and is in danger of turning world cities into world fairs.”
But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, representation to reality, the appearance to the essence...illusion only is sacred, truth profane. Nay, sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness. 39

Feuerbach, Preface to 2nd Edition of The Essence of Christianity

Methods of collage, montage and assemblage were common to the anti-art movement Dada. While collage may have started as an anti-establishment method, it did not remain such for long, as even Mies van der Rohe’s representations came to use collage. With the release of Adobe Photoshop in 1991, these methods were easily attainable to everyone. Architects and designers could now achieve a new level of realism, in representing their designs previously requiring skilled technicians. Along with the possibility of realistic imagery, the option of creating convincing illusionary images opened up. Suddenly architects were able to more easily convey their designs as they saw them, to clients and the public. The unique, ideologically derived architectural representations of postmodernity were quickly replaced by slick new computerized renderings. But these new representations were generic, all using the same basic formula: an intense, richly colored sky placed behind translucent, neutrally grey buildings. The same imagery, undoubtedly found through a Google image search, appears in the representations of multiple offices. According to Ilka and Andreas Ruby the development of Photoshop has:

“On the one hand, created a highly conventional style of representation that has fallen back behind the experimental approaches of the 1960’s and 1970’s. On the other hand it has also had repercussions for the completed building itself that must measure itself
Architecture has along with other disciplines such as film and fashion, adopted this new digital “realism”. An Australian sunset, a Beijing streetscape and the New York skyline come together creating the promise of a new collaged world without distance. Once the design becomes material, its swiss cheese and pimples become a reality. No problem though, the air handlers and love handles can be removed from the photos post hoc. Such are the tactics used in creating the spectacular portfolios of today’s young architects. Equal emphasis is placed on the built and unbuilt, implying that neither is preferable to the other. These ambiguities of reality work to entice the subject. The media, portrays fashion models as neither male nor female and architecture as neither sculpture nor building. The distinction is irrelevant, as either way, the subject has been seduced into an illusionary world of its own creation, and that is all that matters. In words of Guy Debord:

“Though separated from his product, man is more and more, and ever more powerfully, the producer of every detail of his world. The closer his life becomes to being his own creation, the more drastically is he cut off from that life.”
Everybody experiences far more than he understands. Yet it is experience, rather than understanding, that influences behavior.\textsuperscript{42}

Marshall McLuhan

In 1999, B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore published \textit{The Experience Economy}. In this controversial book they argued that businesses should focus on tying their products to unique experiences. Thus the experience or memory a consumer has, begins to be given a price. Architect Anna Klingman, used \textit{The Experience Economy} as the premise for her book, \textit{Brandscapes}, in which she writes:

“Today’s architecture has lost its ability to provoke pleasure and to capture the imagination of those outside the discipline. At the same time, movies, television, and brands have successfully tapped into the dreams and desires of the very same people who say they do not care about architecture. To regain its social relevance, architecture must relate to a larger field of associations and emotions. Can architecture begin to appeal to the collective fantasy of society, or better yet begin to shape it?”\textsuperscript{43}

Under these conditions, the visual ceases to be sufficient. The visual spectacle of post-modernism has been trumped by the multi-modal, hyper-spectacle of post-postmodernism. This is the age of services and events that one can feel. Information, products, art and architecture are all be driven toward comprehensive experiences that integrate all the senses. Raoul Eshelman, prefers the term “performatism” to post-postmodernism, characterizing this era as “a new epoch in which subject, sign, and thing come together in ways that create an aesthetic experience of transcendency.”\textsuperscript{44}
Debord forecast this all-encompassing commercial strategy, when he warned “the spectacle is a permanent opium war waged to make it impossible to distinguish goods from commodities, or true satisfaction from a survival that increases according to its own logic.”45 In an effort to adapt to these conditions and raise the perceived value of its beneficiaries, architecture has presented itself as the supreme hyper-spectacle. Architecture sheds its material, tectonic, even programmatic baggage, as it becomes the hyper-spectacle, a steroidal phenomenology. In *The Man Without Qualities*, the Austrian author, Robert Musil envisaged such a world:

“A world of qualities without man has arisen, of experiences without the person who experiences them, and it almost looks as though ideally private experience is a thing of the past, and that the friendly burden of personal responsibility is to dissolve into a system of formulas of possible meanings. Probably the dissolution of the anthropocentric point of view, which for such a long time considered man to be at the center of the universe but which has been fading for centuries has finally arrived at the ‘I’ itself.”46
Architecture has become a brand in itself, particularly for the 'signature' architect... 47

Kenneth Frampton, *The Work of Architecture in the Age of Com-modification*

In the nineteenth century, trade companies began to heavily transport their products around the world. Up to this point, people mostly used products produced locally and may have even know the producer. The first uses of branding were not unlike the fire-based practice of branding livestock. Initially the brand was applied to the shipping containers, eventually finding its way onto the actual product as with bars of soap. The use of a brand allowed customers to develop trust in products whose origin was distant. In the mid twentieth century, companies began to understand that consumers had developed psychological and anthropological connections to certain brands. Essentially, consumers had developed lasting love affairs with products that could be passed on from generation to generation. This large potential for profit lead to branding becoming its own discipline, distinct from advertising.

While the intent of branding was originally to foster consumer's trust in the quality of a product, it has become “a conceptual framework that no longer judges objects on their own merit but for their effects on people and places.” 48 This change can be observed in law, as new utility patents have decreased, and design patents have increased along with the protecting of trade dress. In a crowded market, some companies have resorted to exploiting branding; using the gap it creates between perception and reality, to gloss over the undesirable aspects of a product. For example, no branding strategy would include facts like, the product was made in a sweatshop, emits toxic off gases...
or does not actually perform the function it appears to. In the words of Alain Guiheux, “The market has figured out that what is purchased is not the object but the imaginary, often by means of the wretched existence of the brand.”

For these reasons, branding has been highly criticized, even hated in architectural circles by theorists and critics. Former critic for the Village Voice, Michael Sorkin, has declared “advocacy of branding is a sell-out in architecture, reducing its meanings to mere advertising, a fine obliviousness to the larger social implications of architectural practice.” And theorist/historian, Kenneth Frampton claims:

“Today’s brand designers are not only dedicated to the gratification of consumer taste but also to the stimulation of desire, knowing full well that everything depends on the sublimating eroticism of consumption as opposed to the intrinsic quality of the thing consumed.”

Such skepticism does not exist across the entire discipline of architecture. In fact, many of the most well known architects practicing today could be considered brands. The most cited example of the architect turned brand is Michael Graves. The success of Graves’ participation in Alessi’s Tea & Coffee Piazza series, a limited run of high end coffee and tea pots, led to his collaboration with the Target Corporation. Target was interested in using design as a means of differentiating itself from other big box retailers and Graves’ kitschy designs translated well into mass culture and consumption. While his collaboration was initially praised for bringing design to a larger audience, this move has since been viewed as contributing to the commodification of architecture and design.
Most representative of the post-postmodern era, is Frank Gehry who has become a household name with the success of many high profile international projects. In 2005, film director and close friend of Gehry, Sydney Pollock, produced a biographical documentary on Gehry. The title of the film, *Sketches of Gehry*, perpetuates the myth of the architect’s napkin sketch, which has in recent years become its own collectible commodity. In April of 2006, the luxury jeweler Tiffany & Co. introduced a new line of Frank Gehry designed jewelry to their Designers & Collections series. Gehry has even collaborated with Brad Pitt, who once had aspirations of becoming an architect.

The tipping point for Gehry might have been the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain that was widely publicized in both architectural and mainstream medias. The completion of the Disney Concert Hall shortly after, contributed to his stardom in the States. Up until that point, he was still largely seen as a regional architect addressing the issue of vernacular architecture in Los Angeles. Aside from the aesthetic differences of Gehry and Graves, once one is past the initial imagery, Gehry’s products and architecture, actually offer a unique experience. Experientially, the spaces in and around the Guggenheim engage the subject, while most postmodern icons fail to offer more than style. The down side of this stardom and minting as a brand, is that it becomes an imprisoning, imposing the established image upon each new commission. Gehry is no longer commissioned to reinvent architecture but to allow someone the ownership of a “Gehry”.
In January of 2008, plans were announced to build an exact replica of the French city of Lyon, in the United Emirate of Dubai. Lyons-Dubai City “will cover an area of about 700 acres, roughly the size of the Latin Quarter of Paris, and will contain the university, a hotel school, a film library, subsidiaries of Lyon museums and a football training center run by Olympique Lyonnais.” The project, scheduled to be complete by 2012, is the brainchild of Buti Saeed Al Gandhi, head of an investment capital firm. Al Gandhi fell in love with the French city after visiting it to discuss the possibility of building a French-language university in Dubai.

The proposal of this project and even more so, the fact that the French have supposedly agreed to it, signals the emergence of the hyper-spectacle, a complete multi-modal experience. If built, it will be the most complete realization of Jean Baudrillard’s concept of simulacra. In *The Precession of Simulacra*, Baudrillard tells story of a map based on Jorge Luis Borges’s fable, *Of Exactitude in Science*. This map depicts an Empire so meticulously that it covers the territory completely, eventually becoming “frayed and finally ruined, a few shreds still discernible in the deserts.” The significance of this story is its questioning of reality. In the words of Rex Butler:

“It is not the territory that precedes the map, but the map that precedes the territory. It is not the map that resembles the territory, but the territory that resembles the map. It is the real not the map which is disappering and turning into desert, the ‘desert of the real.’”

This is the status of the world today. It is no longer a question of which is real for both the map and the territory are real. The internet-based virtual world, Second Life is every bit as real as the material
world we are familiar with. Business, education, socializing and play all take place within the Second Life “metaverse.” Labor is exchanged for currency; it is an alternative market, as organized crime has been quick to notice. This current situation is perhaps a partial answer to question posed by Baudrillard in *The Perfect Crime*:

“The only suspense which remains is that of knowing how far the world can demoralize itself before succumbing to its reality deficit, or, conversely, how far it can hyperrealize itself before succumbing to an excess of reality (the point when, having become perfectly real, truer than true, it will fall into the clutches of total simulation)”

55


6 ***


17 Debdor 67.

18 Debdor 66.


21 Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Learning from Las Vegas (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1972) 64.


25 Mau 41.


27 Edwards 11.


29 Debdor 34.


31 Jencks 6.


34 Jencks 203.


36 Jencks 21.

37 Neutelings.

38 Jencks 135.


41 Debdor 33.


43 Klingman 45.


45 Debdor 44.


48 Klingman 4.


PREMISE

ENDNOTES


51 Frampton xii.


METHODOLOGY taking the field
Can architecture be other than a mere servant to commercial/capitalist/ideological forces?¹

Stanford Anderson, Quasi-Autonomy in Architecture: The Search for an In-between

In Michael Hays’ essay Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form, Hays clearly depicts the two dominant interpretations of architecture’s relationship to capitalism during the twentieth century. One position is that of critical architecture or “architecture as autonomous form” which Hays opposes to the interpretation of “architecture as an instrument or culture.” Historians and theorists have written this dialectic on extensively, thus a complete recapitulation is not necessary. It is however, interesting to note that Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, compiled a list of the terms used to refer to these positions in their article, Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism:

“Culture and form” can alternatively be figures as ‘kitsch and avant-garde’ (Clement Greenberg), ‘literal and phenomenal’ (Colin Rowe), ‘objecthood and art’ (Michael Fried), or ‘capitalist development and design’ (Manfredo Tafuri).”²

The debate between these two camps has proven to be inefficient, resulting in “an irreconcilable contradiction in which both poles remained trapped in a mutual mirroring of their counterpart.”³ Hays proposes taking a cross-section of the debate rather than choosing sides, a move that allows “not only a more robust description of the artifacts, but also the more intricate analysis demanded by artifacts situated explicitly and critically in the world - in culture, in theories of culture, in theories of interpretation itself.” According to Hays, Mies
van der Rohe established such an alternate path, a “critical architecture that claims for itself a place between the efficient representation of preexisting cultural values and the wholly detached autonomy of an abstract formal system.” This thesis’s rejects a monological view of architecture as either formal or culturally contingent.

However, Mies’s architecture does not hold such a position, as it cannot escape the established dialectic since it is based on the same singular assumptions. Similarly, in *The Mirror of Production*, Jean Baudrillard “accuses Marxism of sharing the same fundamental assumptions as that capitalism to which it is apparently opposed.” The possibility of escaping such a binary system using an orthodox means, ones and zeros is implausible. Thus it is necessary to pursue a heterodox solution, a strategy of “dissent of deflection.”

The following section provides a slightly more detailed account of each of these strategies, though it is my no means comprehensive. Acknowledging that no singular approach can completely escape the grasp of capitalism, the third strategy, dissent, offers a means of deflecting such forces. Marcel Duchamp has described such a condition in his book on an obscure heterodox opposition within the endgame of chess:

“The opposition (orthodox or heterodox) is based on the constant relation of the 2 squares occupied by the K’s, and its general formula can be applied indifferently to all the squares of a portion of the chess board. It is a cipher by means of which we establish, a priori, the equilibrium between K’s... It is also important to add that, with the opposition (orthodox or heterodox) or by the occupation of sister squares, no more than a draw can be obtained. For in order to win, maneuvers of breach of opposition must be used. It is difficult to
make generalization about such maneuvers as they enter the realm of tactical utilization of an advantage and vary with each position.”
Can an architecture which professes an objective of continuous experiment ever become congruous with the ideal of an architecture which is to be popular, intelligible, and profound?

Colin Rowe, Introduction to *Five Architects*

Marxism has had an extensive impact on the development of architecture within the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The era's greatest philosophers, subsequently followed by artists and architects, addressed these issues of labor division and class structure. Within architecture, the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School has been particularly influential in its attention to mass culture. The school's critical theory forms the basis of arguments for an autonomous architecture, devoid of external influences. This position that architecture in unable to fully be itself so long as it contains external representations, implies a belief in a singular truth. Form, along with issues of tectonics and construction embody this truth for the modernist architect. In their search for this truth, concerns of history were suppressed, only to find that they too are included in the books. However, Michael Hays claims there is some value in this approach, writing:

“Such an approach has not been entirely unhealthy for architectural interpretation. It has done away with testimonials rhetorically proclaiming a work's greatness and humanistic worth on the basis of its accurate representation of the dominant culture. It has developed a specialized vocabulary enabling critics to talk seriously, technically, and precisely about the architectural object as distinct from other kinds of objects.”

This treatment of architecture as an object however, is the largest shortcoming of the critical position. Rather than building up
architecture and fostering its most pure realization, a weakened architecture emerges. Devoid of any social or political role, architecture becomes a mere exercise in form, one that is easily tarnished by unforeseen restraints. In a culture addicted to the production and collection of trinkets, such a useless architecture is not far from commodity status.
Accept or Immerse

“Let’s be honest; the stern opposition to the image culture that was still feasible only a few years ago is no longer an option.”

Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, *After-Image*

In 1966, the Museum of Modern Art published Robert Venturi’s groundbreaking manifesto *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. Kate Nesbitt, referred to it as the most important trend in American architecture since the International Style of the 1930s. In his manifesto, Venturi made the case for an inclusive architecture that draws from a project’s cultural context both high and low, claiming the critical project’s reductive approach is destructively exclusive. Thus he proposed an inclusive philosophy of “both/and” rather than the modernist reasoning of “either/or.” Such inclusivity allows for the complexity of multiple readings, including the contradictory. In *Learning From Las Vegas*, he refers to his project, the Guild House, as an example of both “high and low art.”

Venturi’s embracement of “the $10,000 stand with the $100,000 sign,” made it acceptable for architects to do commercial work. This valuing of image over content, created wiggle room that incubated new approaches to capitalistic forces, though not all the developments have been favorable as many lack the deliberation of Venturi’s argument. Nesbitt has described, “The appearance of Venturi’s theory, [as] encouraging an eclectic, image-oriented appropriation of history, [that] can be likened to opening a Pandora’s box of styles.”

The opening of this box played an undeniable role in permitting the surge of image driven starchitecture. Though Venturi was in actuality calling for architecture with deeper meaning, his doctrine has become an alibi for the indulgent production of autobiographical forms by the architectural elite.
By engaging consumer society in the themes, materials and procedures of their art, instead of attempting to transcend it, evade it, or observe it with detachment, the dadaists confronted the challenge inherent in innovative bourgeois culture: to sell without selling out.12

Janine Mileaf and Matthew S. Witkovsky, *Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hannover, Cologne, New York, Paris*

The end of the Cold War and the subsequent call for a “new world order” had an indisputably large impact on the world. Thomas Friedman, author of *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* lists this event as the number one flattener of the world. While the ending of the Cold War’s influence on globalization is apparent, its less salient effects are still revealing themselves. This situation is articulated well by Lebbeus Woods in *The Storm and The Fall*:

“The dialectical world is a conflictual one, comprised of different forces contending not for dominance so much as position. In the dialectical relationship, each side needs its opposite - that is the prerequisite for conversation. The aim of contention is not to destroy the opposition, but to find parity with it, to coexist. In the emerging, globally monological world, the aim is quite the opposite, that is, to destroy the opposition and dissention, to remove any impediment to the dominance of one. In the new world order, wars are still fought, but they are wars of eradication. The aim is to smooth the way for a single point of view, a single way of thinking and living.”13

This doom and gloom attitude recalls the writings of Tafuri, specifically *Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology*, in which he wrote “the problem now [becomes] that of teaching not how one should...
To really appreciate architecture, you may even need to commit a murder.

Architecture is defined by the actions it witnesses as much as by the enclosure of its walls. Murder in the Street differs from Murder in the Cathedral in the same way as love in the street differs from the Street of Love. Radically.

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

Architecture is the ultimate erotic text. Censor it and it will reveal both the traces of reason and the sensual experience of space. Sensuously.

The most architectural thing about this building is the state of decay in which it is.

Architecture only survives where it requires the form that society permits it. Where it requires itself by recognizing the limits that history has set for it.

The game of architecture is an intricate play with rules that you may break or accept. These rules, like so many knots that cannot be untied, have the erotic significance of bondage: the more numerous and sophisticated the restraints, the greater the pleasure.

ropes and rules

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Bernard Tschumi, Advertisements for Architecture, 1976

To suffer that shock but how one should absorb it and internalize it as an inevitable condition of existence.”

Thus, the heterodox is crucial. This is the position taken by the editors of Perspecta 21 when they wrote: “architecture is not an isolated or autonomous medium, it is actively engaged by the social, intellectual, and visual culture which is outside the discipline and which encompasses it...it is based on a premise that architecture is inevitably involved with questions more difficult than those of form or style.”

If architecture is to address the social and cultural, and they are being smoothed to a singular point of view, then so too is architecture. Thus, this matter was readdressed in issue thirty-three, by Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting in an article that argued for displacing critical theory’s dominance in the discipline of architecture. Their understanding of the architectural discipline differs from that of Colin Rowe, Peter Eisenman and other in the critical camp. The Frankfurt School’s critical theory has understood disciplinarity “as autonomy (enabling critique, representation, and signification).” Somol and Whiting propose reinterpreting disciplinarity as “instrumentality (projective, performativity, and pragmatics).”

The acceptance of architecture’s relationship to forces beyond its own discipline is a radical departure from critical theory. Rather than rejecting culture, it embraces and validates it, ensuring its continuance. For Hays “this view of architecture [is] essentially an epiphenomenon, dependent on socioeconomic, political, and technological processes.” From this view, the object “is seen as already completed; the critic or historian attempts to restore an architectural object to its original meaning.” In contrast, Somol and Whiting’s repositioning calls for a “doppler architecture” that:
“Acknowledges the adaptive synthesis of architecture’s many contingencies. Rather than isolating a singular autonomy, the Doppler focuses upon the effects and exchanges of architecture’s inherent multiplicities: material, program, writing, atmosphere, form, technologies, economies, etc.”
The concept of field defines place as a framework for reconnaissance but also as a scenario of skirmishes between tensions and forces: that is, as a field of action (or of battle).

Manuel Gausa, *The Metapolis Dictionary of Advanced Architecture*

In 1974, Alison Smithson wrote an article titled *How to Recognise and Read Mat Building*, in which she further addresses a concept first mentioned in the Team 10 Primer, fields. The necessity for the article came from her personal observations of an increased amount of projects embodying the idea. Smithson catalogues these projects starting with the most recent: Candilis, Josic, Woods’ Toulouse University; Aldo van Eyck’s Catholic Church; Le Corbusier’s Venice Hospital; Kahn’s plan for Philadelphia, Hatshepsut’s funerary complex and ancient Islamic architecture in Istanbul. The term “Mat Building” is both verb and noun, it refers to the act of building a mat structure as well as the classification of a built work, “and yet mat building cannot be associated with a specific formal or stylistic tendency in contemporary architecture the way that many object-oriented tendencies do.”

Timothy Hyde has since updated Smithson’s catalogue, examining her usage of the term mat building and altered it such that it aligns more with Stan Allen’s definition of a field condition:

“An attention to FIELD conditions can involve more flexible tactics in order to accommodate or modulate existing topographies (or existencies in reference to social, historical and programmatic change) of the space. ‘Field logistics’ seek to become an opportunity, moving away from an ethic and a modern aesthetic of transgression. Working in favor of the space and not against it;
recording and accepting the complexity of existing data. Architecture must learn to manage this complexity and, paradoxically, can only succeed in doing so if it renounces certain measures of control. ‘Field logistics’ propose a provisional (and experimental) approach to carrying out this task.”

Included in Hyde’s catalogue are works that can be defined as fields (or mat buildings) not so much by their appearance but according the their performance. The projects he includes are Gruen’s Southdale Shopping Center, Kurokawa’s Agricultural City, Peter Cook’s Plug-in City, Archizoom’s No-Stop City, Peter Eisenman’s Cannaregio Town Square, both Bernard Tschumi and OMA’s competition entries for Parc de la Villette, MVRDV’s Villa VPRO, FOA’s Yokohama Terminal and Kazuyo Sejima’s Low-Rise Housing among others. Hyde’s list is not limited to designs though, as he also includeing texts by Archigram, Rem Koolhaas and Stan Allen. Emerging from this field of fields is the work of OMA and the writings of Stan Allen, which for their medium, provide the richest insights to the potential of field conditions.

It is with these models, coupled with the views laid down in its premise, that this thesis has developed its design objective. This objective is the development of a field condition that is anti-image, anti-object and anti-spectacle; it is a spatial network of contingently interconnected aggregates, remaining indeterminate in its continual transformation. If successful, forces will be developed that prevail over a singular understanding of architecture as “autonomous ideology” or “cultural commodity,” any materially driven design could not. These forces emerge from the discipline’s ideological hideout, metaphorically and perhaps literally, creating moving targets. These targets are obscured by their flux, like the jazz compositions of Miles Davis and Wayne Shorter, always narrowly escaping comprehension.
The concept of field conditions translated well across media as evidenced by Iannis Xenakis’s musical composition *Metastasis*, Jackson Pollock’s action paintings, Andreas Gursky’s photographs, Nike Savvas’s art galleries filled with balls and numerous others. Within each medium though, there is specific potential of the field that other media does not allow. It is therefore, useful to examine field conditions as translated across media and how in each case it is possible to deflect that media’s commodification, be it the image, the object or the spectacle. For this exercise, the progression from painting to sculpture to architecture is interesting as in each medium space and time significantly alter the performance of field conditions.
1 Nevelson’s sculpture is structured using the by-products of consumerist culture.
2 The diminution of both color and material further emphasizes the spatial and formal qualities.
3 Instances are located according to the network of crates, but escape the crates’ shadowy refuge.

Structure: Accumulated

Indeterminant: Accumulation
Instances: Layered

Contingent: Contrasting
1 The amorphous background of Goliath is a departure from the structure of cubism, questioning modern hierarchies.
2 Hofmann’s use of the primary colored squares, creates movement in the picture plane.
3 It is difficult to tell whether the background is structuring the foreground or vice versa.

Hans Hofmann, *Goliath*, 1960
Structure: Post-Cubist

Indeterminate: Juxtapose
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Instances: Delineating

Contingent: Commensurate

NON-IMAGE
1 Aligning with existing cultural entities, the design recalls the programmatic stratification of a mixed-use skyscraper.
2 Emerging from the cultural are large platonic solids like the pyramid and sphere, relating to architectural history.
3 The integration of culture and architecture through circulation creates a montage of distinct experiences.

OMA, Parc de la Villette, 1982
METHODOLOGY

Structure: Striated

NON-SPECTACLE

Indeterminant: Extension
METHODOLOGY

Instances: Anomalies

NON-SPECTACLE

Contingent: Contextual


6 6 Marcel Duchamp and V. Haberstadt, Opposition et Cases Conjugees sont Reconciliees (Brussels: L’Echiquer/Edmond Lancel,1932) 112.


16 16 Somol and Whiting 74.

17 17 Hays, Critical Architecture 16.

18 18 Hays, Critical Architecture 16.

19 19 Somol and Whiting 75.
PROJECTIONS probing the perimeter
“The White House. Home of the world's most powerful individual. Universally recognized symbol of political authority. One of America's greatest tourist attractions. Nerve-center of the world's most complex communications system. The ultimate architectural embodiment of power. Few people realize the extent of the White House, since much of it is below ground or otherwise concealed by landscaping. The White House includes: Six stories and 55,000 square feet of floor space, 132 rooms and 35 bathrooms, 412 doors, 147 windows, twenty-eight fireplaces, eight staircases, three elevators, five full-time chefs, a tennis court, a bowling alley, a movie theater, a jogging track, a swimming pool, and a putting green. It receives about 5,000 visitors a day. The original White House design, by James Hoban, was the result of a competition held in 1792. Over the centuries, presidents have added rooms, facilities and even entire new wings, turning the White House into the labyrinthine complex it is today. What if, instead of in 1792, that competition were to be held today? What would a White House designed in 2008, year of election of the 44th President of the United States, look like? On occasion of the election of the 44th President of the United States of America Storefront for Art and Architecture, in association with Control Group, challenges you to design a new residence for the world's most powerful individual.”
It seemed less of stone than one monolithic, bright stone itself.²

William Seale, *The White House*

*The White House is a strange place.*³

Marlin Fitzwater

The White House is possibly the most recognizable icon in the world. Its fame does not stem from architectural excellence but its sign value. Numerous associations come to mind upon hearing that simple epithet, The White House. While these associations may vary drastically, they all share their dependency on the house’s enduring qualities. Though short, the house’s history has been a continual chain of compelling events. Architectural historian, William Seale has built a career around uncovering this history. He writes:

“The United States Congress, at the nation’s temporary capital in New York, ordered in 1790 that a city be built to house the American government. This new city would, of course, include a hall for Congress and a house for the president. With the Residence Act the architectural history of the White House begins. Not only did the act authorize planning and construction, but it brought the as yet nonexistent building to the attention of many of the minds of the time, raising the controversial and intriguing question of just what sort of house a free people should provide for their chief in state.”⁴

The entirety of the White House’s history since inception is too great to cover within the breadth of this thesis. Rather, a synopsis of those events pertaining the development of the White House as an
object, an image and a spectacle is more advantageous. While each of these changes may have first become noticeable within their respective eras, today they coexist within what is now officially being referred to as the White House Complex. As a product of the Enlightenment, the White House has always been a self-conscious pursuit of grandeur. Even from its beginnings however, the White House was to be compromised. The original design, by the French architect Pierre Charles L’Enfant was discarded after the cellars had been dug, for the more pragmatic design of the Irishman, James Hoban. Then in 1793, it was discovered that the quarry from which all the stone for both the White House and the Capitol Building was to come, might not have enough sandstone to complete Hoban’s design. Reluctantly, George Washington, who had been overseeing the construction of the new governmental city, agreed to scale back the height of the White House, though he insisted on maintaining the plan. With this compromise, Seale writes that, “The White House was now in a sense Americanized.”

This was certainly not the first of the projects compromises. According to L’Enfant’s plan of the District of Columbia, the White House was one node among many within a “double network of orthogonal and radial roads (of the urban forest – i.e., of nature made into an object of civic use) [in which] fifteen nodes of development are created by fifteen public squares, allegories of the fifteen states of the union.” In this plan, the White House was intended to align with the Capitol, each being visible to the other. The siting as it is today comes about as a result of L’Enfant’s design of the house being abandoned after the cellars were excavated. The commissioners were at a loss for how to site Hoban’s significantly smaller design and rather than make the decision themselves, they called upon Washington who
personally drove in the stakes at the North end of L'Enfant’s square. With this move, the White House was elevated to a position significantly above that of other nodes, emerging as an instance. The White House was further isolated by Thomas Jefferson’s orders to enclose five acres surrounding the house with a high stonewall, excluding the other fifty-five acres originally approved for the presidential park.

The openness of this landscape had already been entrenched upon by Washington’s poor architectural judgments, the construction of executive offices at the east and west extremities of the park.

Jefferson, who was elected President in 1800, could not have had more differing views of the White House than Washington. He ordered changes to be made to the house even before he had moved in. Unlike Washington, Jefferson had an eye for architecture, as explained by his appointment of British architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe over James Hoban, to the position of official surveyor. The two worked together on many projects during Jefferson’s presidency, the most interesting of which was Jefferson’s concept for connecting the White House to the two executive buildings. Jefferson’s entire concept is not known but according to Seale,

“He obviously wish to achieve several things: to refine the towering hulking White House by giving it a strong horizontal base; to provide convenient communication between the executive departments through new covered ways liked by the vaulted corridor in the basement of the central house; to remove the domestic services or ‘offices’ – laundry, servants’ quarters, storage rooms – from the plantation-like cluster of shanties in the yard and put the functions in rows of rooms out of sight beneath the new terraces, as he was doing at Monticello; and to break out of the confining
Occupying the center of each wing, there was to be architectural follies such as a triumphal arch. One of these arches was built but collapsed when the formwork was removed, leaving the wing in two pieces, each connected to a separate building. Latrobe later designed a triumphal arch that was successfully constructed southeast of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue, it was torn down in 1859 to allow for expansion of the Treasury building. Since the failure of the first arch, the White House has seen many additions and alterations in the form of wings to the east and to the west, none of which have ever come close to Jefferson’s reticular ambitions. In actuality, the wings of the White House do not even come across in the building’s image.

The White House as it stood up to the 1820s, differed little from many other houses except through scale. This changed drastically during James Monroe’s presidency with the construction of the south portico. The circumstances surrounding Hoban’s design are unclear, as the project was put on hold for eight years. From this addition, the bland white box took on a new individuality and monumentality. Five years later, Hoban began work on the north portico, essentially a thickening of the existing pediment. Following this addition, Andrew Jackson ordered the Pennsylvania Avenue gates to the carriage path passing through the north portico to be widened. “With the re-siting of the gates, the White House can be said to have been complete. The general image – the exterior – that would carry through time was now established.” In the 1860s, the sanctity of this image disallowed the House of Representative’s recommendation for relocating the White House to a more suburban setting. Over the following decades, the Army Corps of Engineers developed an uncanny obsession
with replacing the White House. By the time Grover Cleveland was in office, the engineers had surrendered in acknowledgement that:

“The character it has acquired from historic associations of the men of early days, having been occupied by all our presidents, Washington alone excepted, makes it venerable, and lends additional charms to its classic proportions. Our citizens have long been wont to visit the place, and there to take by the hand such Chief Magistrates as Jefferson, Adams, Jackson, Lincoln, and Grant. They will not consent to surrender their prescriptive privilege to visit the President here for the drowsy chance of finding him not at home after a ride of miles away out of town. He must be accessible to members of Congress, to the people, and to those who go on foot; and we have never had a President who even desired a royal residence, or one so far removed as to be unapproachable save with a coach and four. Our institutions are all thoroughly republican in theory, and it will be agreed they should remain so in practice.”

By the late 1890s many of the public’s residences were grander than the White House. The engineers partially used this as the logic behind more plans for the White House, though now they were focused on adding onto the existing rather than building a new mansion. At this same time, the library was being removed from the Capitol and moved to a magnificent new Library of Congress building. For the White House they were proposing the addition of more wings to accommodate more offices and allow the residence more privacy. All of this activity coincided with the White House’s centennial, the 100th anniversary of when John Adams moved in. However, none of the engineer’s plans ever came to fruition.
When Theodor Roosevelt took office in 1901, he inherited “a complex and often inefficient organization ridden with layers of tradition stacked atop temporary procedures. The stationary, with its unctuous legend, ‘Executive Mansion,’ seemed to symbolize it all.” Symbolic of the changes to come, one of his first actions was to officially rename the residence as the White House, a nickname it had carried for over a hundred years. Within the second year of Roosevelt’s presidency he began discussions with Charles F. McKim, an architect from New York to make quick improvements to White House. McKim suggested that anything less than a complete renovation would satisfy neither the historic building nor the President’s operational needs. “The program for McKim was simple on the surface and in a sense wide open. He was to preserve the historic White House but make it work for the modern presidency.” McKim had five months for construction and a budget of nearly half a million dollars to accomplish this.

Fortunately for McKim, the Roosevelt’s were easy clients. Their primary concern was how the house would accommodate their eight children. The historic preservation of the house, which would seem to be in stark contrast to modern convenience, was of less importance to them. Seale writes:

“To the Roosevelt’s restoration meant keeping the house about the same in appearance. McKim redefined the idea and instead decided that a better approach was to take the house back to what it had been originally – even to what it might have been had George Washington’s designer been as able as Charles McKim. The idea of taking the house back freed McKim from any mandate to preserve what he could class additions. As a concept this
worked well.”

The outcome of McKim’s renovation was a simplified, more monumental White House that managed to remain American. The centerpiece of the White House was now made to stand out from the wings more prominently, a concept referred to by McKim as the “cup and saucer.” The changes McKim made to the White House altered the course of future interventions significantly. No longer was the White House able to change with its changing needs, its objecthood and image were set in the American psyche.

“A sharp, crisp image against the sky, a Georgian mansion of stone unique in its painted whiteness, the house seemed to be at last in architectural focus. Yet the main thing in 1902 was that it was the president’s house, steeped in a century of tradition and now edited structurally to a new clarity of image and high level of efficient function that McKim believed would serve for a hundred years more.”

In a sense, McKim was right, for when a major renovation of the structure was needed some forty-five years later; its appearance remained in tact. During World War II, the house’s stability was surveyed and found to be in horrible condition. President Harry Truman would not accept living in such a house and the renovation began. Those concerned about changes to the icon were assured that

“No work is proposed in scope or detail that will alter the architectural or cultural features or impair the integrity of the building in its role of a National Shrine. In all respects the historic and traditional symbolism of the Nation’s most revered mansion must be preserved to the greatest degree consistent with the use of
modern materials and equipment that will be incorporated into the project.”

The entire building was gutted, leaving only the outer walls’ original stones, though even the grout between these was replaced with modern concrete. The essence of the White House was now officially defined as this stone shell of the main house. Various other pieces of the house were dismantled and sold to museums as well as private collectors and other federal agencies. Kits of smaller items were available for purchase at For Myer. The kits were available at various price points with Kit No. 4 including a small piece of stone, a square nail and a brick for the sum of $1. The White House if only symbolically before, was now quite literally a commodity. The Truman renovation was a rushed project, more concerned with shoring things up than creating something poetic. “The result is a sham return to the original White House, a recognition of its more immediate images and at the same time a denial of its broader integrity as a building.” It is this context, existing very much today as Truman left it, that this thesis explores the White House.
Understanding the White House as object, image and spectacle requires having a greater understanding of how commodification is acting upon the White House in its condition. To begin to understand this complex process, it is beneficial to isolate the primary modes by which commodification works. These modes are “option[s] allowing change in the method of operation of a device.” In researching commodification, it seems it can be distilled to twelve essential modes of operation, each of which, has agents pulling upon it, creating an array of divergent forces. Certainly multiple agents are acting upon each mode and overlaps occur, it is therefore unfeasible to attempt a exhaustive analysis of every agent. Instead, dialectically opposed agents that are also concomitantly architectural will suffice. These couplets create paradoxes within each mode, potentially offering insight as to how commodification might be deflected.

This exercise has had less of a direct impact on this thesis’s design than was intended. However, the clarity it provided into the inner motivations of commodification, make it an invaluable step within the overall thought process. The following pages contain collages that were developed along with the research into commodification’s modes and serve as a summary of the findings. The third image on each page is in reference to the paradoxical relationship of the two agents, a potential point of entry into the process of commodification.
MOVEMENT

Mark a standard by which other things may be measured.
Maneuver skillfully through the market.
Endure through change and time.

Fade with the times.

**TEMPORALITY**

Endure through change and time.

Fade with the times.
Collect in anticipation of greater future profits.

Liquidate for immediate financial gains through trade.
PROJECTIONS

Discard the worthless.
Desire the precious.

MODES

Desire

VALUE

Discard the worthless.
Desire the precious.
Waste is the luxury of inefficiency.

Utilize resources to maximize benefit,
PROJECTIONS

Publicize property for the use of all.

POSSSESSION

Publicize property for the use of all.

Internationsl Star Registry

Privatize

Privatize resource for one’s own benefit.
PROJECTIONS MODES

Idle and accept the existing.
Create something new, something novel.
Control the outcome through power.

Sustain existence.
PERCEPTION

Meditate without the senses.

Stimulate to make more sensorily interesting.

**REPRESENTATION**

Abstract, without reference.

Identity exactly what it is.
CLASSIFICATION

Individualize as something unique.
Familiarize with like things
PROJECTIONS

Express thoughts and position.

MODES

Function as intended.

UTILITY

Express thoughts and position.

Function as intended.
Having seasoned the modern, post-modern, and current eras, it now simultaneously embodies the commodification of each era. Additionally, its programmatic functions continue to expand and at the very least it now operates as a residence, office and monument. This pure object in a vast open space, only visible from two perspectives is now appropriately referred to as The White House Complex. The inclusion of the word ‘complex,’ read as both complicated and systemic, is indicative of the White House’s potential as a field condition. In developing the White House as a field, three strategies have emerged, each using a series of tactics specific to a form of commodity.

As an object, the White House has become a decapitated head of state and so I propose reconnecting this object with the body it serves using more public housing, public housing for the public. The White House’s image is singular and cannot be added to, only reinforced. I propose multiplying its image through the construction of lobbyist pavilions, making explicit the middleman between the people and their president. The highly reflective facades of the pavilions reinforce the White House’s image but not without the side effect of dilution. The spectacle is everywhere; nothing is external to it, nothing but nothingness. Only through void can it be controlled. So too is the tourist’s experience based on void, making a tourist loop an appropriate program for deflecting the spectacle.
CONNECT
PUBLIC HOUSING
REFLECT
SPECTACLE
TOURIST LOOP
Fields differ from objects, images and spectacles in that they are not singular, static conditions; there is never a point at which they are complete. Thus, they can only be designed as a congregation of moments, intentional points of intervention that might foster the emergence of a field condition. These points, like the first brush stroke of a Hans Hofmann painting, alter the context, establishing the basis for future developments.

In addressing the White House as an object, I limited myself to operating outside of the fence in the most public of public spaces. Therefore, it was not possible to literally connect to the White House by penetrating it. Instead, I propose extending the object’s context, the lawn so that many other objects share it, relieving the White House of its autonomy.

The image of the White House has come to mean so much to American’s and thus I propose preserving, at least in part. In constructing a wall along Pennsylvania Avenue and strategically placing apertures within it, portions of the facade are designated permanent and unable to be altered, while allowing the rest of the facade to change with the times.

Most difficult to address is the White House as a spectacle. L’Enfant’s original plan shows Pennsylvania and New York Avenues continuing all the way to the front door of the White House. Today, this idea is even more unrealizable due to security concerns. However, as underpasses, citizens circulate through the site, past the White House’s voids uninterrupted by the spectacle.
4  Seale 1.
5  Seale 17.
7  Seale 46.
8  Seale 77.
9  Seale 146.
10  Seale 165.
11  Seale 167.
12  Seale 171.
13  Seale 201.
14  Seale 240.
15  Seale 281.
BACK MATTER
The following pages are an abridged version of text formerly included within the methodology section of this thesis. The purpose of the research was to explore a range of possible strategies for addressing architecture's relationship with capitalism. Having served its purpose, it is no longer befitting to the methodology section. However, because of its importance in developing the language used throughout this thesis, it is included here as a strategic glossary.
EXACERBATION

I am destroying d’Anconia Copper, consciously, deliberately, by plan and by my own hand. I have to plan it carefully and work as hard as if I were producing a fortune - in order not to let them notice it and stop me, in order not to let them seize the mines until it is too late ... I shall destroy every last bit of it and every last penny of my fortune and every ounce of copper that could feed the looters. I shall not leave it as I found it - I shall leave it as Sebastian d’Anconia found it - then let them try to exist without him or me!¹

Francisco d’Anconia in Ayn Rand’s, Atlas Shrugged

According to Frederic Jameson, the “classical notion of Marx [is] namely that a socialist revolution and a socialist society are not possible until capitalism has somehow exhausted all its possibilities, but also not until capitalism has become a worldwide and global fact.”²

Marcel Duchamp’s Fountain exemplifies such an attempt at exacerbation, with the system of art and its conventions as his target. Duchamp, a board member of the Society of Independent Artists, submitted the work as an intentional provocation to a show that claimed to exhibit any submitted work. The refusal to include his piece in the exhibit, revealed the underlying hypocrisy of the art world. Found objects as art, articulated a critique of the commodification encouraged by mass-produced objects. This was an actual shift within art that spawned conceptual art and many other movements, as opposed to the avant-garde’s semiotic reinterpretations of style.
In media somthing, a critical term today can become a catchy phrase tomorrow, and a cliché (or brand) the next.  

Hal Foster, Design and Crime (and other Diatribes)

The minimalist movement, with its stripping away of superfluous aesthetics, is a “rear-guard” position. Minimalism places architecture’s focus on tectonics, materiality and formal purity. Fundamentally, minimalism reveals a faith in the existence of a singular truth. While this simplification is meant to distill architecture’s essential components, it is in danger of devouring itself like an ouroboros.

One of the more interesting explorations of architectural abstinence was Diller + Scofidio’s Blur Building, a “habitable medium without form or dimension.” Rather than merely affixing an image, the architects created an anomalous experience by enshrouding the building in a dense fog, using water from Lake Neuchatel. Thus, building and site become entangled in their materiality. Visitors approached the pavilion via a long bridge before disappearing into the dense fog and reemerging atop the cloud. Only the changing hues of the visitor’s “brain coats” were visible, as they signaled one’s proximity to a compatible mate. This “white-out effect” was seen as being anti-spectacle. In a subversive critique of globalization and the commodity culture, visitors could purchase a range of imported waters from an interior water bar. Where the project disappoints, is in the excess evidence of its existence. For it to actually critique spectacle, the architects would have needed to control the visual documentation of the project, instead intentionally iconicizing the project, by placing logos of it on as much merchandise as possible. Regardless of whether the project achieves its self-proclaimed status as an anti-spectacle, it is successful in so far as it questions architecture’s relationship to spectacle.
Building, where it became great, was almost always indebted to construction, and construction was almost always the conveyor of its spatial form.\(^5\)

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *With Infinite Slowness Arises the Great Form*

Architectural theorists following Marxism, have called for an autonomous architecture, one that avoids contamination from external influences. They believe that architecture should seek purity in the exploration of form, derived from nothing more than architecture’s internal operations. In addressing the issues of form, a supposed connection to architecture’s historical and theoretical past is maintained; ensuring future generations can do the same.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s a priori idealism sought to isolate architecture from the indiscriminate culture of the masses. The stripped down, industrial aesthetic of his buildings removed culturally rooted ornament, relying on the purity of form as its symbolism. These singular forms along with their insulating plazas, created the canonical modernist object. Robert Venturi claims the success of Mies is dependent upon this choice to ignore solving all of the project’s problems. Contrary to the Modernist doctrine, “form follows function”, the creation of autonomous form preceded the pragmatic requirements of the buildings. As Kenneth Frampton has noted:

“Mies’s typical suppression of all that was programmatically incompatible with the monumental manifested itself most strikingly at Crown Hall, where the department of industrial design was banished to the basement to rest, literally and symbolically, beneath the grandeur of the department of architecture.”\(^6\)
Rather than condemn the inescapable image, more prevalent than ever, we appeal to generate multiple and surprising after-images by strengthening the image’s logics of structure, spatiality, and vision.\textsuperscript{7}

Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, \textit{After-Image}

In a society where culture has merged with economy, every aspect of life has become infiltrated by design as we speak of designer surgery, designer drugs, designer children, designer museums and designer homes.\textsuperscript{8} In his book, \textit{Design and Crime (and Other Diatribes)}, Hal Foster describes this as the contemporary version of art nouveau’s gesamtkunstwerk or “total work.” Some architects have taken advantage of architecture’s unprecedented media attention, using this opportunity to branch into areas of design outside of architecture. Designers, such as Philippe Stark have become designer brands by focusing on products for mass consumption rather than expensive one-offs. He has been commissioned to design everything from clothing to cars to buildings and the plumbing fixtures within them. If one so desired, they could ride their Philippe Stark designed motorcycle to their Philippe Stark designed house, full of Philippe Stark furniture and eat food from Philippe Stark designed packaging, using their Philippe Stark designed utensils. If the stress of everyday life becomes overwhelming, take they could take a cruise on their yacht designed by Philippe Stark. As a reminder of whose lifestyle this is, all of these products prominently bear the Philippe Stark logo. All is well though; because he has declared everything he ever designed as unnecessary. In an interview he recently said, “I will definitely give up in two years’ time. I want to do something else, but I don’t know what yet. I want to find a new way of expressing myself…design is a dreadful form of expression.”
How about an architecture of no communication? In other words, that you realize, there ain’t nothing to read, just give up and let it be.⁹

Peter Eisenman, The New Subjectivity Lecture at the University of Cincinnati

In 1999, Peter Eisenman won the competition to design The City of Culture of Galicia in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, a city known for its cathedral and the one-thousand year old pilgrimage made there to honor St. James. A year later, the city became one of the European Union’s Capitols of Culture and construction of the 122 million euro project began. It is interesting to note that, like its neighbor the Guggenheim Bilbao (just 185 miles away), the institution did not actually have an art collection. The client, according to Eisenman, “wanted an alternative to the figural object of Gehry, so we gave them a landscape—a project totally other than Bilbao.”¹⁰ The design is a manipulation of the medieval and contemporary grids, resulting in “a curving surface that is neither figure nor ground but both a figured ground and a figured figure that supersedes the figure-ground urbanism of the old city.”¹¹

This project is significant as it was perhaps, Eisenman’s last attempt at designing a building that can be read. Starting with the Pompei Stazione Santuario project, his work has become “post-indexical.” While it continues to contain codes, they are intentionally convoluted to the point of illegibility. This encryption ensures the buildings can only be appreciated for what they are and nothing more. Eisenman has compared this approach to that of the German filmmaker, Michael Haneke. Eisenman’s attempt to prevent the decoding of his architecture seems to be a resignation of sorts, a silent acknowledgement of his failed attempts to create an autonomous architecture.
Maybe some of our most interesting engagements are uncritical, emphatic engagements, which deal with the sometimes insane difficulty of an architectural project to deal with the incredible accumulation of economic, cultural, political but also logistical issues.\textsuperscript{12}

Rem Koolhaas

Aaron Betsky’s book, \textit{False Flat: Why Dutch Design is So Good}, stands as confirmation the growing interest in Dutch design. While the star power of Rem Koolhaas may have instigated much of the initial interest, the phenomenon has since developed into a full-scale infatuation with Dutch architectural practices with firms such as MVRDV, Neutelings Riedijk, UN Studio and West 8 all receiving many international commissions. The Dutch have a long tradition of being attentive toward architecture and in 1992, after a few decades of mediocre architecture, the Parliament signed a policy to make a more conscious attempt at improving the quality of their architecture.\textsuperscript{13} Increasing the quality of architecture meant providing more social space and greater attention to the city’s architecture as a whole.

This recent interest in Dutch architects is in part due to the emphasis the Dutch place realism, something that has been in question by much of architecture's critical avant-garde. This is apparent in the work of MVRDV whose “creativity is expressed not as the invention of new forms, but as the reformulation of existing constraints.”\textsuperscript{14} In a profession with an increasing number of constraints, the rise of “Neo-Pragmatism” has offered guidance through a pluralistic society, as it “takes apart convention and imposes a hard rule of logic rather than accepting precedent and known formula.”\textsuperscript{15} In the United States, Stan Allen has promoted an American Pragmatism, “that looks for verification not in abstract universals, but in concrete things and their consequences in the world.”\textsuperscript{16}
Architecture drawn as though it were already built - architecture built as though it had never been drawn.17

Lebbeus Woods, War and Architecture

Often cited as the “avant-garde of the avant-garde”, Lebbeus Woods refers to his work as “experimental architecture”. It is an intentional exploration of architecture’s potential not through constructed buildings, but via drawings, models and more recently installations. The limitations imposed by clients seeking a specific typology of architecture and the stylistic pressures of the architectural media are not a hindrance for Woods. Nor is his interest in solving the ideological games of the most contemporaneous theorist. Paper architecture allows Woods the freedom to hypothesize new thought processes and discover new paths of exploration. Unlike other paper architects turned starchitects, Woods has transgressed architectural ideologies and the market’s appropriation, by remaining in the realm of ideas.

His 2002 exhibition at the Cooper Union, titled The Storm, was a complex installation of architectonic elements along with drawings and models. Woods describes The Storm as “not a single vector, but a collection, an accumulation of similar vectors. It is a community of vectors, unexpectedly acting in concert.”18

Within this performance, tension is the true agent. The hundreds of individual metal pipes mean little on their own but as a tensioned construction, they create a complex system in which every piece is contingent upon the others. The concept of a spatial field offers Woods an alternative to architecture’s preoccupation with form over the past few decades and signals a re-centering of architecture on space. After all, form is subservient to space, as the object must exist in a presupposed spatial condition.
Architecture is unavoidably a form of intervention. Ironically, its strength might arise from its resistance to intervention...

FAT, *Contaminating Contemplation*

When the city of Bourdeaux asked Lacaton & Vassal to make embellishments to a small park, Place Leon Aucoc, the architects’ first spent a lot of time observing the park’s use and then gathered local residents’ thoughts on the park. They discovered that park did not need redesigned, however their proposal of doing nothing was not received well by the city and they threatened to hire another firm. Therefore, the design problem became finding a means of intervention without changing the character of the park. Lacaton & Vassal’s solution: better maintenance and replace the existing gravel.

Of equal interest is Marcel Duchamp’s exodus from art. Despite Duchamp’s many attempts to critique the system of art, his work was misunderstood and may have actually further degraded art. As the art world became increasingly atrophied, he stopped professionally producing art, opting instead for a career as a professional chess player in New York. Duchamp preferred chess, as it “has all the beauty of art - and much more. It cannot be commercialized. Chess is much purer than art in its social position.” In 1932, he and Vitally Halberstadt co-authored *l’Opposition et les Cases Conjugees sont Reconciliees*, a book entirely about “a rather obscure situation in endgame strategy where heterodox opposition, a term coined by the authors, takes priority over orthodox opposition.” In Jack Burnham’s book, *Great Western Salt Works*, he hypothesizes that “if Duchamp’s Ready-Mades define many of the closing moves for the game of art, then it is quite probable that his chess book is a continuation of the same theory.” Thus, non-action is an indirect action that may lead to more advantageous results than direct action.
If you have a statue in the city centre you could go past it every day on your way to school and never even notice it, right. But as soon as someone puts a traffic cone on its head, you’ve made your own sculpture.

Banksy, in *The Independent*

The work of architect turned artist, Gordon Matta-Clark explored the concept of detournement in architectural ways. In *Splitting*, he took an existing house and made a cut through the middle of it. Then he removed a portion of the foundation, opening up the split between building halves. This intervention in the house denied its ability to be used in its intended way, as a residence. The building was demolished after Matta-Clark was done documenting with a range of media. This use of cutting buildings formed a large part of Matta-Clark’s oeuvre, making him an idol for disenchanted architects. Clark’s *Fake Estates* project spoke to the American dream of owning property, enlarging his exploration of detournement to the scale of the city. In the 1970s, he purchased a number of leftover spaces from in Queens for less than $100 a piece. These scraps of land were essentially unusable leftovers and in some cases even inaccessible. Matta-Clark began to collect documentation for all of his sites, such as deeds but died in 1978 before he was able to actually use the sites. Upon his death, ownership of the land returned to the city.
7. Berkel and Bos 45.
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228 Digital collage by Adam Koogler, original photograph taken by Will Yokel
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289 Digital collage by Adam Koogler, original photograph taken by Will Yokel
290 Digital collage by Adam Koogler, original photograph taken by Will Yokel
291 Digital collage by Adam Koogler, original photograph taken by Will Yokel
292-293 Photographs taken and merged by Adam Koogler