I, Maryam Fotouhi, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Architecture in Architecture.

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ABSTRACT

An Encounter with Janet Laurence: Towards an Affective Architecture

This study uses the Deleuzian understanding of a body to rethink contemporary architecture beyond building(s) and to reimagine architectural practice as a creative, dynamic and performative process. The Deleuzian body is not necessarily a human body, but a corporeal intensity, capable of metamorphosis, transformation, and becoming. For Deleuze, bodies have the ability to extend beyond the boundaries that are designed to contain them, such as science, medicine, or the justice system, which have always understood the body as a privileged object of investigation or a static site through which institutional power can be exercised. Drawing on this expanded understanding of the body, I will address modes of architectural thinking that are not constrained by traditional or static notions of architectural space, but that dynamically engage with life, generating connections, affects and intensities. In particular, this thesis will explore these themes through a close analysis of a 2006 project by the Australian artist Janet Laurence, entitled Water Veil, wherein the artist uses the body to create a time-space of investigation and enact an expressive and performative architectural process.

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In dedication to My Father:
My biggest supporter who never let me give up

This work is also dedicated to my advisor, Dr. Adrian Lisa Parr, without whom this journey would have been impossible.

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An Encounter with Janet Laurence: Towards an Affective Architecture

Born in 1947 in Sydney, Janet Laurence is one of Australia’s most established contemporary artists. She has exhibited widely in Australia and overseas since the 1980s. Her work addresses the concepts of time, body, memory, environment, and alchemy. Actively involved within the world of contemporary art and architecture for more than thirty years, Laurence has created work that extends from the gallery space into the urban environment and engages with the natural world. Working in mixed media, installation, and ephemeral architecture, she is most well known for her site-specific projects and her collaborations with globally renowned architectural firms, such as Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects.

Laurence has completed many site-specific projects that have been included in major national and international exhibitions. Following her solo exhibition in 1991 at the Seibu Gallery in Tokyo, Laurence was awarded an Australia Council studio residency in Tokyo in 1998, and she has since shown regularly in solo and group exhibitions in Tokyo and Nagoya. She has been invited to create permanent installations, including Elixir (2005) in the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial in Japan, which is a glass botanical environment within a traditional storage house of dark wood that evokes an old apothecary or a tiny botanical museum. Laurence’s Vanishing (2009)—a video installation that played at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, and at the Berlin art forum—was filmed during the artist’s three-month residency at Taronga Zoo in Sydney. Waiting, exhibited in the 2010 Sydney Biennale, is a transparent mesh structure filled
with plants that echoes both a botanical greenhouse and a scientific vitrine. It functions as a medicinal garden that activates processes of “rejuvenation”\textsuperscript{1}. These pieces each explicitly engage with the fragility of the natural world and explore complex environmental issues, such as the interdependence of species in different life systems.

Collaborating with architects, landscape architects, and environmental scientists, Laurence is likewise renowned for her public commissions and architectural collaborations. Among the earliest of these projects is 49 Veils (1998), an award-winning window for the Central Synagogue, Sydney, which was completed in collaboration with architect Jisuk Han. Another of Laurence’s projects, Veiling Space (2001), is located in the Uniting Church of Sydney. Constructed from a translucent material that is suspended within the interior space of the church, it marks one of her earliest explorations of the possibilities for ephemeral architecture. She has continued to complete significant national and international projects, including the internationally acclaimed The Australian War Memorial (2003) in Hyde Park, London, which was completed in collaboration with Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects. This project is a multilayered wall that rises from the landscape and weaves together the names of the birth places and places of death\textsuperscript{2} of Australian soldiers who were killed during the two world wars. A more recent project, Water Veil (2006), is situated in the CH2 Building of the Melbourne City Council. It is a wall that has been transformed into a transparent atmospheric membrane that expresses and

\textsuperscript{1} Adrian Parr in conversation with the author, in Parr’s DAAP Lecture Series, Cincinnati, OH, Fall 2010.
\textsuperscript{2} Adrian Parr and Michael Zaretsky, eds., New Directions in Sustainable Design (New York: Routledge, 2011), 16.
reveals the hydrology processes involved in the black water recycling treatment used in CH2.³

In each of these projects, Laurence creates architecture that moves beyond simply the containment of space. In her view, architecture exists as a process. She works within an architectural time-space that understands architecture as performative, dynamic, and deeply engaged with the processes and events of other life systems. In her work, she introduces new modes of architectural experience through an affective architectural process that interacts with the environment. These affective architectural processes, in turn, are grounded in her holistic view of nature.

In Laurence’s view, nature is inseparable from human life. In other words, we are entities that are interrelated and interconnected with a world that consists of many different kinds of life.⁴ Through her work, Laurence reveals the interconnectivity of humanity and larger dynamic life systems, and she sets out to awaken the viewer’s sense of their own interconnectivity within the life-world. This awareness results in an understanding of how human beings are affected by the world and how they, in turn, affect the world. By incorporating ideas of nature, science, memory, alchemy, and corporeality, Laurence illustrates the co-existence of natural and built environments through architectural time-

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³ In addition to her wide-ranging creative practice, Laurence is currently working on a doctorate at RMIT in ephemeral architecture, wherein she is researching the relationship between architecture and natural processes.
space. In her interview with Adrian Parr, Laurence describes these “elemental”\(^5\) and “fugitive”\(^6\) spaces in the following manner:

Through a language of veiling, transparency, and translucency I set out to create enmeshed environments that express ephemerality. I am interested in how spaces can be slowed down, the pace and the rhythm of porosity and fluidity and how these processes inform environments. I prefer not to think in terms of boundaries; rather membranes.\(^7\)

Laurence is interested in a progressive architectural process wherein the work of architecture becomes a time-space environment. In this view, architecture is not separate from the life-world. This means that a work of architecture is no longer a mere object of thought; rather, it functions as a zone of potentiality. By drawing on connections with other life systems, architecture can evoke processes that are expressive, chaotic, and indeterminate. This approach allows for an endless unraveling of new, open-ended encounters, and generating those encounters becomes a function of the work. The work is never fully completed. It can continually be (re)inhabited and reinvested, and it is this potential for different inhabitations that opens architecture up to an outside. This is an architecture that, as Elizabeth Grosz explains it in *Architecture from Outside*, understands “the capacity of walls, boxes, windows, and corners to function in more than one way, to serve not only present functions but others as well.”\(^8\)

Through the creation of a slow space, Laurence attempts to capture the rhythm of this transformative movement, inviting us to rethink architecture beyond building(s). Here,

\(^5\) Ibid., 14.
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Elizabeth Grosz. *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2001), 89.
slow space is best understood, as Grosz describes it, as “a position, a relation, a place related to other places but with no place of its own: a position of the in-between?” Thus, the slow space evokes the space of becoming, metamorphosis, and movement. This thesis expands on some of the strategies that Laurence employs to create slow space, or what she might call a space of hesitation, focusing in particular on *Water Veil* (2009), wherein the body itself becomes an architectural time-space.

*Water Veil* is a 2006 project by Janet Laurence, wherein the artist uses the body to create a time-space of investigation and enact an expressive and performative architectural process. Located in the recently constructed Melbourne Council building (CH2), this project rethinks contemporary architecture beyond the containment of space.

In the seventeenth century, René Descartes (1596–1650) introduced a conception of space that is one of pure mathematics and geometry. Cartesian space consists of any finite number of dimensions, in which points are designated by coordinates (one for each dimension) and the distance between two points is given by a distance formula. Since that time, Western thought has been dominated by an understanding of space that models the world through pure geometry. This understanding of space originated from Descartes’ philosophical and mathematical justification for comprehending the world in terms of numbers. Indeed, the principle ontological determination of the world for Descartes is one that can be extended in three dimensions. These dimensions, in turn, can be calculated mathematically, through geometry. For Descartes, numbers are like symbols that can represent the world in mathematical terms, as something that can be calculated. In Cartesian space, every point within the space can be equated and calculated.

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9 Ibid., 91.
mathematically. Such an understanding of space originated from Descartes’ dualistic separation of body and mind and his understanding of mind, or cognition, as holding priority over the body. Ultimately, Descartes understands the material world as an extension of mind. This is an understanding of the world that is purely analytical and rational, and for much of the history of Western thought, it resulted in a limited understanding of the material experience of space.

However, this view has been challenged in the past century, mostly through the works of continental philosophers, such as Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Their understanding of space is not limited to Cartesian space; rather, they articulate an understanding of being-in-the world, in which the human mind is embedded in lived experience. This view is one in which space directly engages with notions of time, body, emotion, and memory and can be experienced only through the lens of a phenomenological subject who is embedded in the world and experiences it. French poststructuralist philosophers, among them Gilles Deleuze, have drawn on and elaborated these ideas. Deleuze is interested in the notion of time-space, understood as a zone of pure difference and creativity. In such an account, difference is best understood as difference in and of itself; that is, neither defined though a black and white binary opposition. As Cliff Stagoll describes it in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, difference is understood as “an object of representation in relation to some identity.”\(^\text{10}\) The latter understanding of difference requires an external relation between things, and it draws distinctions and establishes oppositions, creating groupings and separations. In contrast with these understandings of

difference, Deleuze, in exploring the concept of difference in itself, is interested in an ontology of difference. As Deleuze Proposes in *Difference and Repetition*,

To think difference in itself independently of the forms of representation which reduce it to the Same, and the relation of different to different independently of those forms which makes them pass through the negative.\(^1\)

This concept of difference celebrates specificity and singularity. As Adrian Parr describes in *The Deleuze Dictionary*,

The question of ‘life’, namely the force that persists over time and the changes that ensue, is addressed by Deleuze as an experimental, spontaneous, and open process of transformation. As it was articulated in *Difference and Repetition*, evolution is constructed as a process of repetition that is inherently creative: it is productive of difference.\(^2\)

This is a concept of difference in itself and of itself, and it thus is a process of becoming. It is this movement, differentiation, and transformation of life that Deleuze is interested in. In his words, “The task of life is to make all these repetitions coexist in a space in which difference is distributed.”\(^3\) As Parr explains “it is the force of life that persists, thus, through change, the vitality of life and difference are affirmed.”\(^4\) It is this notion of difference that allows for the creative transformation of life and which works as “a system of involution where transversal movements engage material forces and affects.”\(^5\) Under such an account, a Deleuzian time-space is one of transformation and becoming that is reducible neither to Cartesian space, which originates in a binary opposition between mind and matter, not to the space that is experienced by the phenomenological subject, which is

\(^3\) Deleuze. *Difference and Repetition*, x.
\(^5\) Ibid.
characterized by the mutual transformation of subjects and objects. This Deleuzian understanding of space is not necessarily spatio-temporal; it is what Deleuze calls “virtual.” In *Architecture from the Outside*, Elizabeth Grosz describes the virtual, in the sense that Deleuze uses it, as follows:

The virtual is the space of emergence of the new, the unthought, the unrealized, which at every moment loads the presence of the present with supplementary, redoubling a world through parallel universes, universes that might have been.  

This time-space is, paradoxically, neither spatial nor temporal but, rather, is an affective status, a series of enabling and transforming potentialities within an encounter that might become actual. Grosz explains such a space as:

A hesitation or pause within the expected; thought may actively function to passively interrupt habit and expectation by allowing something already there in the series, in the subject or object, to become. Thought, life, is that space outside the actual which is filled with virtualities, movements, trajectories that need release. It is what a body is capable of doing without necessity and without being captured by what it habitually does, a sea of (possible) desires and machines waiting their chance, their moment of actualization.

Such a conceptualization of the space of the in-between can enhance contemporary architecture by allowing it to be considered as beyond the containment of a space (or spaces) and instead conceptualized as an affective entity. This is architecture as a transformative space and “as a mode of [re]production and enhancement of the real.”

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16 Grosz. *Architecture from the Outside*, 78.
17 Ibid., 70.
18 Ibid., 90.
At this point, it is helpful, by way of example, to return to Laurence once more and her use of affective change to generate slow space. Her work *Water Veil* is a glass membrane that is located behind the concierge desk in the CH2 ground floor reception area. The glass wall is a site for a permanent site-specific project that evolved through a project-specific research and design collaboration with CH2 architects (VIC Architect City of Melbourne and DesignInc, Melbourne). The city of Melbourne intended CH2, which opened in August 2006, to exemplify the best of high-performance, sustainable design and to serve as a model for other Australian cities.\(^{19}\) CH2 saves 70% of the amount of water used in a regular office building by purifying sewage and using it internally in the building for cooling, irrigation and the flushing of the toilets.\(^{20}\) *Water Veil* creates a transparent atmospheric membrane that expresses and reveals this hydrological process and, in particular, the process of transformation of black water that is used in CH2. *Water Veil* is an expression of water purification. Laurence explains, “It echoes the black water treatment within the building.”\(^{21}\)

From this part to the end I almost see everything to be necessary to be said, however there are many repetitive sentences also that when read it loud it looks kind of problematic. *Water Veil* is built out of a series of vertical overlapping glass panels. Over these are placed hanging or standing glass panels inscribed with metallic texts of chemical symbols, indicating the elements removed in the black water treatment. These panels carry a series of fluids that appear to be water. These overlay the chemical symbols inscribed on the white

glass panels beneath. Glass is an expression of the fluidity and transparency of water and its purification. Black water treatment is usually a hidden process. However, in this work, this process has been expressed through the inscription of the chemical symbols on the body of the wall, revealed through the use of the transparent veil of the glass membranes, and interpreted as a lived medium. Thus, Water Veil engages the viewer playfully and poetically, while connecting and sensitizing the viewer to and informing them of the hidden water purification processes within the building. Janet Laurence describes Water Veil as:

> Utilizing the double-storey height of the window, enhancing a vertical sensation and enabling a sense of flow and spilling of fluids, the wall is made up of layers of veils of vertical glass panels, of crystal clear, star-fired glass to create a whiteness and difference from the surrounding architectural green-tinted float glass. The glass elements are screen-printed, minimally imaging vertical laboratory glass vessels.²²

Water Veil changes our conception of a wall and re-conceptualizes the conventional definition of a wall as a solid divider. Laurence’s wall connects, rather than divides, and it has corporeal presence. Dynamic, shifting, and sensually engaging, the wall invites the viewer to encounter it as another living body with the capacity to affect and be affected. In other words, Laurence re-conceptualizes the static-function of a wall, presenting in its place an intensive and performative architectural space. In *Deleuze and Memorial Culture*, Adrian Parr makes a similar point in her discussion of the wall of Maya Lin’s *Vietnam Veteran War Memorial*. The memorial, situated in Washington, D.C., is a “500-foot

²² Ibid.
wedge-shaped black granite wall, polished to form a mirror-like surface.”\textsuperscript{23} Parr describes the wall in the following manner:

Using the architectural element of the wall that commonly produces a sense of inside and outside, division and exclusion, protection and safety, Lin combines this with a variety of other architectural elements. It is at once a wall (enclosing structure) and a window (an opening) as the polished granite surface emits reflections that expose the viewer to spaces beyond the wall itself, such as the surrounding trees and lawn reflected in its surface.\textsuperscript{24}

The memorial seeps beyond the boundaries and conventions that attempt to contain it. Lin reconfigures the function of the wall in a way that goes beyond its everyday context and typical functions. The memorial, as Parr describes it, is “a wall-becoming-path” that invites the viewer to engage with the wall and its surroundings by unraveling the invisible circular forces within the site and thus creating a circular motion over the site,

We move ten-feet below the earth’s surface and slowly rise again; we follow our own reflection as it connects with the reflections of the park and the names of the dead and missing. A wall-becoming-window presents itself as another world reflected in the surface of polished granite; a wall that we cannot penetrate but from which we glimpse the slippery images of the world around us in reflected form. Engaging the temporality of the journey the memorial decodes the functional definition of the wall-corner (termination of a surface and the creation of a space); inverting the solid connection between a vertical and horizontal line (this being the dominant connection traditional monuments articulate) it creates a circular tapestry instead of a V-shaped structure. The circle connects the surrounding field producing an invisible path through the grass as we follow the time-line off into the distance. The chronological listing of the dead and

\textsuperscript{23} Adrian Parr. \textit{Deleuze and Memorial Culture: Desire, Singular Memory and the Politics of Trauma} (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 56.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 65.
missing move the visitor through time up one path at which point they cross the lawn to chronologically meet up with the list of names at the end of the wall on the opposite side.\textsuperscript{25}

In this sense, the function of the memorial is not reduced to signifying the past as a fixed part of history or conveying clearly defined meanings or rigid interpretations; rather, the wall is a living medium that connects its own body with other bodies, thus “engaging the past”\textsuperscript{26} with the future, the unrealized, and the indeterminate and affirmative forces of life that resist any predetermined interpretations and representations. Through employing architectural elements, “in unconventional ways [the wall] infuses an affective intensity.”\textsuperscript{27}

Along similar lines, Deleuze writes in \textit{Francis Bacon: The Logic of sensation},

When the visual sensation confronts the invisible force that conditions it, it releases a force that is capable of vanquishing the invisible force, or even befriending it. Life screams at death, but death is no longer this all-too-visible thing that makes us faint; it is this invisible force that life detects, flushes out, and makes visible through the scream.\textsuperscript{28}

It is this force of life that resists death and invokes the “power of the future.” In her reading of Deleuze in \textit{Chaos, Territory, Art}, Grosz argues that what all arts might share is “the aim of capturing the force of time.”\textsuperscript{29} The goal of art, in this understanding, is to open up sensation to the force of the future and to render time as something capable of being experienced through the senses. The object is not to control or understand duration or the chronological passage of time, which indeed cannot be controlled; instead, it is to live

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., 70.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 65.
\textsuperscript{29}Elizabeth Grosz. \textit{Chaos, Territory, Art}. (New York: Colombia University Press, 2008), 86.
within time as fully as one can, “even if it means becoming different.”\textsuperscript{30} As Deleuze emphasizes, “to render Time sensible is itself the task of [art], it is a task beyond all measure or cadence.”\textsuperscript{31} Grosz expands on this, saying that “it is this goal that makes art itself eternal, always seeking a way to render time sensational, to make time resonate sensibly, for no art can freeze time or transform its forces except through the invention of new techniques, new forces and energies.”\textsuperscript{32} The Vietnam memorial, as Parr explains it, puts everyday architectural elements to work in order to create a “combination that generates an amplified milieu of sensation in connection with the body.”\textsuperscript{33} Parr quotes from one visitor’s description of visiting this memorial, who remarked that “there is an energy there that is unreal.”\textsuperscript{34} It is through such an affective account that “the memorial presents the sensible affect of trauma without situating it in a representative narrative.”\textsuperscript{35}

Laurence’s \textit{Water Veil} employs similar architectural techniques to achieve similar goals. The wall is made up of layers of vertical glass panels and fluid spills across the vertical glass membranes. This combination creates a dramatic, blurring effect and makes the wall seem to be in perpetual flux, challenging the clear distinction between outside and inside. Ultimately, this allows the real to expand itself in order to generate itself “anew,” and it undermines the conventional dualistic understanding of a contained space defined by an inside and an outside. For Laurence, the wall is an expressive entity that poses different possibilities within the urban fabric. In this instance, the layered veils of vertical glass panels that make up the wall are transformed into a transparent membrane that is connected

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 87.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Parr. \textit{Deleuze and Memorial Culture}, 71.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., 67.
to and affected by its context, as it engages with the surrounding urban life. In so doing, *Water Veil* is re-inventing and (re)framing the quasi monumental function of a wall.

A wall, as traditionally understood, is a fixed entity that serves the purpose of dividing two spaces from each other. Laurence’s wall, however, connects the outside and the inside and unites public and private spaces through the use of sheer glass. Through its transparency and reflectivity, the sheer glass problematizes the dichotomy of outside-inside, public-private, and external-internal. In other words, Laurence re-conceptualizes the function of a wall, and presents in its place a wall that articulates intensive in-between spaces. The wall thus becomes a means to generate affects and sensations.

In her work, Laurence “prefers not to think of boundaries; rather membranes.” That is to say, her understanding of the world is not a dualistic one that thinks in terms of dichotomies, such as that which defines an internal world in opposition to the external world. Instead, she understands the world as layered, interconnected, and interrelated. Thus, the wall is suggestive of a membrane, or what Laurence terms a “veil.” Glass also acts as an expression of the veil and echoes the title of the piece. The word “veil” is incorporated into the titles of many of Laurence’s works, yet she changes our conception of the traditional veil. In her works, the veil is no longer a tool for hiding something, but rather it reveals the inseparability of inside and outside. It vacillates between interiority and exteriority and between the invisible and the visible. This use of the veil adds a mysterious and dramatic effect to the work. The quality of the veil, in this sense, is “to transform the window into a membranous fluid and [smooth] space; a space of seemingly non-fixity.

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within the urban context from the public space outside creates a dramatic effect.” Thus, glass becomes a transformative materiality that allows the space of the new wall to evoke a sense of fluidity. Laurence asserts that “This work bleeds the boundary between the inside and the outside of the building’s skin. It can be viewed from both within the building, and the public space outside. One sees through it and reflects into it in varying light.”

In a very explicit and literal way, by turning the wall into a veil that reveals the processes of water purification, the wall unveils and intensifies bodily affects. The wall foregrounds the transformation and purification of the black water within the building, which is typically an invisible process, much like the many chemical processes within the body. The purification of water resembles a corporeal system through the transformation of its material and elemental components, and this also reinforces the corporeal quality of the work.

Drawing on the Deleuzian understanding of the body, I understand corporeal schema as modes and series of linkages, assemblages, and associations that a body makes with its own elements and parts and with other bodies to create affects, intensities and sensations. This is a concept of the body and its affects that is not reduced to a psychoanalytic or phenomenological account of the body as “it is experienced, rendered meaningful, enmeshed in system of significations.” In her book *Volatile Bodies: Toward A Corporeal Feminism* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis University Press, 1994), 116.
a Corporeal Feminism, Elizabeth Grosz describes such an understanding of the body, extrapolating on Deleuze’s ideas, in the following manner,

…body as a social object, as a text to be marked, traced, written upon by various regimes of institutional, (discursive and nondiscursive) power, as a series of linkages (or possibly activities) which form superficial or provisional connections with other objects and processes, and as a receptive surface on which the body’s boundaries and various parts or zones are constituted, always in conjunction and through linkages with other surfaces and planes.⁴⁰

Such a corporeal schema is affirmative and affective. In contrast with a psychoanalytic definition of corporeal matter as originating from lack, defined by its striving for an external object (the expression of a desire to occupy the position of the symbolic father)⁴¹, and one that “has neither memory nor dynamic force of its own, certainly none outside of symbolic that is ruled by lack and negativity,”⁴² a Deleuzian body evokes “the empowering force of affirmative passions,”⁴³ and engages with the creative force of life. It thus performs through affections, conjunctions, and associations. Grosz briefly illustrates such a body in the following examples,

Oral sexuality can be retranscribed in corporeal terms. Instead of describing the oral derive in terms of what it feels like, as an endogenously originating psychical representation striving for an external, absent, or lost object (fantasmatic and ultimately impossible object of desire), orality can be understood in terms of what it does: creating linkages with other surfaces, other planes, other objects or assemblages. The child’s lips, for example, form connections (or in

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⁴⁰ Ibid.
⁴¹ Ibid.
⁴³ Ibid., 66.
Deleuzian terms, machines, assemblages) with the breast or bottle, possibly accompanied by the hand in conjunction with an ear, each system in perpetual motion and in mutual interrelation.\textsuperscript{44}

Thus, corporeal matter is complex and does not simply function through a single point, goal or term. It can traverse and connect different potentials. It travels from one assemblage to another\textsuperscript{45}, changes, transforms, and recreates itself, and thus it is never fully complete. This is a corporeality that may resist fixed meanings, codes and symbols. Such an extended understanding of corporeal matter provokes one to rethink bodies beyond the psychoanalytic model of lack, the phenomenological coding\textsuperscript{46} of corporeal matter through subject oriented meanings and meaningfulness, and the Cartesian dualistic model of mind versus body. Building on the transformability and complexity of corporeality, Grosz reconfigures the corporeal schema through the metaphor of an Môbius strip, wherein the body and mind are intertwined and “functional alongside of and with the subject’s body.”\textsuperscript{47}

As Grosz explains it,

Instead of seeing the obsessional person’s desire for impenetrability as a yearning for what is absent and lost (a staving off the castration thread and the expression of the desire to occupy the position of the symbolic father) the obsessional person’s toes can be seen to make mechanic connections with sand, with rocks, with grass, such that these “external objects” can no longer be considered either an internalized part of the subject or an expelled external residue of the subject; rather they exist on the same level as the subject’s body parts (in this case feet), neither inside or outside but functional alongside of and with subject’s body.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{44} Grosz, \textit{Volatile Bodies}, 116.
\textsuperscript{46} Grosz, \textit{Volatile Bodies}, 117.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 116.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
This Môbius strip both creates and vacillates between inside and outside and inner and outer experience. It is as if the interior is becoming the exterior and the exterior is becoming the interior, and this enfolding process is one that produces linkages, connections, change and difference. As a result of such interactions and connections, corporeal schema (re)produce and (re)create bodies as they connect with (outside) social, political, medical, and pedagogical planes and (inside) phenomenological and psychoanalytic frameworks. Thus, difference and intensities and affects are produced. It is this mobility of corporeal schema that Deleuze and Guattari (drawing from their reading of Spinoza) are interested in tracing through what they might call “a longitude and a latitude.” In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they explore their concept of the body as the

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\text{Sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude); the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude). Nothing but affects and local movements, differential speeds}^{51}
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According to Deleuze, bodies are “physical intensities.” They are intensive capacities whose force allows for change and which are capable of creating life “anew.” This kind of physicality is specific to bodies, understood as a combination of muscles, fluids, energy, and the forces of memory and habit. The unpredictability of corporeal materiality intensifies a bodies’ power of being affected and affective in the world and allows them to both undergo and engender change and transformation. It is through the use of such an

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49 Ibid.,117.
51 Ibid.
53 Adrian Parr in conversation with the author, Cincinnati, OH, Fall 2010.
account of corporeality as an affective process that Laurence carefully chooses the materials of this project to allegorize the non-containment of the physical aspects of the body. Thus her use of these materials (such as water and glass) is based on an understanding of bodies as uncontainable physicality and transformative materiality. That is to say, bodies have the ability to extend beyond the boundaries that are designed to contain them, such as science, medicine, or the justice system, which have always understood the body as a privileged object of investigation or a static site on which and through which institutional power can be exercised. Through their systems of knowledge production, these institutions have sought to reduce the body to a static and isolated entity.

As Foucault writes in *Discipline and Punish,*

> …the body is directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs…the body is invested with relations of power and domination.\(^54\)

Each of these disciplines acknowledge the body as an “object of thought” within the boundaries of the discipline, ignoring that bodies are complex and multifaceted entities and that they are productive—affecting and affective—sites of remembrance, life and transformation.

*Water Veil* transforms the materials that compose it, acting upon, transforming, and purifying the black water. This whole process is visualized in “the actual space of the wall [that] expresses a slight ambiguity, a slight breathing sense through the layering and

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changing light and reflection.”55 The body of the wall becomes a living medium. It creates an ephemeral space that enacts an architectural process that goes far beyond the contained physicality of traditional understandings of space or the built environment. By transforming the wall into something that connects rather than divides and that reveals the interior processes of the building rather than obscures them, it enacts a threshold between the private and public, invisible and visible, and absence and presence.

Through her work, Laurence prompts us to think of the world as a system of affects and intensities and to understand ourselves as part of that world. In so doing, she goes far beyond the subject-object schema that has long dominated Western thought and architectural practice. Architecture, to Laurence, is not merely an object of thought, nor is the viewer a subject who experiences her work at a distance. She problematizes the distinction between the work of architecture, the viewer, and the world by disarranging and blurring the clear boundaries among them. She introduces new modes of architectural experience. Put simply, in her understanding, life is a network in which everything is interconnected, and we are enmeshed in it. Thus, we are not separated from the world around us. Through such an affective understanding of life as eventful, chaotic, and indeterminate, Laurence creates architectural environments that inform and sensitize the viewer to other life systems. She therefore shifts architecture beyond thinking only in terms of building(s) and evokes an environmental understanding of architecture. She prompts us to reconsider architecture as a holistic process and as part of an environment that is complex and multilayered, in which many elements are interconnected and interrelated. In

this understanding, the built environment is only one aspect of a densely interwoven environment.

According to Adrian Parr, “Laurence prompts us to resituate ourselves in an everyday context by reconfiguring how our senses, feelings, and memories interact with the environment.”56 Thus, her architectural processes function within a broader system, and they are not reduced to the contained forms, elements, and meanings or the functional goals of traditional architecture. Laurence is no longer necessarily concerned with the meaning of the work of architecture; rather, her question might be how contemporary architecture can “enhance life.”57 Such a view of architecture engages with the creative force of life as an unpredictable and eventful system—one that invites and incorporates change, and one that accepts that such change cannot be predetermined.

Grosz has theorized this creative dynamism as an affective process in Architecture from the Outside. She explores a mode of architectural thinking that moves beyond the containment of space, in which architecture engages with the creative forces of life and generates connections, affects, and intensities. With this mode of architectural thinking, architecture is not simply a tool or an instrument. Rather, as Grosz argues, architecture can be (re)thought as

[A process of] scatter[ing] thoughts and images into different linkages or new alignments …[ in order to] produce unexpected intensities, peculiar sites of indifference, new connections with other objects, and thus generate[s] affective and conceptual transformations that

56 In conversation with Adrian Parr, Cincinnati, OH, Fall 2010.
problematize[s], challenge[s], and move[s] beyond existing intellectual and pragmatic frameworks.\(^{58}\)

In this way, architecture becomes expressive, performative and volatile, and it has the capacity to transform both itself and those who engage with it. Drawing upon Deleuze, Grosz encourages her reader to think about architecture more productively, wherein the work of architecture is not a mere object of thought; rather, it has the potential to become “a form of action”\(^{59}\) and a “mode of becoming.”\(^{60}\) In other words, “more than what it is and how it presently functions.”\(^{61}\) This is exactly how Laurence approaches architecture and art.

To conclude, I return to the Deleuzian body as way of thinking otherwise about contemporary architecture. In this view, a body becomes an architectural time-space. Bodies are a pure outside, meaning that there is always the possibility for a body to become otherwise. In Grosz’s reading of Deleuze, she asserts that “we don’t know what a body can do, because the body is outside of thought; which does not mean that it is unthinkable, but that we approach it in thought without fully grasping it.”\(^{62}\) In Deleuze’s understanding, the body is “any whole, composed of parts”\(^{63}\) in which these parts are interrelated to each other, “with the capacity of being affected and affective.”\(^{64}\) The relationship of parts is not a hierarchical one; instead, the body comprises parts that function as a whole and collectively. A body is not merely defined by its materiality or by occupying space (i.e.,

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\(^{58}\) Grosz. *Architecture from the Outside*, 58.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 58.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 72.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 90.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 28.


\(^{64}\) Deleuze and Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*, 256-257.
extension), nor is it defined by its organic structure or form. Instead, a body in a Deleuzian sense is best understood as a physical intensity.\textsuperscript{65}

According to Parr in \textit{Deleuze and Memorial Culture}, “a Deleuzian intensity substitutes sensation for form. Rather than attending to the extensive, it invites us to consider affective magnitudes.”\textsuperscript{66} In this view, the body becomes a whole that is composed of the system of interaction between and relation among its parts. However, the relation here is not simply reducible to a mechanical one that explains the coherence of the body on the basis of a subject/object distinction. Instead, according to Deleuze and Guattari in \textit{A Thousand Plateaus}, a corporeal system is defined by “every relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness.”\textsuperscript{67} Such a body is not defined by its parts and organs, but by its transformative materiality or, as Deleuze says in \textit{A Thousand Plateaus}, it is “an aggregate whose elements vary according to its connections, its relations of movements and rest.”\textsuperscript{68} Thus, for Deleuze, a corporeal materiality and physicality is constituted by becoming, meaning that it functions through the transformation, movement, and association of its elements, generating affects, intensities, and sensations. The human body is just one example of such a body. An animal body, a body of work, a political party, or even an idea can be a body.\textsuperscript{69}

This study has proposed architecture as an affective body that creates an environment inseparable from life as a whole and from the world around us; that is, an architecture that is enmeshed in other life systems. In this view, architecture performs itself

\textsuperscript{66} Parr. \textit{Deleuze and Memorial Culture}, 154.
\textsuperscript{67} Deleuze and Guattari. \textit{A Thousand Plateaus}, 256-257.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
as an expressive and open process, creating possibilities for new relations and associations. Thus, architecture becomes an art of movement and metamorphosis, as bodies generate what is new, surprising and unpredictable. This means that the definition of architecture is not reducible to building(s). Instead, architecture becomes a process, a time-space, a silent murmur that sustains life as a dynamic, active force of change. The work of Janet Laurence provides a crucial example how such an affective architecture might work. Throughout her art, she creates an interrelated and interconnected system of spaces and materials that can best be understood as dynamic modes of change and movement. Architecture, as her work exemplifies, is a transformative process—an architectural time-space.

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70 Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, xi.
Works Cited:


