University of Cincinnati

Date: 4/3/2014

I, Ryan T Scavnicky, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture (Master of).

It is entitled:
The Bangarang Contagion: Towards an Architecture Against Human Devolution

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UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

10401

Last Printed: 4/8/2014
Document Of Defense Form
The Bangarang Contagion:

Towards an Architecture Against Human Devolution

A thesis submitted to the
Division of Research and Advanced Studies
of the University of Cincinnati
In partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture
in the School of Architecture and Interior Design
of the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

2014

by

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Bachelor of Arts in Architecture / University of Cincinnati 2011

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We are living in the largest agglomeration of desensitized architectural detritus ever to be assembled, and thus belong to, without a doubt, the most placeless and transient generation in modern human history. This phenomena has brought with it - among laudable benefits - an explosion of digital media. It has also manifested in a new temporal memory which has caused an erosion of the physical environment within the human consciousness and condition. Thus reinforcing the possibility of a slow societal and cultural decay - the devolution of mankind. With digital existence increasingly encompassing the real world, it is necessary that these two realities must not oppose, but coexist. And if they are to coexist, it so happens, they must do so with critical acceptance of their conflicting nature.

In these continually developing systems, the programming of subsumption architecture becomes a vital strategy to combat the anesthetized physical experience. This architecture relies upon identified operations of divergence in order to bring itself into the foreground of consciousness. Its ability to evince local formal systems or symbolic expressions allows the project to exist as a recurring physical memory within a landscape.

This synchronicity must be a moment of Bangarang. This term - which refers to a hubbub, uproar, or disturbance as well as a punch line, retort, or comeback - becomes the framework for a vast architectural contagion, which exists in order to counteract the dangerously cyclical and overbearing barrage of new media which is permeating and eroding meaningful physical conditions.
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1.1 The Bangarang Contagion

Throughout history, philosophers have meditated on the end of the human race beyond mere apocalyptic terms of explosions, wars, or aliens, but rather a slow social and cultural decay that permeates humans ability to think, create, or criticize. These degenerative scenarios have taken us from the brutish and short life of man before the social contract described by Hobbes in Leviathan, to the stuffed and vapid existence of T.S. Eliot’s Hollow Men, to the bland, obese, digital lifestyle depicted in Disney’s WALL-E. These cultural decompositions produce fascinating landscapes, however distant they seem in possibility. All of this begs the question: are the theories and warning signs behind this kind of degeneration - the devolution of mankind - all too real in today’s placeless and increasingly digital culture?

We are living in the largest agglomeration of desensitized architectural detritus ever to be assembled, and thus belong to, without a doubt, the most placeless and transient generation in human history. This phenomena has brought with it, among laudable benefits, an explosion of digital media. It has also manifested in a new temporal memory which has brought with it an erosion of the physical environment within the human consciousness and condition. With digital existence increasingly encompassing the real world, it is necessary that these two realities must not oppose, but coexist. And if they are to coexist, it so happens, they must do so with critical acceptance of their conflicting nature.

This subversion must be a moment of Bangarang. This term - which refers to a hubbub, uproar, or disturbance as well as a punch line, retort, or comeback - becomes the framework for a vast architectural contagion, which exists in order to combat the dangerously cyclical and overbearing barrage of new media which is permeating and eroding meaningful physical conditions.
2.1 Devolution and The Enduring Ephemeral

The first indication of devolution depicts the present condition of humanity with a wide angle. It argues a subtle change in the human genome has taken place over thousands of years, causing a measurable decline in our intellectual and emotional abilities. In his paper called *Our Fragile Intellect*, Doctor Gerald R. Crabtree, Professor of Pathology and Developmental Biology at Stanford University School of Medicine, has defined for us the guidelines and evidence needed to suggest that the human gene pool has certain entities which are more fragile than others because the number of genes required for these traits to be normal is quite large. In the systems of transference which have occurred over thousands of years, these more fragile genes have slowly declined in quality. He identifies throughout the research that the specific genes which are more susceptible to mutations are those of emotive and cognitive intelligence.1

Gene pools are fragile. It takes a significantly larger selection of healthy genes in order to produce normal emotive and cognitive processing than most other human traits. Due to the relative safety of humans today as compared to, say, our hunter-gatherer ancestors, these pools have evolved mutations which have not been sorted out through natural selection; it’s not just the fittest who survive. Assuming that this trend continues, Crabtree suggests that the stability of our genome is at risk. While this theory is a product of science and research, conceptually it is already possible to see this change infiltrating the human condition and, by extension, our social and physical landscape. Shown in an extreme form as a piece of science fiction such as the 2006 film *Idiocracy*, this idea that safety will create degenerative links in the human genome is not a possibility to be ignored. While it is hardly the role of the architect to solve such problems, one must see some effects of this as a plausible threat, and formulate a design response.

Continuing this string of thought to current research in sociology reveals the work of Wendy Chun, a professor of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University. Chun argues a different type of collapsing within human cognitive processing, which is environmental rather than genealogical. Her essay entitled *The Enduring Ephemeral, or The Future is a Memory* contains links between digital media and memory, by first introducing the consequences of nonsimultaneousness in new media.

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The slipperiness of new media - the difficulty of engaging it in the present - is also linked to the speed of its dissemination. Neither the aging nor the speed of the digital, however, explains how or why it has become the new or why the yesterday and tomorrow of new media are often the same thing. Consider concepts such as social networking, or hot YouTube videos that are already old and old e-mail messages forever circulated and rediscovered as new. This constant repetition, tied to an inhumanly precise and unrelenting clock, points to a factor more important than speed - a non-simultaneousness of the new, which I argue sustains new media as such.

New media, as defined by Chun, is not necessarily fixed in time, but it is cyclical. It follows that experiences and memories, recorded and shared, can follow the same track. Emotive and cognitive processing takes on a more difficult task when confronted with truly new human experiences, because the idea of storing those experiences becomes a more nebulous and complicated matter.

Memory, with its constant degeneration, does not equal storage; although artificial memory has historically combined the transitory with the permanent, the passing with the stable, digital media complicates this relationship by making the permanent into an enduring ephemeral, creating unforeseen degenerative links between humans and machines.

While these degenerative links created by digital media stymie our need to hold memories on our own, they also complicate our relationships with each other, with our environment, and by extension with architecture.

How did architecture become so backgrounded in the lived experience? While memory has become cyclical and recurring newness in digital media erodes the experience of the real, what causes this erosion at the scale of architecture?

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3 Ibid.
To expand on the lack of enduring physical memories, we must understand what factors contribute to this degradation, specifically the role of our built environment, which is the backdrop of life and memory. While memory has become cyclical and recurring newness in digital media erodes the experience of the real, what causes this erosion at the scale of architecture?

To answer this, consider Gertrude Stein’s famous quote about Oakland, California “There is no there, there”\(^4\), which is often interpreted as a knock on the apparent lack of local culture. Stein’s quote, written into her autobiography in 1937, implicates our contemporary context as one can easily imagine many more placeless spaces today. Take for example the typical American suburb or the Brobdingnagian condominium towers of China, all the exact same and often empty of meaning. Defining this term non-space, the anthropologist Marc Auge also suggests we are living in more non-spaces than ever.\(^5\) It is startling to consider that this phenomena unfolds without anyone seeming to care.

One of the primary tenets of modern architecture was its highly regarded ability to simplify. The walls, skin, and structure of the building were stripped of unnecessary decoration and set in perfect harmony with function and material. This architectural movement, while valid in its reaction, has unfortunately transformed from a philosophy to a style, happily accepted by all those seeking value and function. As such, it has been pervaded, replicated, and disseminated until it has lost all meaning, therefore becoming positionless. In his book *Architecture and Nihilism: On the Philosophy of Modern Architecture*, Massimo Cacciari asserts that the architecture of fulfilled nihilism was, in fact, against all attempts to integrate symbolic significations into the process of the annihilation of place carried out by the project. This was not meant to simply reject history, but to question it in the entirety and complexity of its elements and its intentions as they go into effect.\(^6\) From this perspective a more appropriate definition of nihilism within the architectural realm is one which attempts no critical position on its context or locality. These completely camouflaged objects are apologetic and backgrounded. It is worrisome that, according to Sanford Kwinter, the entirety of the built realm will be doubling in the next twenty years, and only five percent of that new constructed landscape is to be designed or planned in the traditional manner. The rest will follow one-dimensional pathways of the market, which is dangerous in its current trajectory and pervasive banality.\(^7\) This practice of building in order to question decoration and intricacy works when there is detail, symbols, and history to reject, but too often this behavior subverts itself and becomes a completely antiseptic structural context rather than an antagonistic architecture of the embellished history it is attempting to renounce.

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Memory has inherent value. Because of the non-simultaneousness of digital media, it can be said that if there is no digital recording of the experience of a space then it is sinking only further into the forgotten depths of consciousness. Non-recorded memories are temporal and therefore do not compete with cyclical, digitally-chronicled memories. This is a dangerous slip. What was once considered a disruptive, rigorous, and nuanced design could become backgrounded within the general landscape. While not necessarily a cause for devolution, its proliferation will only remain an architecturally degenerating and devalued approach considering the current vulnerability of memory in a digital age.

*How do these non-spaces, so pervasive in our value-engineered architecture, melt so seamlessly into our cities?*

We had reached the place where the motion of the wasted world accelerates just before the final precipice.

*William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying*

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation... A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.

*Henry David Thoreau, Walden & Civil Disobedience*
In the late 19th and early 20th century, Leo Tolstoy explored behaviors detrimental to the human condition that continue to be profound to this day. In his work *What Is Art?* these explorations coalesce in the form of Zarazhenie, also understood as infection theory. The legacy of Tolstoy is extended in our contemporary context by Douglas Robinson in his book *Estrangement and the Somatics of Literature*, which unpacks infection theory, exposing it as a contagion where religion and art decay and begin to bring deterioration of the culture at large. 

According to Tolstoy’s initial contemplations, there are two ways that infection pervade culture. The first model is the fake-infectious model; in this context society is a “kind of ghastly theater in which the principals do not actually feel the enlivening infectious power of God or morality or true art but know that they are expected to show the outward signs of feeling that power, so they fake it.” This is a somatic discussion, however the power of art and architecture is not limited to mere physicality. One could relate this argument back to Gerald Crabtree’s *Our Fragile Intellect* and ascertain that our inability to feel enlivening infectious power of true art can be linked to our degenerating emotional and intellectual genes. Tolstoy continues his argument outlining how alienation, or the threat of alienation, is what causes people to feel the need to express fake feelings. How do these non-spaces, so pervasive in our value-engineered architecture, melt so seamlessly into our cities? The fake-infectious model gives us a better understanding of how someone may go about living in such a non-space; the false expression of emotion in approval of their built environment is better than the truth. That truth being the most problematic symptom of nihilistic architecture: it is alienating. This is a probable cause for why the proliferation of banal, antiseptic architecture continues without anyone seeming to care.

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9 Ibid.
The second model of Zarazhenie is not the intellectual inability to experience true art, but rather it suggests that true art and religion have been permeated by hedonistic art. The suggestion is that whatever truth once existed in art is nullified by the wrong feelings which have pervaded - pleasure for pleasure’s sake, pleasure in beauty as the only moral good, pleasure in the new.\textsuperscript{10} True art becomes masked by homogenized feelings designed as pleasures rather than introspective emotional experiences. Tolstoy adds that a true work of art is one which “evokes in a person that feeling that is totally different from all others, of joy, of spiritual union with another and with others perceiving the same artistic work.”\textsuperscript{11} Such a statement marks his position as one which requires feelings to be shared, and that true art unifies as a collective experience.

These kinds of memories, pleasure, beauty and newness, are the exact types discussed by Wendy Chun - author of The Enduring Ephemeral, or The Future is a Memory - when she refers to recurring ephemerals. The sex appeal of current advertising media, the pervasive industry of beauty, the desperate craving for true newness on the internet are all examples which lead to the connection of one hundred year old warnings of sociological theory. While it may be a stretch to say the theories proposed by Tolstoy have been taken up directly by Crabtree or Chun, it is uncanny to unpack their relationships. Together, the arc of their discussion illuminates current trends.

According to Michael Sorkin, there is a link between modernism and banality in the lived experience, via the work of Umberto Eco, who has contrasted postmodernism’s “new aesthetics of seriality” with modernism’s preferences for the shock of the new, the presentation of material in an “unexpected and chance manner, embracing originality and enhancing innovation.” Serial production involves the artist in the replication of a formal set or known pattern. The era of electronics, Eco suggests, never emphasizes shock, interruption, or novelty but instead values the repeatable, the cyclical, the expected. Inattentive viewing publics, according to Eco, search for relaxation and amusement, and remain indifferent to the stories narrated, relishing instead how well the copy reproduces the original, and how minute variations embellish well-established themes.\textsuperscript{12}

A single building which accepts its surroundings without being critical may not do immediate harm, however the acceptance of this as standard and good practice is, according to this group of thinkers, an incredibly dangerous methodology for the healthy sustainability of the human condition. Is it possible to create an architecture which responds to this alienation? How do we create more familiarity and bring people closer to the context they already inhabit? What modern architectural dialogues respond to the typically antiseptic state of the built environment?

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
What modern architectural dialogues respond to the typically antiseptic state of the built environment? What is clear about these approaches is that non-critical building strategies pollute and pervade by distancing and alienating people from architecture. To retain attention and importance, complex society requires complex architecture.13

When Sanford Kwinter saw the newspaper reports of a jogger being attacked in Central Park by a small group of gang members, he felt the need to try and articulate his feelings as to what made that event so unique. The gang descended upon the jogger, but it wasn’t a purposeful assault. In fact, it was the resultant of a strategy of havoc. It was the outcome of a tactic in which the group moved randomly and recklessly through ponds, people and monuments without any sense of direction, path, or togetherness. This plan of attack - which the gang refers to as wilding - causes an otherness to form, a randomized guiding force which acts to separate themselves from those who would adhere to normative forms of movement through space.

This multiplicity and embeddedness, combined with the critical presence of a “thick” time, allows for the open-ended interactions of parts - the hybridizations, blendings, and conflicts - that effectively destroy a structure’s determinism and that feed its wildness. Wildness emerges in a system once we lose the ability to predict - from the outside - what it will do.14

This wildness allows for an architecture which is outside of a centralized, singular control. He specifically relates to the systems we call urban design, in that it sets up rules, both large and small, which are played out to various degrees without the over arching control of any one person. Kwinter argues for a kind of indeterminism in urban planning, and that it is, in fact, the only way to effectively build up a robust, adaptive, flexible, and evolving design.15

15 Ibid.
There is a conflict between the kind of urbanism discussed here and the urbanism hailed by Parametricism as defined by Patrik Schumacher. While they both argue for the same result - adaptation and flexibility in the urban system - Parametricism relies on adaptive, parameter-based rules, not direct individual influence.

The assumption is that the urban massing describes a swarm-formation of many buildings. These buildings form a continuously changing field, whereby lawful continuities cohere this manifold of buildings. Parametric urbanism implies that the systematic modulation of the buildings’ morphology produces powerful urban effects and facilitates field orientation. Parametric Urbanism might involve parametric accentuation, parametric figuration, and parametric responsiveness.  

Rooted in the argument seems to be a discussion of control vs contract. The social needs of the urban system are given life either by some kind of input-driven formula as determined by an overarching system of flexible parametric generators or with the kind of group contract and individual influence of wildness. Both positions argue for a flexible and adaptive urban system, but they remain separated by a differing attitude toward cohesiveness and control.

Expressed in a more fluid form, Coop-Himmelblau distinctly declares a desire not dissimilar to the discussed parametricism, in the poem entitled *The Future of the Splendid Desolation*:

The solitude of squares, wildness of the streets, and the devastation of the buildings characterize the city of the present and will characterize the city of the future, too.

We live in a world of unloved objects, props of urban civilization which we hate but whose benefits we nonetheless make use of every day. Today’s architecture reinforces this discrepancy, until it becomes a rift in our minds. Using backwards-looking methods, it tends to conceal the problems rather than create the necessary, new awareness.

Architecture must be redefined as a medium of an expanding sense of life. Timely architecture will then arise when streets, open spaces, buildings, and infrastructures reflect the span of urban reality, and in the city’s desolation become signs of a fascinating wildness. A wildness that is not the result of comfort, but instead, an emotional act of using. Only through recognition of urban reality can the desire and self-confidence develop to take possession of the city and alter it. Then, what will be important won’t be the grass you can’t walk on, but the asphalt that you can.

Everything that hinders this emotional act of using must, of course, be discarded: The false aesthetics, sticking like smeared make-up on the face of mediocrity, the cowardice of antiquated values, the belief that everything that is disquieting can be beautified, and the uncontrollable autocrats whose actions are dictated by the motto “efficiency, economy, and expediency.”

Architecture is not a means to an end. Architecture does not function. Architecture is not palliative. It is the bones in the flesh of the city.

Architecture gains meaning in proportion to the wildness that comes about from the act of using. It gains strength from the surrounding desolation.17

The consensus between the three is that designers must begin to prescribe a vaccine for the inhuman, stillborn urbanism of the grid (or box) in order to instill closeness between our buildings, the city, and its people. How can this kind of urbanism be reflected at the scale of architecture and introduce that which is strange?

17 Ibid.
3.1 Strange Making

When the social and theoretical constructs of Non-Space, Nihilism, Infection Theory and Wildness mix intermittently with the current state of urbanism and digital media, we begin to see a trend emerge. Each of these theories rely on polarization; they all require categorization of an incredibly complex aggregation of things into finite theoretical dualities. Space versus non-space, nihilism versus alignment, infection versus cure, and wildness versus control. How, then, might one uncover systems or methodologies which could highlight or even propagate these dualities within architecture? What can we do to circumvent the accepted normative condition and introduce that which is strange?

When the meaning of the temenos has been banalized or polluted, critical intent has had to search for alternative ways of expression outside the classical canon. Strange Making has then had to take a path that is altogether different: to destroy the classical canon, now itself the embodiment of “the deadening effect of habitualization.” A new passage has had to be opened up - disrupting symmetries, shifting axes, breaking corners, bursting through boundaries, abandoning hierarchization and tripartition, opting instead for deformed and irregular patterns, ignoring elements, members, and their ranks. Catharsis has had to flee the classical schemata of taxis, genera, and symmetry and forge another formal anticlassical canon.18

Strange Making is, of course, not a specifically architectural term. In fact, its most base form comes to us from literature. First outlined by Viktor Shklovsky, Estrangement [ostranenie] is a term signifying a specific way of perceiving or realizing an already automatized phenomenon. Gathering most of his examples from the work of Leo Tolstoy, Shklovsky’s Estrangement Theory imagines the ordinary as strange, as newly surprising, as it were “moved aside.”19


Fig. 7 - Something strange.
Strange Making according to Shklovsky is a sort of Hegelian externalized inwardness. What makes the stone stony is a re-internalization of the stone as inward sensation; what makes the poem poemy is a re-internalization of the alienated experience of making it oneself. In other words, the real art is that which is an inward emotion made external, which is then re-internalized by an audience. The romantic art form, or art form made strange, is therefore gleichgültige Äußerlichkeit, which translates to an indifferent externality, so that Romantic art brings in anew the separation of content and form from the opposite side of the symbolic. Which is to say that the externality of romantic form is equally or indifferently in force on the inside and the outside, the self and the other, the own and the alien.\textsuperscript{20}

So it is clear that in order to subvert banal architecture we must respond as a complete defamiliarization to both the nihilistic and decorated space. This would create a re-familiarization between the user and those spaces which were originally backgrounded. Next to the alien, one becomes closer to that which is not made strange. Striving for an architecture which can difference itself from a context becomes an important goal of breaking through the banal landscape of the nihilist construct. How does architecture - made strange - become foregrounded to the experience of the user, in order to subsume attention from the digital reality?

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
How does architecture - made strange - become foregrounded to the experience of the user, in order to subsume attention from the digital reality? Brokenness is one of the most apparent ways that something gets attention. If something is to be broken, it follows that the object no longer serves a utility, causing its usefulness to be re-evaluated. When a thing stops doing what it is supposed to be doing, it becomes noticed and attention is called to it. Brokenness is a strategy for breaking through identified antiseptic zones. When expectations of utility are subverted, there is an attentive goal to restore that utility and order. Architecturally, where there should be usefulness, direction and organization, brokenness instills chaos, disjunction, and unexpectedness.

As when Heidegger considered the peasant’s shoes in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, usefulness is a virtue which is essential to reliability. The peasant only knows the shoes because of their reliability. When this reliability is interrupted - the shoes broken - does one reconsider their usefulness. ²¹ It is in a similar manner that one can consider architecture to be foregrounded when it is broken. The backgrounded, desensitized zones are an architecture which is only concerned with utility. But when the program becomes broken, when one cannot find the way, one looks for signs in the building, asks for directions, or one attempts to discern one’s location in the world. Brokenness can help deviate our attention from the nebulous dual reality of digital ephemeral into the strictly physical.

This type of interruption can be experienced in Eisenman’s Jewish Memorial in Berlin. Upon the approach, the project appears as a park or a regular grid of precariously playful planes. An open urban zone of Berlin becomes disrupted by rectangular volumes, forming a wavy, smooth surface across the empty, gray space. The rectangles are shallow on the rim, and one can still feel connected with the Berlin street when meandering about. However, if one goes deeper into the middle, the surface below the feet starts to undulate and eye level starts to sink lower towards the ground. The space becomes dysfunctional and rippled. Slowly one is coalesced into a mess of leaning concrete masses atop churning, unstable ground - without a sense of direction. The visual cue of the Berlin street has been taken away; there is only the ground, body, mass, and sky. There is no clear path in or out. The expected utility of an urban park, typically an easily understood, safe, playful zone, is gone, giving way to chaos, disorder, and a reconnection to ones own mortality. The reality of the grid is lost and the space around has become broken.

This sensation manifests itself from the desolation and violence of the program. It allows for a transition from typical city life into a thick, internal experience rife with unexpected, broken moments. This architecture has the capacity to deviate attention from the dual ephemeral realities to create a purely physical memory. The memory is cyclical due to the nature of the program, and the possibility of photography. The physical memory then becomes a digital serenity - a digital copy of an exemplary physical experience - which combats the slipperiness of new media, and the threat of devolution in architecture.

How do we signify Brokenness of form in architecture? How exactly do we call attention to something as broken when it had no previous history of working?
3.3 On Difference

From Shklovsky to Derrida, and from Aristotle to 2 Chainz, the nature of that which is different has never gone out of style. It was the act of being different, or sounding different in this case, which prompted Skrillex to title his second debut album *Bangarang* in light of the notion that his music is a retort to everything else that came before it.

How, then, might one uncover systems or methodologies which could highlight or even propagate these dualities within architecture? Differentiation discusses a relationship to a context. In every design setting, there exists a moment of highest contrast; an apex which differs. It is long strived for within the realm of architecture to diverge from the simple box, but how and why the divergence is the true struggle. The built environment is infinitely shaped by construction codes which constantly confine concepts, especially in urban environments, to dumb boxes. These forces are rules and guidelines of urban planning requirements, and structural and value engineering. Far too often there is a strict allegiance to those rules. Even advertising urges us to “think outside the box.” Why? Because it is thought we all hate the box for being too dumb, too boring, and we want to escape it. If we do escape, by buying the advertised product, we usually find ourselves inside another dumb box populated by boring people just like us. It is clearly possible to live an extraordinary life inside a dumb box. Question: is it possible to lead an extraordinary life in anything other than a dumb box?

Man experiences the space he lives in as asymmetrical. The vertical, in fact, is the common frame of reference for all other directions. The experience of a symmetrical, perfect space is not, in fact, understood by walking through a building. Therefore its goal as a design quality, and thus its importance in the logic of the dumb box, is motivated by construction, value engineering, and lack of creativity; not by actual effective spatial quality. A symmetrical, dumb box response is therefore, in fact, de-contextual. Actual recognition of context hinges on the ability to be critical of it. Rather than mimic or fit in, a contextual response is one which can recognize and build upon some codified syntax.

Its not simply a goal to be different. It is a design process of conscious knowledge; it is an acceptance of the fact that nothing can be done to keep something from being different than other things. Attention will be paid to any focal point of difference, care must be given as to what is done with that attention. As far as Bangarang is concerned, moments of divergence must be calculated, extreme, intentional and locally inspired. These moments of difference can aid our ability to break through the banalities of an antiseptic condition.

22 An American Hip Hop artist from College Park, Georgia, Tauheed Epps, or 2 Chainz, is well-known for the hit single “I’m Different” released in 2012.
A building which exemplifies difference as a contextual response is that of the Akron Art Museum by Coop-Himmelb(l)au. The immediate shape and form of the surrounding city becomes the syntax for a simple expansion to the existing museum building. The space between the two becomes the framework for a piercing, edgy glass lobby. The form rises above the original building as well as the addition, and becomes a large wing. The form soars over both structures, organizing a kind of closeness between the two. The old form and simple form become united in that they are both different from the glassy lobby. This is a critical formal response which gathers attention, and delivers unity. The accepted incoherence and schizophrenia of the addition becomes key in the design intent, resulting in a strongly structured and strikingly scathing architecture.
The concept of Bangarang can define an architecture which is against the human devolutions that have been discussed up to this point.

Bangarang is a Jamaican word meaning hubbub, uproar, disorder or disturbance. It was also the title of one of the first great Reggae tracks by Lester Sterling & Stranger Cole, released in 1968. The only lyrics in the song are *Muma no want no Bangarang* which can be understood to mean that Lester’s woman doesn’t want him to play music, but he makes it anyway.

In American pop culture, the word takes on still another life. In the 1991 film *Hook*, the Lost Boys would use the word to signify a comeback, or punch line. After their colorful leader Rufio refers to Peter Pan as a “fart factory, Slug-slimed, sack-of-rat-guts-in-cat-vomit, cheesy, scab-picked, pimple-squeezing finger bandage. A week old maggot burger with everything on it and flies on the side!” The group of lost boys yell out “Bangarang Rufio!” While of course Peter retorts, the use of the word constitutes the alignment and support of a counterattack.

In a more contemporary context, widespread use of the term has reappeared in the digital realm through a reference to a song by the electronic music artist Skrillex. His song, simply entitled *Bangarang* is a 2011 EP characterized as such. The artist’s choice of title elicits these other layers of meaning while adding a sarcastic retort to all other styles.

Bangarang is both a disturbance and a counterattack. In architecture, it becomes the programmed creation of specific distinctive events or distortions set up in critical opposition to a defined normative condition; revealing possibilities, interpretations, and providing a basis for new meanings and associations.

As a design approach, bangarang first defines a normative, or nihilistic condition. The design must respond to heightened areas of that condition by becoming critical, or opposite to it in some sense, in order to achieve disassociation. Revealing a new familiarization through formal tectonic strategies is how moments of bangarang happen. Bangarang is critical of the way in which something achieves otherness. Bangarang believes otherness can be revealing of some different underexposed methodology, in order to exist as a recurring, physical ephemeral.

In this way, it is not only an object of refamiliarization through defamiliarization, but it can become a cyclical physical memory, to combat the digital ephemeral.

For this architecture to resonate, it must take qualities of interruption and merge them with some kind of deep impactful understanding of a place and its underpinning formal relationships.

[Manifesto]

An architecture of convenience has been made to function, purely and purposefully in order to accommodate lifestyles of comfort.

Yet our unloved, dilapidated cities are fixed and frightened. Our mortality and inner animosities remain unreflected in their forced, vinyl-sided smiles.

It is not politics or budget that holds us back - it is a culture of conformity, constructed out of our proliferated, banal concepts.

We live in a world propogated by these sterile, analgesic, static, palliative and stillborn systems.

We must reject everything in architecture that promises us expediency and amenity. We must be against that which is nuanced, vapid, simple, nihilistic and ultimately forgotten.

Where one expects usefulness, direction and organization, we must instill chaos, disjunction, and abandon.

It is there where Bangarang exists, on the bleeding edge of space between physical and digital ephemeral memory. It becomes the new hive mind of a city. It is itchy, thick, tumultuous, vile, non-habitual, and unexpectedly other.

It is where architecture ends, bringing about a contagion of uncontrollable wildness of space.
The Grow and Consume method is founded not by how a building decays with itself, but how when it does, other species and scavengers begin to move in. In the instance of warehouses, this begins with moss and grass, and eventually leads to wild animals, people and even trees. These begin to consume what was there, and grow and populate like an infection. It could even be the internal structure, rebar for example, which begins to infect and consume its concrete shell. This methodology can inform the way a structure is reinhabited. Starting small, and then growing like a contagion and eating into the necessary parts in order to fit a new program. Various species begin to take over a shell or coalesce themselves into a system previously absent of life. This process is more of a metempsychosis than it is a parasitic relationship.

Fig. 10 - Abandoned construction site, Cleveland, Ohio, 2012
A second outlined method is found when a building breaks itself down. Time itself is the force which begins to take pieces, normally skin, and de-laminates them from the bones. Paint is stripped of its surface, hanging off in dissonant fashion, where it then flakes to the ground. Brick eventually falls away from the shaking internal structure, and so on. As a design method we can understand the peel to become an important methodology in making form. It is how we see something falling apart, broken, and decaying, but it can also begin to signify an introduction of a new system.

Fig. 11 - Abandoned warehouse at E. 55th and Carnegie, Cleveland, Ohio 2014
5.3 Expose // Break

When the materials and intersections of these processes come together, things break apart and expose what is normally concealed. This methodology is the act of pulling apart and showing the complex innards intentionally covered and hidden by construction practices. Showing and revealing these guts is a process normally seen as decay.

Fig. 12 - Abandoned warehouse at E. 55th and Carnegie, Cleveland, Ohio 2014
6.1 On Cleveland

Familiarity may have numbed most of us to the aesthetic shock of the actual sights visible beyond the guardrails on the daily commute. But underwritten by a century or more of environmental degradation, the scale and corrosive grandeur of the mess in and around America’s cities surely does suggest a once and future kingdom of titanic, chthonic powers.

Douglas Max Utter, *Genius Loci*
Yet what is interesting in this respect is the novel beauty to be found in works of art and architecture of the past which have changed their appearance due to the damage of time or destruction by disasters in the course of the centuries. This is described as the beauty of decay, but is it not perhaps that beauty which material assumes when it is freed from artificial make-up and reveals its original characteristics? The fact that the ruins receive us warmly and kindly after all, and that they attract us with their cracks and flaking surfaces, could this not really be a sign of the material taking revenge, having recaptured its original life?

Jiro Yoshihara, Gutai Group Manifesto
Harvey captured and chronicled every day what was–and will always be–beautiful about Cleveland: the still majestic gorgeousness of what once was–the uniquely quirky charm of what remains, the delightfully offbeat attitude of those who struggle to go on in a city they love and would never dream of leaving. What a two minute overview might depict as a dying, post-industrial town, Harvey celebrated as a living, breathing, richly textured society.

Anthony Bourdain, *The Original Goodbye Splendor - An Obituary to Harvey Pekar*
Cleveland is a communal act of defiance against a nation’s celebrity culture.

Wright Thompson, *Believeland*
Rust Belt Chic is churches and work plants hugging the same block. It is ethnic as hell. It is Cleveland punk... It is wear: old wood and steel and vacancy. It is contradiction, conflict, and standing resiliency. But most centrally, Rust Belt Chic is about home, or that perpetual inner fire longing to be comfortable in one's own skin and community. This longing is less about regressing to the past than it is finding a future through history.

Anne Trubek, Richey Piiparinen
Rust Belt Chic: The Cleveland Anthology
Wherever buildings are broken by the explosion of bombs or artillery shells, by fire or structural collapse, their form must be respected as an integrity, embodying a history that must not be denied. In their damaged states they suggest new forms of thought and comprehension, and suggest new conceptions of space that confirm the potential of the human to integrate itself, to be whole and free outside of any predetermined, totalizing system.

Lebbeus Woods, War and Architecture

Through site studies it becomes clear that residents are under a constant barrage of the decline of industry in the city. These monstrous factories, mills, and warehouses sit dormant in the landscape like caged elephants, capable of so much if they were only set free. These disparaged zones of the city remain in the consciousness of its people, yet are viewed as only eyesore. They have attracted various processes and methodologies of decay during their time, which we can begin to unpack and understand, in order to then create new form from those methods. It is in this way the project will have both otherness and familiarity to it.
7.1 Breuer Tower Metempsychosis
Existing
Tower

Existing
Rotunda


