ARCHITECTURE in the AGE of MEDIA CONVERGENCE
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INTRODUCTION

Samuel Dodd

Architecture students operate within a complex media environment. They easily move from modeling to tracing to diagramming and back again in the pursuit of an elusive idea or form. In so doing, they switch between analog and digital platforms and execute processes rooted in old techniques and rebranded for new software. Students frequent sites like ArchDaily to find information on current trends; share their own work with online communities at Houzz and Behance; and curate their digital media experiences using Instagram and Pinterest. Within this age of media convergence, where information is fluid and the role of cultural gatekeepers is in flux, students must cultivate skills in critical thinking and discernment.

During the 2015 spring semester, I led eighteen undergraduate architecture students from the University of Arizona’s College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture in a seminar on the theme Architecture and Media. We focused on three main relationships between our titular subjects: buildings as media; the use of technologies in the design process; and the way people experience the built environment through popular media. Our goal was to identify viable theories and methods for thinking about the architectural mediations we come into contact with everyday, either as designers in practice or as consumers and audiences of design culture.
Looking back over their projects, a few lessons stand out:

**We have always been modern.**

As Henry Jenkins argues, old media don’t die, they evolve. Only the delivery technologies used to access content get replaced as they become obsolete. A number of student projects highlight this evolution by revealing similarities between our current media practices and those of designers throughout history. Students found in Archigram, Nicholas Negroponte, Philip Thiel and other leading figures from the 1960s helpful guides for tackling questions on systems theory, cybernetics, and spatial notations. They also learned from architects who, five hundred years earlier, responded to the emergence of single-sheet engravings and printed treatises by adapting sketching traditions and using print as a mutable and participatory medium. These historical precedents helped them better understand how media practices and modes of thinking continue to evolve.

**Participation is vital.**

The projects show how willing students are to engage value-making systems from outside architecture in their pursuit of a practice that is more socially relevant. Specifically, they tried to learn from pop culture and its mechanisms—consumerism and mass media—how to better shape public opinions and tastes. One student found that Gaston Bachelard’s ideas on phenomenology make for compelling street art. Another proposed a punk-DIY zine as the best platform for spurring people to consider interstitial public spaces outside the reach of commercial systems. Others explored how websites and Pinterest boards could become spaces for collaboration and idea testing. By incorporating public engagement methods, these students have demonstrated the importance of pushing architecture beyond its customary navel-gazing.

**The method is the message.**

The value of a seminar, especially when it supplements a studio-based curriculum, is in empowering students with theories and methods they can use in various scenarios. The work in this book shows how seriously these students took the task of designing their own research projects: identifying questions worth asking; assembling a literature and history of workable models for answering those questions; and adapting the models into something applicable to their other areas of study. In compiling all of their reports together (with special thanks to Ryan Baxter, who designed this book), these students have taken the important step of sharing their comparative-media methods with a larger audience.

Ultimately, the following projects provide important lessons on representation, technological change, and participation that have the potential to transform architectural practice.
the AGE of ADZ

Ryan Baxter

BACKGROUND

In the 1920s, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) developed a series of consecutive restrictions on publicity and marketing. In 1927, the AIA published this policy, that “an architect will not advertise for the purpose of self-laudatory publicity.” While similar professions, namely engineering, were openly embracing advertising, architects remained steadfast in their 19th Century “gentleman architect” ways (Shanken, 409).

And though it is completely legal for architects to advertise the way lawyers, or to a lesser extent doctors do, the profession is still wary of acclimating to the marketing potential of its consumer-led industry.

This project was conceived in the idea that architects and the AIA had adapted faster to the changing consumer culture. The next few pages contain a remediation of famous corporate slogans re-appropriated to influential firms and individuals that might have advertised, if they could.

THE PROCESS

The slogans all belong to other companies: Nike, Chrysler, Levis, Butterfingers (Nestle), Lexus (Toyota), and Burger King. I paired these slogans with their complimentary architects: Gehry, Saarinen, Wright, Graves, Ando, and of course Philip Johnson (respectively).
THE ARCHITECTS

Frank Lloyd Wright
If Frank Lloyd Wright had advertised, he would not have been able to afford very much (perhaps he would have been able to secure advertising funding from a wealthy client). Without money, Wright would have had to make the choice between a few, very large and colorful ads versus a lot of smaller, black & white ads.

A wise advertising firm would have been provided a compromise. The ad is almost entirely black & white, saving a good deal of money. The ad would then be printed with a small amount of magenta and yellow ink for Wright's signature red square icon.

This advertisement would have been produced in the mid-fifties. Falling Water was already well-known at this time. The choice to use a drawing instead of a photo of Falling Water was made to help the audience to imagine how Wright could start with a drawing and give you a seemingly unachievable masterpiece.

The slogan, “Quality Never Goes Out of Style,” belongs to Levi’s Jeans. Frank Lloyd Wright was aging and as the world was increasingly using less and less “ornament,” Wright would have needed to fight against the new national desire for international and ultra-modern steel and glass architecture.

Eero Saarinen
Saarinen & Associates had several corporate relationships, GM probably being the most notable. During his work for GM, Saarinen learned how to work like a corporation to communicate professionally (Lange, 234). During this relationship, Saarinen may have also developed an understanding of corporate image and corporate marketing.

This slogan, “Inspiration Comes Standard,” which actually belongs to Chrysler (a major competitor of GM), fits perfectly with the corporate-oriented Saarinen workspace. His work was exciting and daring, but this level of inspiration can be sold as a standard package. Each client would connect this promise of service with his famous TWA building.
The image is a full color bleed, which means that it would cost a lot of money. The audience would not have missed it. It may have even been printed on the back of the magazine for extra exposure. However, even when you paid a lot, plate shifts during the printing process were common in the 1950s. In Saarinen’s ad, the cyan plate has been shifted in the process (especially noticeable in the far left-hand side).

**Philip Johnson**

This advertisement would have been produced in the 1980s (the construction of the AT&T Building began in 1981 - the photo of this model was likely to have been taken prior to beginning construction).

The slogan, “Have it Your Way,” belongs to Burger King. It was chosen and assigned to Philip Johnson primarily for the client-driven and service-based firm structure that he applied. Johnson is famous for saying, “I am a whore and I am paid very well for high-rise buildings.”

Additionally, the font Bauhaus 93 (based on Joe Taylor’s Blippo Black font, itself based on an unfinished Bauhaus font) was chosen for a specific reason. Philip Johnson’s Glass House has often been called a “knock-off” of Mies Van Der Rohe’s Farnsworth House. Prior to emigrating from Germany, Rohe served as the Bauhaus’ last director.
Michael Graves defined Post-Modernism as a style more than any other architect. During a period when most architects were producing the same simple concrete and glass building structure, Graves began creating iconographic buildings. At the time, they were bold and continue to be controversial.

I can’t think of anything more controversial in architecture than using a Serif font.

REFLECTION

When I first started to think about this project, my mind jumped to the absent content, the missing media for architectural advertising. Had there been architectural advertisements through the 20th Century, my project might have been a creation of GIFs or coding Pop-up Ads of the old advertisements to fit in between Facebook posts. Instead, without any original content, my goal became to create the media first. Using existing slogans from other companies and common styles and tropes after pouring through old copies of House Beautiful at the UA Library, I have started to fill the media void.

What was most interesting while browsing old magazines in search of a possible architectural advertisement, I came across an ad for a company selling Frank Lloyd Wright pattern designs. This was congruent with Andrew Shanken’s article “Breaking the Taboo,” architects were being advertised as a label for a product instead of advertising the product of a building. In the article by Shanken, he says “as architects worked more closely with manufacturers, the barriers between professional and commercial practices eroded faster than the AIA could bolster them” (Shanken, 415). Did this add to the growth of the starchitect? Did separating the architect from consumer marketing create the separation of architects and the client?
JUST DO IT
FRANK GEHRY

GEHRY PARTNERS
12541 Beatrice Street, Los Angeles, CA 90066
(310) 482-3000

CITATIONS:

Source Image Credits:
Drawing of Falling Water by Frank Lloyd Wright from: <http://api.ning.com/files/LVjYhH7*e2zW6ZXbjiU3h4q5YTEqsXXvPX-9z79D9OHOWGD14v8zMjF*4**hTDXL9BCySNsNyy8sSKLui-WH4WseL2Mzb/FallingWaterPerspective.jpg>.
AUTO DECONSTRUCTIVE ART for BACHELARD’S POETICS of SPACE

Asher Caplan

Gaston Bachelard’s Poetics of Space is an important text in certain architecture circles and an influence on the profession in general. An important question I have is how this writing can relate to the general public. His densely written prose is difficult for anyone to digest, but for the architectural designer is at least understandable. If, however, our profession is to be taken seriously, text like these must be transferable. As an architect, activist and artist I am particularly keyed to popular culture. Things like Google Flux is aiming to design purely functional buildings through scripting, or Revit which aims to increase the constructibility. Coming from a different school of thought, similar to the heady reasoning inherent to Bachelard, the critical process and deliberate slowness of architecture is an undeniably important factor for contemplative, healing and inspiring spaces. As a profession the question of architecture and media becomes about how we can utilize communication to convince potential clients to become customers.

The research process began with a general reading of the text. But more importantly it continued into Tumblr. Finding what people were quoting from Poetics of Space on their blogs is important in seeing what they find important. Tumblr users are a tuned in demographic and are proven consumers with a catalog of their desires for beautiful architecture. Through research and following links from the documentary Exit Through the Gift Shop I was led to an interview with the curator for the Serpentine Gallery in England. Hans Ulrich Obrist finds up and coming artists, mainly in the experimental mediums, almost entirely eschewing traditional fine arts. My research into artists culminated into the art of: Gabriel Kuri, Sarah Sze, Gustav Metzger, and Andreas Slominski. These artists use different scale and media to promote their message. While my interventions
are seemingly simple, they utilize specific techniques that these artists employ. Specifically Metzger’s work from which my title is taken. Auto Deconstructive Art aims to use decay, and destruction to build new ideas.

In the work itself, juxtaposition of imagery and text became imperative. Utilizing first drafting and modeling techniques in Rhino 3d to export line work to 2d vector work in Illustrator. Once there, a dialogue between Illustrator and Photoshop fostered a work balance of created and reality. This work after all is meant to be out in the world, creating guerrilla activism, not highbrow art. Final work is a piece that is meant to be talked about and provoke thought on Bachelard’s work, or my own that leads to a base of theory founded in Poetics of Space.

The first works illicit daydreaming in two ways. One is a consumer product, screen-printed on pillowcases and infiltrating the home, the space for daydreaming. It’s a reminder and a common form of pop art in the Tumblr world. The second is a same response to the idea of home as a device for daydreaming, as it examines the common use of the home now. Calling attention to consumer’s habit of watching too much TV, and especially TV on demand, instead of allowing their own dreams to percolate. I call out this destructive habit in imposed street art on an urban façade. Each house contains its own daydream.

The next main theme explored in my work and pulled from Bachelard is nostalgia. Very important to this is memory and intimacy. As is written about many times in the book, people often return to the past for their daydreams instead of to the future. In this way, history infiltrates the present and informs the future. Speaking to this idea, I propose a child’s plastic house be placed in the median divider of an urban street. Disheveled and mangled with weeds growing up, it reads “Comfort” in front with NASCAR lettering. The American “always go,go,go” attitude is a dis-ease trumpeted as heroism. Bachelards own ideas of the home meet my own in a desire to promote the dreamer to the hero and not the doer. Mostly they are doer’s of stuff, and filth. The real doer’s are the dreamers. For this my response is one of scale. On one end it is a
big gulp. A symbol of American problems like obesity and poor nutrition, I paint it black, but not quite opaque. The package is the message, its sheer size is indicative of its volume, the straw a simple indication of use. The users of these cups are creatures of comfort and often the exact contradiction of my ideas and marketing meeting. They are the ones I am trying to reach, not the art world.

The last major theme pulled from the work is solitude. Bachelard creates symbols of solitude. He writes “immensity is the movement of motionless man. It is one of the dynamic characteristics of quiet daydreaming. To this thread I propose a balloon house, desaturated now. Ominous yet imposing, an image of comfort from one’s youth, yet not as inviting. It becomes a stop and stare piece and ultimately a place for reflection and solitude. The materiality however will slowly deflate, further highlighting that one’s own daydreaming always and forever will be an act of solitude. Then I jump scale again. Now on a popular tourist trap, I again use text. Here I have written “silence echoes... in solitude.” A wording of my own to highlight Bachelard’s writing on “a thousand windows of fancy” and “geometry of echoes.” I take these two saying to imply that nature, as reflective and awe-inspiring as it can be, when surrounded by so many others, is ultimately no match for the house.
CITATIONS:


FURTHER READING:

FIGURE-GROUND in the DIGITAL AGE

Patrick Ceguera

Depiction and representation in architecture and the allied arts is constantly in flux. As new mediums make themselves available, the field adapts and evolves along with these upgrades. A constant, however, in modes of representation is that of the figure-ground technique. Typically thought of as a simplification of form using black and white, this mode of drawing has become a way of distilling information and observing the truths that negative space of an image can reveal. Many architects and theorists have studied and used the figure-ground in their own work, including Colin Rowe, Aldo Rossi, and Giambattista Nolli. According to Matthew Carmona’s text Public Places, Urban Spaces, Colin Rowe in particular used the figure-ground to teach students to “consider buildings not just as objects, but as backgrounds” (Carmona 69). While figure-ground as a technique has existed in both the analog and digital realms, its potential to evolve using new technologies has been little explored. This mediation project therefore becomes an exploration into the ways in which the application of new technologies to existing figure-ground works can add a layer of depth to the drawings, literally and figuratively. Specifically, this project explores Mario Gandelsonas’ text X-Urbanism: Architecture and the American City, in which Gandelsonas undergoes an exploration of the American urban fabric via a series of figure-ground drawings.

In X-Urbanism, Gandelsonas utilizes the figure-ground typology in an analytical way. Applied to mapping and architecture, it can become a powerful tool into examining the formal organizational strategies, and underlying themes of these strategies, that may otherwise be overlooked. This is a technique that has been practiced for centuries. Giambattista Nolli became famous for using this technique in the mapping of Rome. In the text Giambattista Nolli and
Roman, Ian Verstegen states that using the figure-ground allowed Nolli to provide “a unique glimpse of the city by exposing its continuums” (Verstegen 81). Gandelsonas, however, is particularly interested in using this technique as an exploration of the American city, for fairly specific reasons. For example, the American city lacks the history of the European city, and because of this, the landscape of the American country has provided a blank canvas for planners, architects, and designers to implement their ideas of successful city design. Using influences hearkening back to the successes and failures of the European city, planners and designers used the American landscape as a field for experimentation and a laboratory for the urban fabric. The cities today are still being used as prototypes for urban testing and the implementation of new city-centered ideas, which has resulted in truly distinctive urban conditions that, while bearing certain similarities to other parts of the world, are obviously unique despite their influences. It is these unique urban fabrics that interest Gandelsonas, and in X-Urbanism, he engages in an examination of their successes and failures through the figure ground. By deploying this technique, Gandelsonas is able to distill the information of the city, and to bring forward the larger organizational methods of each. It also allows Gandelsonas to make sweeping and large scale changes to the plans that are easily understood visually. By using the figure ground as a means of both representation and creation, Gandelsonas attains a more thorough comprehension of the successes and the failures of the existing plan of the city, and engages in the discourse created about urban space, public space, and the architect’s role in city design. To quote Gandelsonas himself, this exercise was a “reflection on architecture” and “an attempt to depict the architectural implications of the strange metropolis that began to develop in America” (Gandelsonas 1).

Despite the successes of this exercise, there were certain limitations to the techniques used based on the technology available at the time. Gandelsonas, however, works with what is available in order to set up a typology of figure-ground analysis that contained potential to then be brought into the digital realm. X-Urbanism is then one person’s attempt at using a largely analog figure ground analysis of cities in order to apply the technique to American cities in a way that hadn’t been done before.

This exercise became an exploration into utilizing the work that X-Urbanism sets up and bringing it into the contemporary digital realm to bring a layer of depth to the work that Gandelsonas was not able to with the technologies of his time. The process is not only a remediation of the work, but a furthering of the ideas Gandelsonas sets up as a way of exploring the ways in which bringing the figure ground further into the digital realm affects the information portrayed and produced by the technique.

The course of action for the act of remediation included a process of scanning the original drawings, performing a live trace of the drawings in Adobe Illustrator, and then bringing these vectors into Rhino in order to extrude the masses and bring them into the 3-dimensional realm. A process of diagramming was then implemented using Adobe Illustrator. By putting Gandelsonas’ original work through digital processes, a certain simplification and distillation of the drawings occurred. In particular, the combination of live tracing the original drawings in Illustrator and extruding them in Rhino exposed implications that were latent in the original, but not explicitly cited. For example, when Gandelsonas’s plan for Hell’s Kitchen in New York is put through this process, a large wall manifests itself to the west of the plan. This wall is the highway that blocks the city from the waterfront. Represented as a line in the original plan, the digitization of the drawing exposes the real implications behind that single line. Similarly, the process of digitization revealed certain
aspects of the figure-ground plan of New Haven, such as the inward nature of its four districts, in juxtaposition to the small scale of the extroverted axis that connects the district: Chapel Street. Chapel Street is drawn as a line in the original plan, but by bringing it into the computer, that line essentially disappears, speaking to the lack of hierarchy given to the street in plan. Lastly, the digitization of the Los Angeles plan was telling, as it virtually erased all of the surrounding context except for a central urban core, which speaks to the scale of that district. The distillation and exposition of such large urban elements is reminiscent to the ideas that Kevin Lynch presents in Image of the City, where Lynch simplifies the city into much larger elements, such as districts, nodes, and landmarks. Lynch cited the successful use of simple forms and shapes in the realm of preliminary and conceptual city planning, stating that By getting down into the basics of urban planning, figure-ground, and the digitization of the figure-ground, acts as a means of revealing the flaws and successes in our cities.

Of course, the exercise was not perfect. It is an over simplification of city plans and ignores many of the intricacies that go into urban design. Additionally, the digitization of the hand-drawn elements created a distortion and over distillation of the original work. However, that is exactly what the figure-ground is: a distortion and distillation, and this is where the merits of the technique are found. This exercise mostly worked to expose the latent analysis that was already inherent in the figure-ground technique. As Colin Rowe states in Collage City, the “debate” that figure ground creates is between “solid and void” (Rowe 83). The digitization of figure-ground only works to make the visualization of these “solid to void” conditions easier, and to make available perspectives through the solids and voids that were not readily available until now. Rather than discrediting the analog figure-ground as a technique, this process of remediation became an extension and celebration of the groundwork laid by the age-old technique.

CITATIONS:

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8 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT the .GIF and ARCHITECTURE

Emily Cole

The history of the gif is a rich one, beginning way back in 1987 with moving images of pixelated American flags. Those waving American flags, shaking orange and red specks meant to look like flames and the ever annoying "under construction" gif our parents probably remember from the AOL dial up days were the beginning of a new media. It stands for Graphics Interchange Format, and that new media is a collection of multiple frames encoded into a single image file that can be played back on loop by a web browser. In 1995 and 1996, the Netscape browser began to automatically animate. This was the Web 1.0. The dawn of the 21st century brought on Web 2.0 and with it, an increased popularity of the gif. Sites like Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter and Buzzfeed become a venue to showcase the gif. Artists like Reed and Radar take on the motive as their own unique art form that expresses fashion in a way previously not seen in its realm- the world of fashion didn’t latch onto the web as quickly as they had anticipated. A rather heated popular debate surrounding the media is its file name pronunciation. The file formant creator, Steve Wilhite from CompuServe can be quoted saying “choosy developers choose gif” thus inferring he intended a soft g pronunciation. However, those without a preference can use the catchy, artsy name “cinegraph”.

In these recent years, through its evolution, the gif has become a tool that could be particularly useful to architects. So far it’s gone relatively underutilized. The following are ways it could be purposefully incorporated into our work.
1. **They tell stories quickly—Exactly like the diagram should.**

We’ve all heard the same plea of the desperate studio instructor- “just draw a diagram!” However, it’s 2015, and sometimes we feel like we can do better. Instead of presenting confusing diagrams with a bunch of arrows all lined up sequentially, a gif concisely combines images in a way that will make a memorable statement about the essence of a project.

2. **They give us new perspectives.**

Gifs have the power to capture an extra architectural dimension that’s often missing – or imperceptible—in still images. We may think that we know buildings from pictures, but to really understand one, we need to experience it as if we were moving through it. Gifs are a natural vehicle for those check-out-this-cool-angle shots.

3. **They can be used as a design tool.**

The essence of site analysis, massing, function and form can quickly be animated into gif format. The moving story can provide us a new depth we previously had been unaware of, and it can allow us to further edit our work.

4. **They can reanimate history.**

The innovative format of the GIFs has meant that brilliant moments in history can continue on loop forever. These will never get old.

5. **They can be analyzed against up and coming technologies of the past.**

Harris and Hollister state that: “Television affects planners’ and designers’ work indirectly, but substantially, through its continuous influence on the climate of public opinion.” In today’s society, we receive information primarily from the internet and social media, which is saturated in gifs. If we compare the movement that came along with television, the outcome can easily be applied to this new technology.

6. **They can be used to counteract negative opinions about the built environment.**

Harris and Hollister go on to say that “News, public affairs and entertainment programs not only shape viewers’ perceptions of cities, they also contribute to people’s concepts of what is environmentally desirable and possible.” As I was saying before, if the gif, while definitely not as widespread as the movement that came with television, are used where people are likely to be looking, the message will spread.

7. **They allow the medium to become the message.**

As Marshall McLuhan stated: the medium is the message. Our interpretation of his thesis was that if we start noticing changes in our cultural or societal norm right away, we are more observant to the presence of a new message, or, the effect of a new medium. When we analyze this new medium as the gif, we can try to interpret what its message could be for architects and how we can use it.
8. They can quickly illustrate the passage of time.

This was my individual interest when beginning the mediation project.

PROCESS
I began this process by researching popular restorative architecture and chose two examples that could be mediated in gif form. I found a local example at 222 E. Fifth St. A 1950s First Baptist Church education building has recently been repurposed into Mister Car Wash’s Tucson headquarters after sitting vacant and collecting graffiti for several years. The national example I chose was the J. L. Hudson department store. Initially, Hudson’s first building was constructed on the site in 1891. It was rebuilt as one of the first skyscrapers in 1911. Several additions were constructed between then and 1946. On October 24, 1998 it was demolished. Now, the site sits empty. SHoP Architects are working currently on a new design for the site.

After choosing two buildings that had changed significantly enough over time, I collected as many images of them showing such age as I could find. This included taking screenshots of YouTube videos of them as they existed originally, over time, and during demolition.

Then, I sized the images and uploaded them in chronological order to “makeagif.com”. The website allowed me to choose the speed at which the images flashed; I chose a speed that allowed the viewer to easily see the buildings change over time but kept the 70+ image sequence under 30 seconds. The argument behind this speed supports my media as archive thesis: The rapid storytelling of gif culture can be metaphorically applied to the rapidness with which we consume architecture.

CITATIONS:


FURTHER READING:
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New Uses of Television by Design Professionals, William W. Harris & Robert M. Hollister
http://architizer.com/blog/trending-architecture-gifs/
http://architizer.com/blog/top-10-architecture-gifs-of-2012/
http://www.engadget.com/2012/03/08/pbs-traces-the-history-of-animated-gifs-deal-with-it/
the SKIN and BONES of ARCHITECTURE

Kyle D’Alessio

The questions that led me to the exploration in this research started with the observation of high rise corporate towers. The thought of “where did it all start?” came to mind. Through history courses I learned about the basic Dom-ino diagram created by Le Corbusier and the 5 Points of Architecture that he created, which brought about the question that if Corb is using these basic principles throughout his architecture and was influential to many other architects, then how has this carried into the current times of building use and design? Did His 5 Points carry into the future to influence other young architects? Is architecture in current times just a remix of old principles and new materials? Does this radiate throughout all architecture, or is it apparent in only specific building types?

The idea was to find patterns within the forms and language of buildings, focusing mainly on the mid/high rise commercial buildings, as well as museums and government buildings. This choice was made to get a variety of programs to compare to the use of materiality.

Research and observation of architects and their buildings led to the typological forms created in this project. In depth analysis allowed me to edit and refurbish the coding page that is seen in the visual portion of this project. Architectural Record held a multitude of examples of commercial, residential, and corporate high rise buildings, and even some residential low rise to see if this theoretical data was reflected on all scales of projects.

Continuing on with the research for the second portion of this project, I looked at major architecture firms, mainly super architects as we know today, to see if this language has been expressed within their buildings. Architects such as Zaha Hadid, REX/OMA, Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, to name a few, were carefully

Image right | The project is designed to merge the world of computer code and architectural design elements to highlight the basic features of modern architecture. The faux-code language is made to portray something so simple as a complex form. To the average eye, this project should look like gibbersh

Skin and Bones Buildings [1920-present]
Created by Kyle D’Alessio

<building type>tectonic {predominantly} <building type>
<structural materials= wood frame construction; steel frame construction;
web and cord framing; space frame; plate glass;
<building type> stereotomic {predominantly}<building type>
<building materials><structural materials= brick; stone; CMU; reinforced
concrete<building materials>
<building style>international style<building style>
<body= rectilinear form; light frame structure; taut; plane surfaces; orna-
ment free>
<body>deconstructivist style<building style>
<body= non-rectilinear form; light frame or interconnected structure; taut;
curvy organic surfaces; planar and abstract forms; ornament free; fluid
forms>
<structural sources= le corbusier>
<structural materials> < {predominantly} large scale commercial build-
ings= first floor raised on columns made of reinforced concrete; reinforced
concrete framing and internal structure> <structural materials>
<visual appearance > < large scale commercial buildings= clean façade; no
ornamentation; hints of color {red; blue; yellow}; horizontally dominant?;
curvilinear form> < visual appearance>
<environmentally friendly> < focus= green roof; air circulation; celebration
of light> <environmentally friendly>
<structural sources= mies van der rohe>
<structural materials> < {predominantly} large scale commercial build-
ings=steel frame construction; plate-glass{everywhere}> < structural mate-
rials>
<structural materials> < {predominantly} small scale residential buildings=
steel frame construction; plate-glass{everywhere}> < structural materials>
<visual appearance > < large scale commercial buildings= exposed struc-
ture; simple connections; skin and bones; uniform structure and design
throughout; first floor raised on columns made of steel; flat roof> < visual
appearance>
<building form> < {predominantly} large scale commercial buildings = big
giant box, rectangular; based on golden section/ratio> <building form>
<structural sources= tadao ando>
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ings= reinforces concrete throughout, glass> < structural materials>
<structural materials> < {predominantly} small scale residential buildings=
reinforces concrete throughout, glass> <structural materials>
<visual appearance > < large scale commercial buildings= concrete, con-
crete, and nothing but concrete, very minimal views of interior, thin long
windows {dramatic lighting}> < visual appearance>
<building form> < {predominantly} large scale commercial buildings = pure geometry> <build-
ing form>
<building functions> <environmental features{sustainabili-
ty/USGBC-L.E.E.D.}> <building functions>
<water management> < rain water harvesting = direct use to site {plants};
cistern {prolonged use}; reduction of use{interior of building}> < water
management>
<material usage> <considerations of materials = location derived; long
term effects; long term results; etc.> <material usage>
<site location> <considerations of site = long term effects; long term re-

considered in this study. I looked mainly at the materiality and the facades of the buildings created to get a deep sense of what was portrayed (typically the architects don’t show their working drawings and wall sections for these crazy structures, but visually it was apparent). What I had found was a typical pattern of skin and bones.

The process of thought incorporated into the project was derived from the idea that most of the modern buildings seen today, including commercial, residential, and corporate high rise buildings, are all based on very apparent and specific structural materials, appearance, and concepts. These design principles were derived from the international styles of Le Corbusier and Mies Van Der Rohe, while including the more recent examples of extreme use of concrete by Tadao Ando, and the USGBC-L.E.E.D. criteria. Although the idea of the coding seen in the poster is not really a functional code, the concept is to create a check-list that would allow someone to pick and choose design principles and materials with a focus on any category and have a new modern building be created for them.

This is a play on reality since most new design concepts are derived from either the Revit program, which uses coding to create forms and textures, as well as lighting sources to create the reality of the projects, or using a more conceptual program such as rhino or digital project to create the organic/abstract forms of a building, and then taking it back into Revit. Revit is seen as a design tool that hinders flexibility of design methods to the standard X, Y, and Z axis in a linear dimension. What happens is that every building comes out looking and functioning like a Mies, and Corb building, with mechanical systems that are formatted by the LEED criteria while the structure is standardized material. Other building types, such as Tadao Ando buildings, would be created using a more conceptual program to speak of an emotional response. The idea was to take the basic structural logic and materials and format them in a specific field, organized appropriately to create a web like system that would be seen as HTML code, breaking down all forms into one page based on very broad concepts. This in turn would create a faux-code format for all basic forms of building structure and facades.

What has come of in this idea of standardization in all current commercial/corporate high rise architecture is the interest of reasoning, which is efficiency of materials, and cost effectiveness. It is basic function that is driving the form of these buildings into a uniform and similar design. This is mainly for the standard “we just need a building that stands out but functions like all other buildings” approach. For the deconstructivist styles of Hadid, Gehry, and Libeskind, this is a different story. The form and personality of the building comes alive with abstract forms and curvy walls, mainly just a skin to the bones. When analyzing these exotic structures, my personal opinion of the use of these buildings are dominated by form and visual aesthetics over the function.

In conclusion it is apparent that it all comes down to the use and function of a building. The original concept of this project grew into something much more complex, starting with basic boxy architectural forms for efficiently built office buildings, and ending with an analysis of high cost/ highly exotic forms comparing to standardized/low cost architecture.

**FURTHER READING:**


the FETISH of the NAPKIN SKETCH: WHAT DOES IT TEACH US ABOUT ANALOG and DIGITAL DRAWING?

Tasanee Durrett

Introduction

The use of the napkin as a medium for architects--It has been a spontaneous way of getting ideas and designs down, and it has emphasized that design is inspired anywhere, anytime, anyplace. Today we see napkin sketches displayed in museums, and now we are starting to see this design process integrated into digital software. When and where did the napkin sketch originate? How has our fascination with the napkin sketch impacted our design processes? Taking these questions into consideration, this paper will investigate the myth of the napkin sketch and its relevance today. This paper will also assess the fetish of the napkin sketch and how this fetish has impacted how we view analog and digital drawing.

The napkin sketch dates back to the early 20th century where Alvar Aalto drew the basic form of one of his most successful works, the Church of Holy Spirit. Today, it preserved as a work of art. The status of the napkin sketch derives from "a generation of modernist architects for whom going out to lunch was as much a part of the design process as smoking a cigarette. Sometimes during a meal with colleagues or clients, a dynamic conversation yielded a surprisingly synthetic image that would survive the meal and hang above drafting tables or computers” (Horwitz, 106). How valuable are napkin sketches as a media? The spontaneity of drawing on any surface draws out the significance of communicating ideas as they come to you, so that nothing is lost or forgotten.
McCluhan's Theory

According to Marshall McCluhan, the media allows people to do things that we could not do ourselves, whether it be physically, emotionally, or mentally. In his work “The Medium is the Message”, he states that the media “accelerates and enlarges the scale of previous human function” (McCluhan, 2). In a way, this is beneficial towards broadening our information and knowledge, although it can tend to be a distraction towards how aware we are of the capabilities and complexities of media. McCluhan also states how “the content of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium” (McCluhan, 2). We tend to ignore the usefulness of certain media once we become so accustomed to them. For example, he talks about the character of the street light. The message of the streetlight is commonly ignored because we have grown unaware of the impacts that they have on us. This relates to the use of the napkin as a hand drawing tool. Have we completely ignored the potentials of hand drawing?

McCluhan’s theory elaborates on how the medium varies our understanding and awareness of what we think as we draw. Do we think differently when we draw on the computer as opposed to on a napkin? Digital media tries to integrate analog practice so that what you draw digitally can appear to have been hand-drawn in the end. For instance, the design software, AutoCad, has developed a new tool that allows you to generate objects and lines into a napkin sketch. When you generate the napkin sketch, random bumpy line segments are created along objects that have been selected to include in the sketch. You can even choose the line format from a very tight look to a messy look depending on the artistic flare you want the sketch to have. We have fetishized napkins to the point where we are not even utilizing them in their physical form but integrating them digitally so that drawings appear napkin sketched.

In my opinion, there is a huge difference between physically sketching on a napkin and letting the computer generate a napkin sketch for you. A napkin sketch causes one to work and think slowly so as not to destroy the napkin while sketching and there is a limitation to how much you can sketch. The computer has an infinite amount of space to draw on and allows you to erase, delete and start over—you cannot see your thought processes this way. As a generation, we have lost the sense of the physicality of the page—we no longer understand the importance of hand drawing.

Pallasmaa’s Theory

Juhani Pallasmaa theorizes that utilizing the body and the hand helps our understanding of the physical world. He expounds on the interplay of emotion and intelligence as we hand draw in his work “The Thinking Hand”. He talks about the potentials of hand drawing and how hand drawing allows us to slow down and understand what we are thinking about as we draw. He shows how the pencil in the hand becomes the bridge between the mind and the emerging image. He states that it is “through the unity of mind and body that craftsmanship and artistic work can fully be realised” (Pallasmaa, 33). Hewitt argues something similarly in his work “Representational Forms and Modes of Conception: An Approach to the History of Architectural Drawing” as he states that “drawings provide primary clues to thought processes and ideas” (Hewitt, 3). Drawing on a napkin allows you to slow down and realize what you are thinking about as you draw. On the computer there is barely any evidence, if at all, of what you thought about as you were drawing. Relating to how I work in studio, I tend to start designing by hand on trace paper, and I usually don’t stop hand drawing until the very last minute when it is time to start producing final drawings. I hand draw on trace so that I can go back and see what my thought processes were as I progressed in the design. Sometimes going back has even helped me further the design because I was able to gain an understanding of where I was going as I drew.

Taking Pallasmaa’s theory into consideration, perhaps we are not fetishizing the napkin sketch. Perhaps we are not fetishizing it enough by exhibiting them in museums and by integrating them with AutoCad. The exposure of the napkin sketch could be a way to show people how important napkin sketching is as a design tool—a way to emphasize that hand drawing is still important today as it had been centuries ago when there weren’t any computer screens or tablets.
Conclusion

Having had gone through this spontaneous experience of sketching on napkins, it has been an interesting investigation of how napkins can become more than a tool that we utilize when eating. The napkin became a way for me to communicate to myself about what I thought about and visualized—a way for me to sketch whatever idea, image, or word that came to mind, regardless of whether it was architectural or not. To me, the myth of the napkin sketch very much has relevance today, although I do not believe that the napkin sketch is being fetishized enough. It is important to never lose sight of hand drawing so that digital softwares like AutoCad do not replace the designer. It is also important for future designers to be capable of sketching their ideas physically so that they can understand their thought processes and grow to appreciate them.

CITATIONS:


FURTHER READING:


GOTHAM CITY: a SIMULATION of REALITY

Antoinette Escobar

Architecture is a subject that is understood in many ways, varying from the public eye, to those with knowledge of the subject, and even to the individuals who are in the profession themselves. To communicate architecture to the masses is to create a face for design and portray it in a way for the viewer to understand the designer’s intentions. Mass media play a large role in communicating information to varieties of populations. Film, for example, is a form of media that can be seen as universal to our society today. Unfortunately, architecture and design as portrayed in media and film can easily be misrepresented due to budget, set production, etc. which then creates a broad range of understanding the product in contrast to what the designer had intended to communicate to the audience.

In order to gain a better insight on architecture in media, I have chosen to explore the aspect of architecture in film, and how media convergence and mass production affects the reality of architecture and design. Within the field, I am choosing to create an analysis through research and cartography and how the quality of design is experience and perceived at an urban scale. But what city is worthy of an analysis in order to gain an understanding of its design? Any existing city will have clear design intentions and strategies and already have copious amounts of information available, but would it be viable to use a realistic city that is perceived in a consistent manner to the masses? This is why I have decided to focus on the cartography and design of fictional cities, Gotham City in particular. My reasoning for selecting Gotham was through comparison of other fictional cities; Metropolis is heavily based on New York while the Avengers series uses realistic cities. Gotham on the other hand, does derive from the city of Manhattan, but throughout Christopher Nolan’s Batman series, multiple city settings are used in the
filming process. That being said, The City of Gotham plays a significant role in the storyline of Batman, which is why constant change of city locations in Nolan’s movies creates a skewed understanding of the creator’s intentions.

Before conducting an analysis of Gotham City, an understanding of fictional cities and the media should be achieved. Gaining ideas from research as well as faculty and peer feedback, I came across concepts that apply to my objective; transmedia, simulacra, and hyperrealism. Transmedia creates a form of storytelling which occurs across multiple platforms; television, film, internet, video games, etc. Within these platforms occur fictional settings which create “new virtual architectures...” and in turn, “are becoming the spaces actually lived in.” As they become increasingly orientated around games and media devices, will people expect physical spaces to behave like these virtual spaces?” In addition to these fictional settings, simulacrum, “an image or representation of someone or something” occurs, and with a fictional setting portrayed through film, a hyper-reality is formed.

To begin my research on Gotham, I sought out to see if a map had already existed. I came across an article through Smithsonian that discussed DC Comic’s need for an official plan for Gotham after the series had already existed for 50 years. The cartographer for the city of Gotham was Eliot R. Brown, who even though had no experience in cartography, was a former technical artist for Marvel and also study the field of architecture. Brown worked back and forth with the creators in order to get the key elements of Gotham city just right. The final product took form of an island type city, similar to Manhattan, located in the area of where New Jersey is located in the United States today. As similar as it appears to be in comparison to existing cities, the creator wanted to label it as a fictional city so that anybody in any city was able to identify with Gotham. Here we can see the concept of simulacra, where our postmodern culture is merely creating a fictional setting for the existing reality. With our society today so heavily involved in media, there comes a point where people struggle to differentiate the fake from the real. “We, as human beings, interpret what we perceive to be real by gathering a series of signals, of clues, from the context which surrounds us: gestures, patterns, things we recognize as meaningful in a certain way, objects, places and the context they suggest.” Although these concepts are already being seen in the cartography of Gotham, additional aspects that affect the interpretation of design to the masses become apparent when the City of Gotham is represented in Nolan’s film series.

With the knowledge of the intentions for the layout and design of Gotham City, I went through Christopher Nolan’s Batman series with a recreated key plan map and took note of location highlights relative to the storyline of each movie. Also using IMDB, I was able to acquire a list of filming locations used in each movie. Since the City of Gotham plays a key part in each storyline, it became apparent that there was a motive to have a consistency of shot scenes of cityscape and skylines at a bird’s eye view. With Nolan’s series spanning from 2005-2012, the development of technology contributed to the production of each movie. Batman Begins (2005) consisted of a dark story setting, and had a consistency in scene locations from Wayne Manor to Blackgate Penitentiary. In contrast, Nolan’s more recent movie of the series, The Dark Knight Rises (2012), has a variety of location settings which portray Gotham in many different ways. This is where technological advances relative to media can cause an abstraction to the reality of design at an urban scale. In The Precession of Simulacra, Jean Baudrillard uses various phenomena to discuss the loss of distinction of reality and simulacrum, one of which is media culture. “Contemporary media (television, film, magazines,
billboards, the Internet) are concerned not just with relaying information or stories but with interpreting our most private selves for us, making us approach each other and the world through the lens of these media images. We therefore no longer acquire goods because of real needs but because of desires that are increasingly defined by commercials and commercialized images, which keep us at one step removed from the reality of our bodies or of the world around us.” So between the creation of the city setting through cartography, and the physical and visual representation of the Gotham in film, occurs transmedia story-telling, creating a hyper-realistic city from the elements of the realistic.

Watching and analyzing the series brought more of my attention to the change of the way the City of Gotham is portrayed to the masses. But with the City of Gotham being a hyper-realistic city, is there even a definite way of depicting the city to the audience? Or could it just be that the concept of simulacra applied to the design of Gotham is intentional, in order to allow the individual of any culture to relate to the city as if it were real. Apply this to the way we design today, how creating hyper-realistic designs, being affected by advancing technology and media distinguish the way we create spaces. Simulacrum is known to occur in our postmodern culture and in this case, postmodern architecture where design has an intention of incorporating the existing architecture from the past, what already exists. It is simply a replication of styles and symbols that are coined in previous methods which relates to creating a hyper-realistic design. “When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning.”

CITATIONS:


RECOMMENDED VIEWING:


INVISIBLE CITIES and the CITEES
Ayse Forier

In 1972 Rem Koolhaas along with Madelon Vriesendrop developed The City of the Captive Globe, a visual graphic of gouache and graphite on paper. This image is a conceptual representation of Manhattan an "accelerated birth of theories, interpretations, mental constructions, proposals and their infliction on the World." In his book OMA, Roberto Gargiani states that "many of New York's sky scrapers had...ideological ambitions to the extent that they represented...European avant-garde movements...that had which in their own way been preoccupied with the invention and subsequent imposition of a new way of life" (Gargiani 16). A grid is used to organize a series of blocks, each of which represents a different ideology of architecture. In his book Invisible Cities, Italo Calvino describes 55 cities through the voice of Marco Polo to Kublai Khan. As Polo describes more and more cities, the Khan comes to believe that only one city is actually being described through numerous conceptual representations. Polo in turn admits that he is describing Venice, which cannot be illustrated as a single city but must be understood as a series of realities, all making up the city as a whole. Like Koolhaas with the City of the Captive Globe, the cities described by Calvino are a series of typologies, broken up so as to understand each one as it exists on its own, but more importantly how each of these types fuse together to create a single cohesive city: Venice.

Koolhaas describes each block as a “breeding grounds” for ideologies upon which designs by Le Corbusier, Mies Van Der Rohe and a number of other architects are placed. Each design represents an architectural movement such as “Futurism, Constructivism, Expressionism, Surrealism, and Socialist Realism” (Gargiani 16). By organizing these elements on a grid, they must be understood in relation to each other, coexisting in one system that makes up the metropolis...
he uses artifacts taken from each place, each item taking on the role of a game piece on the board that is Venice. “...Each piece of information about a place recalled to the emperor's mind that first gesture or object with which Marco had designated the place. The fact received a meaning from that emblem and also added to the emblem a new meaning” (Calvino 22).

Koolhaas suggests through his graphic that the true essence of Manhattan as a metropolis cannot be understood through a single physical description of the city, but rather needs to be understood in terms of “unwelcome laws, undeniable truths... nonexistent physical conditions” (Koolhaas). It can be argued that Calvino uses the same methods in describing Venice but instead of graphically illustrating designs on granite pediments, he verbally illustrates and organizes each idea in the form of an individual city. Cities were chosen to be conceptually illustrated based on Polo's description of them in Invisible cities.

Eusapia is described in terms of duality, the duality of life and death. The inhabitants of Eusapia above construct and underground city, Eusapia below, for the dead. As inhabitants pass from life to death they are brought to the underground version of the city where the living only place them in positions of leisurely activity, creating a utopia for the dead. Soon the living begin to model Eusapia above after the ideal city of Eusapia below in hopes of their own Utopia. This blurs the lines between which came first, which is the land of the living and which is the land of the dead.

Laudomia also deals with duality of the city but in terms of non permanence instead of utopia. The celestial Laudomia is inhabited by the unborn, the visual Laudomia of the living, and the Laudomia below, of the dead. It is unknown whether the unborn lives are infinite or finite, suggesting that life as a whole is temporary. Like an hour glass, lives will continue trickling down from life to death until life runs out.

Ersilia is a city that exists through internal relationships of inhabitants to each other. The paths made between individuals are traced with thread, creating a physical web of relationships that replaces the city walls as they turn to ruins with the passing of time. Like Ersilia, Eutropia is defined in terms of movement and interactions of the individual rather than of the walls and buildings that exist. The paths of the inhabitants shape the city, giving it form and meaning, turning the built environment into negative space, secondary space. "...Thus the city repeats itself, shifting up and down on its empty chess board." “So their life is renewed from move to move” (Calvino 64).

Koolhaas' City of the Captive Globe lies upon a static grid of pedestals, constant and un-moving in their relation to each other. Calvino's cities cannot be organized in the same manner. They exist upon a chess board, open to movement and the changing...
connection of typologies as they are described through each city. Desire, Trade, Life and Death, Continuous and Hidden cities and so on are constantly changing, developing and disappearing as the pieces on a chess board.

Through Polo’s stories of individual cities, Calvino uses metaphor and intense imagery to describe the elements of Venice. The idea of city being more than the image it portrays of itself is illustrated through Tamara. Despite being within the city, it is impossible to understand fully what lies behind the walls and signs, what the city truly is. The endless strive to create a perfect city, an unattainable utopia that architects have always striven to design is seen in the description of Eusapia. The unknown idea of whether the city and life is permanent and will continue forever or whether it will reach an unavoidable end is described in Laudomia. Where Koolhaas dissects the city into ideologies of architecture to create The City of the Captive Globe, Calvino creates Venice through concepts of life.

CITATIONS:
Beginning the remediation project, I was thinking about the types of tangible media that are popular amongst today’s youth. The first thing that came to mind was the zine - a mini self published magazine usually used to display/promote an artist's work. I researched “zines” on the Internet and discovered that they go all the way back to the 1930s. The most popular type of zine was used in the punk eras (1970s and 90s) to share music and raise awareness through raw and explicit images. Taking an architectural concept and delivering it to U of A students through the form of the cool and relevant zine will hopefully promote a public awareness of an important social issue that affects us all daily.

Reading an article on your ipad or computer screen can be so monotonous and interest is lost so quickly. Information delivered through technology is dominated by ads, links for other articles, and the distraction of scrolling, never fully being able to digest the article as a whole piece. A zine eliminates the busy world of ads that not even a magazine has the capability of doing. A zine doesn’t ask much of the reader. It’s not asking you to click a hyperlink, scroll past ads, or flip past pages of Apple’s new product. The material in every zine is original, chosen carefully by the maker. The carefulness and carelessness gives each printed copy its own personality (which might be taking it a bit far) but the author is making this zine with a purpose - to promote their work or to get a message out to the public. They are most likely not getting paid so there’s not much money motivating the zine creator, just raw passion.

I began by doing what I have done for every project since I knew how to use the internet: I Googled. I looked up images and archives of punk zines. Towards the end I felt like I needed something tangible to reference. I drove to Bookmans in hopes of finding some old...
magazines that could inspire me. I was standing in front of Vice and some Japanese pop culture magazine and then a thought occurred to me. I wasn’t going to find any old zines in Bookmans because a zine isn’t meant to stick around for more than a month (or even a week). They’re ideas that come and go and they may or may not stick in the reader’s mind but that depends on the quality/message of the zine. However, I think the content in self published mini magazines is much richer than anything in most magazines. There are less pages to fill so the content is more carefully chosen with a lot fewer advertisements (maybe none at all).

Along with Google I referenced History and Theory III, my own experiences in public spaces, and an article written by a friend of mine that I assisted with. In history we were learning about globalization and Rem Koolhaas’s Junkspace was one of the recommended readings. After reading that essay, it put a lot of my thoughts and feelings into perspective. Although junkspace was nonsensical at times and criticized architectural works that were not designed by OMA, it had some really solid points about the spaces that go unused. My own experiences in private spaces have left a bad taste in my mouth which is what motivated me to write about this topic. And after following multiple artists and photographers on social media sites who make zines to promote their work, I figured that anything miniature and well designed is a sure-fire way to get your work/ideas out there.

The text that aided in how to design a public declaration was The Founding and Manifestos of Futurism by F.T. Marinetti. Written in 1909, Marinetti is definitely on to zine culture. He’s loud, explicit, and delivers a message to the public through a combination of personal and political words that current day zine-makers only wish they could mimic. With this, I found myself stripping down public space to its essence. Sure it’s a concept that gets thrown around all the time by architects but what often gets overlooked are the feelings we have in public spaces. With each public space comes the personal emotion each individual has associated with it which is why, on the last page, I’ve called it a feeling or an adjective rather than a formula or perhaps definition.

After taking a step back from the text it appeared as though I was contradicting my own thoughts. I love places like the High Line and despise the mall but the two are undeniably always filled with people. It seems as though Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi had similar feelings when they suggested students learn from Las Vegas. In an interview conducted by Adam Marcus for Museo Magazine, they came to a consensus that maybe it’s not the content of Las Vegas that we’re learning from. It’s the actually “learning from” method that we take something away from. Applying that idea to my own surroundings, Tucson Mall, I can see that there aren’t many physical things I can take from the architecture of the mall that can be applied to the design of a public space, but I can learn from these spaces and apply that method elsewhere.

I’ve always been interested in magazines and then when I found out about the less intimidating “zine,” I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to do something fun combining all the things I’m interested in: skate culture, public space, graphic design, and writing. I began with the desire to make something tangible to deliver to a public audience and then thought about an architectural concept that everyone would/ or could be interested in. Taking this project a step further (which I definitely will aim for over the summer), I would like to place the zine in one of these private spaces so the topic really hits home. One thing that I know I definitely do not want to do is put this online because a zine is meant to be flipped through (with the intention of the reader getting a paper cut). The public and their space is something I’m deeply interested in and it’s clear now that the zine is the perfect form to deliver that message through. The two (public space and zines) have so much in common. They both demand very little but can offer so much.
THE BEST SPACES IN LIFE ARE FREE.

CITATIONS:


FURTHER READING:

Huck Magazine - Zine Scene

**a WHOLE NEW WORLD:**
**BRINGING the ACTUAL to the VIRTUAL**

Caitlin Kessler

Did you know the Sims was originally designed as an architecture simulation program, with the Sims only there to evaluate the built environment? This is a fact—taken straight from Wikipedia. Whether this statement is an actual fact or not, there is certainly truth within it and a reason to question the power of virtual reality. Why is life simulation a powerful tool for design? What kind of limitations and opportunities does the Sims offer for designing space? Why is the Sims not a professional design tool for architecture students? Can tangible, physically built architecture be equally represented within the gaming world? After taking these questions into consideration, it became important to focus my research on two ideas – placeless architecture and testing the similarities and differences between real and simulated models. By using Le Corbusier’s built project, Villa Savoye, understanding the importance of representation through movement in space, and discovering the limitations and opportunities of video game programs, it becomes evident that the virtual world of the Sims 4 can completely distort reality.

After some extensive research of real architecture to remediate with virtual production, Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye became the best option to be represented in digital media. In Towards a New Architecture, Le Corbusier focused on the idea of “perfect” architecture – involving “rejection, pruning, cleansing [to discover] the clear and naked emergence of the essential” (Le Corbusier 128). He understood that modern architecture was a new style of architecture, and he endeavored to follow the process of perfection in order to portray this style. With the idea of perfection came an idea of placeless architecture, in which “the attainment [was] universally recognized, [and] a state of perfection universally felt” (Le Corbusier 128). In other words, his architecture is “high art,” perfect and...
placeless. Villa Savoye could, essentially, be placed anywhere and belong – perhaps even the virtual world. Le Corbusier’s architecture represents his idea on residents of architecture “installing themselves in their house-implements” (Le Corbusier 129). Henri Lefebvre discusses how people actually used Le Corbusier’s architecture by stating, “And what did the occupants do? Instead of installing themselves in their containers... they decided that as far as possible they were going to live ‘actively.’” In doing so, they showed what living in a house really is: an activity” (Lefebvre 92). The Sims allows versions of people to live within the spaces we design while managing to eliminate the idea of culture, erasing the boundaries between high and low art. Due to this process of normalization, modeling Villa Savoye within the Sims 4 platform became an interesting and ironic task.

Before reflecting on the process of building Villa Savoye within the Sims 4, it is important to understand the relationships between architecture, movement through space, and interactivity through video games. In the book Video Game Spaces, Michael Nitsche explains how Le Corbusier created the idea of “architectural promenade” that was implemented in Villa Savoye. He explains, “In this house, we are presented with a real architectural promenade, offering prospects which are constantly changing and unexpected” (Nitsche 75). Le Corbusier knew that the new style of architecture needed to be represented in a different way, and he often turned to film to represent movement through pace within his architecture. This was the very beginning of virtual architecture. Nitsche states on virtual architecture, “It may have grown out of cinematic traditions, but once interactivity was added, it reached the world of video games” (Nitsche 76). Video games are the tool to represent Le Corbusier’s idea of “architectural promenade.”

Through the “interactive and navigable nature of virtual space” (Nitsche 77), and using plans and sections of the very real Villa Savoye, I discovered the limitations of designing in the Sims 4. With Le Corbusier’s “five points of architecture,” I imagined it to be fairly simple to design columns (pilotis), living space above the ground, terraces, a free plan, and a free façade within the game. From the size of the Sims’s “lot,” to having no options for curved walls, to a forced entrance for the building (due to the location of the street), and to other multiple limitations involving doors and windows available to use, the digital platform confined creativity to a certain extent. After using the Sims 4 and its “tools,” the limitations seemed to discourage important aspects of the Villa Savoye’s design.

The Sims 4 may distort the reality that we are familiar with; however, it also creates an entirely new reality. Beatriz Colomina describes the process of filmmaking, in relation to Le Corbusier’s experiments with photography and film, as “the manipulation of two realities— the superimposition of two stills, both traces of material realities—produces something that is already outside of the logic of “realism.” Rather than represent reality, it produces a new reality” (Colomina 7). Similarly, the digital platform of Sims 4 uses material realities to produce new, and virtual, realities. Unlike other design platforms such as Revit, SketchUp, or Rhino, the Sims 4 allows simulations of people to “use” the built environment. Through this opportunity, a new reality can be created, visited, tested, and manipulated. Sherry Turkle, a leading professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wrote about the idea of simulation and how “it has become clear that it can tempt its users into a lack of fealty to the real” (Turkle 8). Turkle is describing the phenomena of being placeless within this virtual reality. The Sims 4 simulates human experience, engaging the designer in a unique way and offering a different perspective of digital design. Through the eyes of a simulated human, or Sim, the virtual architecture is connected to experience that is familiar to tangible reality. We can walk through, sit on, lay on, walk up, walk down, reach, bend, and spin our way around the virtual architecture, realizing a new reality that is almost completely in our control.

From using the actual Villa Savoye to create a virtual model, to understanding what sets video games apart from other design tools, to virtually constructing the Sims’s version of Villa Savoye, it can be concluded that virtual models misrepresent physical models, yet provide opportunities of different exploration. Through lack of...
appropriate scale, endless limitations, and the inability to interact tangibly with the space, the value of built reality is lost through digital design platforms. However, the reality that is created through Sims 4 can be uniquely experienced and manipulated. It is a reality the designer controls, free from culture, climate, economy, and politics. Nevertheless, it is a design platform that has its limitations with the availability of space and materials. The Sims may cultivate design creativity, but it is confined creativity.

CITATIONS:


FURTHER READING:


MODEL as a DIAGRAMMATIC EXPERIENCE

Eduardo Lopez Corte

In modern times we are very intrigued and focused on the experiential aspects of life and architecture. In architecture we tend to make models and diagrammatic drawings that can express and project a particular experience. We as humans seek to unveil the essence of architecture through different media. There are various types of models that can serve different purposes and can be understood in different ways. Alexandra Lange explains how models were used to convey different ideas and purposes; specifically I will focus on her “Paste-up” modeling idea. “These collages featured real fabrics and finishes cut and pasted on a board” (Lange 238). By using real elements in on these boards, designers were able to express their ideas in a stronger way. They could very closely represent the final experience and textures with some colors and fabrics.

For this project I intend to understand the importance of model making and how we can translate experience from a 3d object to a 2d drawing. Architects and designers have relied on the physical models ever since the profession was invented. This is a way to physically manifest ones idea and to engage the client or the user. “The mock-up” in Lange’s reading is a physical representation of a particular aspect of the building which can be used as a way to explain the entirety of such. In the mock-up we find real materials, with real proportions which generates a response in humans. We can experience the materiality of a building without having the complete building in front of us. Through experiential means we can project our ideas or influence the user and alter his emotions.

I do not intend to only focus of the idea of physical models, an important aspect of this mediation project is to translate the physical model into a 2d drawing and still manage to convey and project experience and
materiality. In contrast to Alexandra Lange, Kevin Lynch utilizes 2d techniques in order to map cities. In Lynch’s “The Image of the City”, Lynch created the concept of “place legibility” which is essentially the ease with which people understand the layout of a space. These mental representations along with the actual city contain many unique elements, which are defined by Lynch as a network of paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. Another famous method he used in order to map a city is called “mental mapping.” Rather than emphasize the traditional way we learn about our city, through maps and plans, Lynch focuses on how people in the city usually use and perceive their physical environment. There is a strong difference between the way a physical map represents a city or a campus and how mental mapping represents the same thing, for instance, a map of a college campus show blocks and roads but when implementing mental mapping we focus more on how the user experiences such place and how they actually move through the campus.

In order to begin this process of paralleling the techniques of physical modeling and those of 2d modeling first I came up with a scale model of one of my projects. The materials used were simple standard basswood and glue. I tried to keep this model as simple as possible in order to be able to diagram the project and bring out the experience in a different way. During the modeling process our brain begins to visualize the user walking through the project. We begin to ask ourselves how the user might find his or her own path around.

The physical model in this instance serves in a way as a mixture between a miniature mock-up and a paste-up. We have something tangible in 3d that can be manipulated in a way almost like the mock-up that Lange talks about. We can use this model as a way to show the client or the user how some of the pieces will come together, the relationship in scale from one object to another one as well as the proximity of spaces. Although not exactly the same, the paste-up is also represented in the physical model in a particular way. Instead of having a board where we have textures or pictures of some sort pasted to a board, we have a model that expresses the difference in materiality and the difference from interior to exterior. Also, materiality can be represented with different textures throughout the model which mimics the idea of the paste board. We can call the physical detailed model the modern paste up-board.

Now that we have an understanding of the physical model we can move forward with the re-mediation and use the techniques implemented by Lynch. The diagram is intended to express the experience one would have by navigating through the project. Lynch utilized his diagraming techniques on a grand scale, he focuses on cities but in this exercise I took his elements and placed them on a smaller scale. The diagram shows how some areas are narrow and you get the feeling of compression. Also we have landscape to look at and in the diagram is well noted with the same symbols as Lynch would do it. In conclusion, both methods of modeling (3d and 2d) serve their own purpose and there is different information that one can get from each one. In a sense they are independent from each other but when utilized together they can complement and express better the ideas.
CITATIONS:


FURTHER READING:


MAKING the CUT: the EDITING PROCESS of OLD and NEW MEDIA

ELIANA MERCADO

The basis of this project is focused on the classic discussion of old versus new media. The old media being analyzed is the magazine and the new media chosen to compare it to is the Pinterest board. The two case studies are the magazine, L'Esprit Nouveau edited by Le Corbusier, and the Pinterest board, L'Esprit Tucson curated by myself. The project focuses on the act of curating and how it occurs in the two forms of media — how they allow for different types of editing and the liberty or control people have on the information being put out. It can be said that L'Esprit Nouveau was particular in the work that was published and every image was carefully adapted to fit the vision by the editor and the vision I was trying to convey by using the Pinterest board was one of a modern and art-filled Tucson.

The two forms of media differ drastically in the editorial process. A magazine, especially one as specific as L'Esprit Nouveau goes through multiple layers of editing and reading and re-reading. It is a process for a group of people where tasks are divided amongst professionals in order to produce a product worthy of being published. The part being published has to go through a series of filters in order to classify as “publishable.” On Pinterest, because it is the “new media” being analyzed, the editing boundaries are only those of the person clicking the “pin it” button. A Pinterest board can be described as being less formal, personalized, and being one without limits.

Both forms of media can be seen as powerful platforms for curating an idealized or fake image of the world as it may be conceived by the editor. The editor may chose to publish only what he/she may think will aid his/her argument. It can be said that editors use a method of converging in their editing process whether it be as

Image right | L'Esprit Nouveau re-mediated to fit today’s Tucson including an explanation for why certain images were chosen

Hotel Congress is located at the center of Downtown nightlife and functions as a restaurant as well as a bar and comes with its own piece of history

Bleaphois 2 is one of Tucson’s greatest attractions. It not only serves for hours as a history lesson but as a scientific accomplishment as well

some posts that were included had to do with nature and the desert’s natural beauty

Cafe Passe is located on 4th Ave., a place of entertainment and representing the liveliness of Tucson

Tucson, the University in particular, currently has their eyes on the January 8th memorial competition. The finalists include a local architecture firm composed of UI of A CAPLA graduates

DUST is a local, young, up and rising architectural firm focused on site specificity and reaching into the past

Linda Rosenberg was a Tucson native and musician who forms a part in Tucson’s history. This video represents the time period she was from as well as a more accurate representation of her music rather than including lyrics or musical notes

the tucson streetcar was included due to its connection to technological and social advancements of the city

Rem Koolhaas on the cover of Wired Magazine was a great advancement on the architectural realm because architects are not often featured on the cover of magazines that are not architecture related

The Living Hy-Fi MoMA PS1 installation by David Benjamin was an interesting article to include because of his innovative use of technology for architectural purposes

Pritzker Prize winner Fani Otto, was just announced and this was an interesting post found on Pinterest on his accomplishments and works

L'Esprit Nouveau also included pieces on other magazines and journals of the time so that relocation of the Tucson boutique, Boni, would be a good opportunity to shine some light on it and publicize it

De Grazia Art Studio is the art studio and gallery of a local Tucson artist

I made the relation between the Tesla car and Ford and added a Tesla model commercial in representation of the Ford ads in the magazine

El Charro Cafe was included as part of the advertisement section because it is a Mexican restaurant in Tucson but it was also one of the first Mexican restaurants in the United States

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formal as a magazine or as informal as the Pinterest board.

Henry Jenkins defines convergence as "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audience who would go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they wanted." Convergence can be seen in L’Esprit Nouveau for Le Corbusier included a variety of works in the magazine from articles on fine arts to advertisements for a Ford automobile.

More directly related to this project is Jenkins’s ideas on "participatory culture," the interaction of media consumers and producers and the heavy dependency on the consumers’ active participation on the circulation of media content. The active participation from us as consumers to pin and re-pin a commercial for Tesla rather than printing it on the back of a magazine. New media is interactive and dependent on connection and conversation.

The research part of the process called for searching general key ideas concerning Le Corbusier, specifically L’Esprit Nouveau in order to get a good understanding of the intention of the project. The analysis of the content in L’Esprit Nouveau was done by taking a look at republished versions of the French magazine and translating portions of it into English considering that they have yet to be fully translated. This helped clear up the themes and concepts in the magazine. The translating tools were not used to translate all of the text but just enough to make sense of the images and illustrations. Some of the reoccurring topics included aesthetics and sciences, architecture, music and lyrics, dance, cinema and film, literature, materiality and of course advertising.

The Pinterest board was used as the new media substituting the old. The editorial process for Pinterest involves uploading personal images, sorting through existing pins found directly on the Pinterest search engine, or using the world wide web as your source. L’Esprit Nouveau was constricted to only printable works and Pinterest can host a variety of methods of conveying an idea therefore You Tube was a tool used in the remediation process specifically for advertising and the musical part of the issue.

After translating and narrowing down the essence of L’Esprit Nouveau I took the larger topics into consideration and went on to create the Pinterest board in lieu of a magazine featuring artists, musicians, and events directly related to Tucson or more global topics relating to a broader audience. Using the Pinterest search engine I found articles and images that other people had already posted then I went on to search on other websites for more specific articles. I was acting as the editor or curator of this page as Le Corbusier was for L’Esprit Nouveau. Le Corbusier’s editing process differed from mine in that he went on to physically alter each piece to fit his vision while I just scrolled through multiples of the same image until I found one that fit. The topics I chose to include in L’Esprit Tucson related to art, music, eateries, and technology specific to Tucson but I also took the liberty to include some works from greater scale firms and organizations.

The processes of editing has not only changed over time but has also changed in relation to the form of media being used and each medium comes with its own liberties and restrictions. Le Corbusier was able to control what was being published and what wasn’t, where he went as far as to airbrush his own images in order to portray a different vision of what was actually real. Newer media is so open to change where control over these things is almost impossible. Pinterest, in this case, allows you to pin images founds within Pinterest, the world wide web, or even personal images and if you do decide to go with an image found in the Internet then there will most likely be multiple variations of that same image in a different format and then you lose control of what is being posted. Pinterest will also relate your pin to other pins or will find another similar image and the chain continues. This project was a discovery of the role new technology plays in our everyday lives. Marshall McLuhan would describe this as "the medium is the message," meaning that we often believe that the content being displayed by these new forms of media has an affect on us but it really is the media and technologies that directly influence the way we view the world.

FURTHER READING:


Alfred Hitchcock’s Psycho is a classic horror movie that uses architecture in order to create the setting of psychological fear. Hitchcock takes specific architectural steps in order to enhance the mood of the scene. Architects take similar steps in the development of a design. I started my architectural mediation project by researching what goes into conducting a film analysis. I knew that I needed to watch the movie multiple times, while taking notes. I also began to research Alfred Hitchcock. I found that the architecture in the film was used to tell the story as much, if not more than the characters themselves. As film uses architecture to tell a story, architects use story to convey their design.

Hitchcock made over twenty-six plans of the Bates motel and residence. I was able to find several film reviews as well as architectural plans drawn by Hitchcock himself. He used the architecture to symbolize the relationship between Norman and his mother. The imposing home sits on top of a hill and has a vertical axis while the motel sits at the base of the hill and runs along a horizontal axis. This juxtaposition in forms is meant to represent the juxtaposition between the two sides of Norman. There are also many discrepancies in the plans of the buildings meant to represent Norman’s break in personality. For example some of the plans had no bathrooms, while others had bathrooms that went into other motel rooms. One film reviewer believed that, “Norman’s frail mental state is a direct result of his inability to locate himself between the anonymous modernist box of the motel or his mother’s Gothic house.” The camera work by John L. Russell is positioned so that the characters appear small in comparison to the overbearing architecture. When the film was shown in Thailand, the film was not dubbed or even given subtitles. The sound was turned off, while a
man stood near the screen and interpreted what he saw. This shows the importance of setting, rather than what can be heard. The architecture became a key player in the film.

For the remediation project I created a series of storyboards that depict important scenes, each with some sort of architectural significance. I documented the first encounter with the motel and house, the approach to the house, the final reveal, and the end reflection. These were scenes that were important to the story and were set up in specific ways in order to create the scene. The film itself uses the architecture to set the mood and play on the emotions of the characters as well as the viewers. The first time we see the motel it is dark and raining. We don’t get a clear view of the motel and this reflects the mystery of the residents. When the home is shown, we see a silhouette of “the mother” in a window of their Victorian house. As characters begin to realize that something may be amiss within this setting we are shown images of the house, each getting closer and showing more detail. In another scene as Norman comes after the character, we are shown a scene in which she hides on the stair going to the fruit cellar, while we see Norman ascend the stair going to the bedrooms. “A staircase not only connects the semi public spaces of the house with the strict private environment of bedrooms but for this reason portends deep familial crisis.” Descending into the fruit cellar, the architecture changes immediately. We are no longer in a Victorian home; we are in a cold, stone basement. This is where Norman’s secret is revealed, in the deepest part of the home, the part that is closed off to the rest of the world. As Norman is taken into custody, the final scene of the film places him in an empty room against a white, textureless room. At this point we are supposed to shift our focus from the architecture to the character. This is when we are meant to reflect on what has just happened as we listen to the final monologue of Norman Bates. “You quickly forget how A leads to B ... but as the French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard observed, the Hitchcockian cinema compels not with story, but with images – the open palmed hand reaching for the door, the simulated fall down the staircase, the whirling retreat of the camera from a dead woman’s face. These stark snippets imbue the films with their uncanny allure and imprint themselves in the mind of the spectator much more effectively than any of the maters convoluted plots.”

So then look at the reverse, what can architects take from film? Architecture tells a story. The story can be simply telling how a design was developed or the experience one gets as they walk through a space. Concepts often fade as a design develops. By thinking of architecture as a story, it can become easier to maintain a concept all the way through a project. The details are then elements of the story that piece together to create the overarching theme. Architectural presentations are essentially a story as well. We take the audience through our designs in a similar method as film leads the audience through the lives of the characters. In film and architecture it is important to pay attention to the needs of the audience (or clients). “Our interests might not align with what is most important to the project.” This is certainly true in architecture as often clients have something different in mind than the architect believes would be best. In film the aim is to provide entertainment or convey a message, the aim is always at the audience. My remediation project of storyboards relates to the architecture boards we use to present our projects. We are essentially doing the same thing. We are using a series of drawings or images to represent the experience of a space or scene. Scenes in film are set up in a very specific way; similar to how we choose the exact angle we take our renderings from. That exact view conveys the message we are trying to get across. Film and architecture feed from each other interchangeably, they work in similar methods, while the
Images above | Norman Bate’s final monologue

CITATIONS:


A BLOG FOR BUCKY

Katie Roch

MEDIUMS
‘Old’ Media – pen, pencil, acrylic on paper and canvas as well as physical books for research

‘New’ Media – digital image editing (Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop), Tumblr, video hosting sites, and online library research tools

For this mediation project, I explored how social media is used as a creative outlet as well as tool for the distribution and discussion of ideas. Working with communication theories of Clay Shirky and Marshall McLuhan, I combined traditional media with digital media as a method of creating additional commentary on the work of architect Buckminster Fuller. Starting with “Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth,” I reinterpreted passages into imagery using various visual mediums including paint, pencil, and digital processes. I concurrently created a Tumblr account with which to share my art and reblog other imagery and quotations by Buckminster Fuller (buckyoperating.tumblr.com).

I chose Buckminster Fuller as my subject because although he primarily wrote in the mid-century, his work still resonates strongly with the problems of today. Buckminster Fuller is remembered as a designer with an unusually comprehensive view of our world. Fuller was not only an architect, but an inventor, engineer, author, poet and philosopher. His work focused on the betterment of society through innovation and “doing more with less.” In his 1963 book, “Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth,” Fuller discusses globalization and sustainability, decades before these issues became well known. In this book, Fuller urges global cooperation to end the quick depletion of Earth’s resources. He insists that specializiation, as a form of disguised slavery, has been a detriment to society and that people must begin
to think holistically in order to resolve world inequities and ensure continuing resource production. “Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth” is especially interesting considering Fuller’s expectations for today; that by the twenty-first century either society will have ceased to exist, found a new planet to inhabit, or “humanity will be physically and economically successful and individually free in the most important sense . . . no human will be interfering with the other” (34). Though Fuller may have overestimated humanity’s capacity for such quick change, digital communication and social media may be helping us move towards this freedom. By interpreting his work on a public, digital forum, I hoped to call attention to Fuller’s revolutionary ideas and expectations for humanity.

I took to Tumblr as a platform for my blog as well as a source of current information and cultural attitude towards Fuller’s work. Searching for posts tagged under Buckminster Fuller yielded very interesting results. Almost half of the top posts as well as first recommended blog regaled the daily adventures of a French bulldog lovingly named after Fuller. To Tumblr, pictures of this dog were far more popular, and perhaps more culturally relevant, than Buckminster Fuller himself. Others pages had been created dedicated to his actual work but had since been abandoned. More than ever, I felt that Fuller’s ideas were underrepresented. By contributing original artwork based on Fuller’s ideas and reblogging images, videos, and quotations by the inventor, I created a compilation of snapshots into Fuller’s vast contributions to architecture, engineering and world theory, all available to be viewed online in a public forum.

As a background for my explorations, I studied the digital media theory of Clay Shirky in his book “Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations.” Shirky, an interactive telecommunications professor, discusses the expansion of social capital created through the advent of digital communication technologies. He argues that we are living in the middle of the greatest increase in sharing and expressive capability in history, and that the unprecedented increase in connectivity brought to us by new communications tools have empowered people to take action in ways previously impossible. For this project, I was able to create and curate content that has the potential to reach viewers across the world instantaneously.

This new potential for nonprofessionals to share ideas across wide audiences is not without its limitations. Shirky argues that “in a weblog world there are no authorities, only masses, and yet the accumulated weight of attention continues to create the kind of imbalances we associate with traditional media” (94). This imbalance, he argues, arises from the inability to communicate meaningfully with more than a handful of people. This social exchange allows us to discuss and spread ideas as well as improve ourselves based on the input of others. It isn’t enough that I’ve shared my work publicly; the lack of written response is a main pitfall in this blog platform. Tumblr encourages “favoriting” as well as reblogging, but comment threads only happen if a successive chain of people are willing to repost on their own blog and contribute commentary. Although I added my own thoughts and opinions to many of the posts I made, through the rating filtration system, they are likely to remain unread, unchallenged, and therefore meaningless to others. This inability to engage in commentary is incredibly detrimental to the process of social media as a tool for social change.

Marshall McLuhan, mid century communications theorist and public icon, also understood the
implications of new technology as an extension of man. Though McLuhan did not live to see the incredible societal changes brought about by social media, he predicated this eventual capabilities of electronic technology as well as its effects on mass culture. He described the uniting nature of the electric age as a ‘global village’ where ‘everybody lives in the utmost proximity created by our electric involvement in one another’s lives’ (35). This virtual proximity has enabled us to connect with others on a global level. Marshall McLuhan himself recognized the importance of Buckminster Fuller’s own work on global theory. Perhaps more often quoted than Fuller himself, in 1965 McLuhan underlined Fuller’s lessons by stating: “There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew.”

These are three main ideas I took from my research and experimentation with social networking:

1. Social Media has made it incredibly easy to share your work, and there’s little reason not to.

Austin Kleon, author of “Show Your Work!”, urges artists and other professions alike to engage with social media as a tool for improvement and self-promotion. Moving forward, I’m considering using these tools to track the development of my ideas throughout my capstone as well as my personal artistic progression.

2. Forming an online community and gaining “recognition” is harder than it looks.

It takes time, effort, and luck to create a readership from scratch. It is perhaps best to build off of existing, and active, communities with similar mindsets in order for your ideas to catch on. Clay Shirky argues that the ideal group size allows for its participants to freely communicate with one another. The one-sided popularity contest often resulting from internet fame is not collaborative or productive, much like other media.

3. Activism over social networks has the potential to seriously impact societal views.

The speed of our changing technology has also effected the speed of our changing political climate. Joss Hands’ book, “@ is for Activism” discusses how the freedom provided by digital technologies has radically transformed politics in the last few decades. As an outlet for the masses, social networks allow users to explore a variety of ideas and creative outlets, much like Buckminster Fuller had wanted for the astronauts piloting Spaceship Earth.

“In the patterning of total evolutionary events, there comes a time, once in a while, amongst the myriad of low energy events, when a large energy event transpires and is so disturbing that with their general adaptability lost, the ultra-specialized creatures perish. This is typical of the way in which extinction occurs through overspecialization” (Fuller 12).
"When we approach our problems on a universal, general systems basis and progressively eliminate the irrelevancies, somewhat as we peel petals from an artichoke, at each move we leave in full visibility the next most important layer of factors with which we must deal. We gradually uncover you and me in the heart of now."

(Fuller 39).

CITATIONS:


FURTHER READING:


IS 3D PRINTING the NEXT INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION?

Monica M. Sanchez

3D printing, also known as “the industrial revolution 2.0” (3D Printing 2015) is considered the next big thing on a large scale, but what’s all the hype about?

There was a time where plywood and plastic were the next big thing following World War II that also gave promise to transform our lives. When looking through digital trends, it shows “The Next Big Thing” rarely turns out as it is intended to. The more ground breaking something is, the more unforeseeable its future is resulting in dissatisfaction. It is difficult to know fact from fiction (3D Printing 2015).

Plywood material following World War II has been said to embody “the great promises of modernism inherent in the adaptation of new industrial techniques in the service of a scientific response to the human desire for comfort, convenience, efficiency, economy, and cleanliness” (Harrod 2008, 2). Charles and Ray Eames, American designers, began using the material during the mid1940’s when it was available for domestic purposes and potentially for mass-production (Neuhart 1989, 59). Their goal was to test the limits of a rigid material to create an ergonomic seating device with little process time. The Eames’ LCW chair delivered the solution to the method and straightforward process. A rough shape of each component was sketched out on plywood sheets and coated with a plastic binder. Where the wood grain ran parallel, another sheet was placed perpendicular to the next to increase strength one ply at a time to obtain a 5-ply thickness, known as lamination (Neuhart 1989, 59-60). The next step was to place the laminated ply, still wet, over an inflatable neoprene and canvas air bag where a metal mold filled with synthetic heating oil. At the bottom of the mold was a plaster mold where wood and glue were clamped to the machine (Neuhart 1989, 60). It was stated by Eames design that,
“compressed air filled a rubber membrane pressing the plywood into the curves of the mold. The heat from the lower pad fused the wood sheets into a single piece” (Neuhart 1989, 60). Only a total of thirty minutes for all pieces were required for curing and trimming on a table saw (Neuhart 1989, 60). When all pieces were obtained, they were drilled and fittings were placed to assemble the chair.

Though modified today, the process of lamination is still used for furniture among other things. Lamination is a more efficient use of wood and rapid process for a project outcome.

In the postwar American era, there was hype around Celluloid plastic as “The Next Big Thing” of the future. Plastic was such a big deal in the 1960’s that in the movie “The Graduate” there is reference to it in a quote stating, “I just want to say one word to you. Just one word…. Plastics….There’s a great future in plastics” (Meikle 1995, 3). Sound familiar? McLuhan writes “the medium is the message” (McLuhan 1964, 1), so we must ask ourselves, what is the message 3D printing is delivering? The buzz around the use of 3D printing is to virtually produce or digitally fabricate anything you can imagine through the use of plastic by a click of a mouse to represent the twenty first century “medium.”

It has been said, “the future will be constructed in your living room—everything from cars, food, guns, drugs, even human organs” (3D Printing 2015). This may sound appealing, or scary to some, but there are limitations. 3D printing allows us to use an additive manufacturing process to melt plastics, or in some cases metal or concrete. Through this method, the heated material is limited to melt one thin layer at a time in the Z-axis onto a surface.

Through the years, several designers and architects with complex designs have turned to 3D printing to represent their projects or concepts at a small scale. Now designers and architects envision, and are currently considering at a small scale, using this technology to build homes and eventually urban design. However, the process is a very slow and a painstakingly challenging task (Armstrong 2014, 3). Not only do files have to be converted, transferred and created, the print time can take several hours if not days. SketchUp 2015 Pro (BIM), STL plugin, Certificate Trust List, Rhino 5, Makerbot 2 3d printer, Dimension sst 1200es 3d printer, PLA material, SLA material, computer and a flashdrive are some of the steps just to get started.

A demonstration of a printed object was conducted to provide insight on the complexity of the process. The first step was to research the accurate dimensions of an object, in this case the Eames LCW chair. Once acquired from midcenturyhome.com magazine and smartfurniture.com, a SketchUp model was created in 3d using SketchUp 2015 Pro as a Building Information Model (BIM). This was done by importing the measurements with orographic projected images from a JPEG to the buildable space in SketchUp. Orthographic projection is the process of orthogonally representing a third-dimensional object in a two-dimensional space. Next the JPEG of the orthographic projection was scaled and traced. Shapes were extruded and dimensioned to proper proportions until fully assembled. Each singular member was grouped and exported to an STL file format using the STL plugin which then transfers to a Certificate Trust List file. The file was then loaded into Rhino 5 as an AutoCAD DWG file which then used to insure all meshes were closed and able to print on the 3d printer. The file was sent to print from the Dimension sst 1200es 3d printer interface on the computer and was also sent to the Makerbot 2 3d printer. The file sent to sst 1200es 3d printer (the white print) used additional material as support to test the stability of the print build with more material. The Makerbot 2 was used to test if more material would be needed for support for the printed LCW chair. This was printed on the Makerbot 2 interface on the computer. Printing 25 minutes on the Makerbot 2 3d printer proved printing must have supported material to print the remainder of the chair (red). Two problems occurred. One, without support material, the heated plastic material continued to print
in space causing a bundle of plastic build up to form, which was not originally fabricated in the file. Second, the head of the Makerbot 2 bumped the freestanding legs which caused them to tip over. Duration would have been 1 hour and 24 minutes at 3 inches tall. After 4 hours on the Dimension sst 1200es 3d printer the LCW replica was finished and support material chiseled away (white) at 3 inches tall.

The findings of 3d printing were to be less of a rapid process, inefficient in material, more laborious and time consuming even printing at a small scale (3 inches tall). Imagine how much time it would take for a small house to be printed using the same process.

Can it still be said 3D printing is the next big thing? After decades, plywood chairs are still made today because of the rapid process. It may be nice to print your own organ or food, but 3D printing at a large scale in the next five years seems to be a little far-fetched from a process standpoint.
CITATIONS:


the ARCHITECTURE of DIGITAL SPACE

Amanda Schwarz

New Media is characterized by its “interactivity” - often described in terms relating the use of digital media to communication and conversation. In her research on models of interactivity, new media theorist Sally J. McMillan writes that interactivity has been identified in two types of exchanges: “the dialogue view and the message-based view” (McMillan, 165). And while many definitions for interactivity exist, they exclusively allude to verbal and/or written exchange. Although McMillan too focuses on interactivity in terms of communication, she writes that “the most important thing to be examined in measuring the level of interactivity is not the provision of technological features, but rather how users perceive and/or experience those features” (McMillan, 165). This nod towards “Perceived Interactivity” hints at the ability for digital media to be more than a communication tool. Interactivity is more than dialogue or message - to interact is to inhabit.

The ability to participate in the creation and consumption of digital media fundamentally shifts the old understanding of interaction. Digital texts are now consumed in a flexible way, which allows for an infinite number of ways to enter into and understand them. Rather than holding text, as in a physical book, or even watching text, as in a play or movie, the text has now become an inhabitable space. The experience of participating in and consuming digital media allows readers to become inhabitants, shaping the content around them by the way in which they move through it - creating a digital space. These new methods of consuming digital media call for new methods of examining them. By applying architectural theory to digital media, we can come to understand it spatially and experientially. This architectural concept of digital space contradicts the notion of simply facilitating multiple modes of communication - one-to-one, one-to-many, or one-to-machine. We experience digital space in the same way we experience physical space - through embodied, inhabitable perception.

The fundamental difference between digital space and architectural space is physical, embodied presence. The flat screen, web-based world of the internet cannot be physically inhabited, and therefore lacks many of the sensory qualities that are inherent in architectural space. However, the fundamental similarity between digital space and architectural space is human experience and perception.

Humans have processed information spatially since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans. In her book The Art of Memory, Francis Yates writes about the “method of loci,” an ancient memory technique that viewed memory spatially. In this method, memories are stored and retrieved by moving through this mind space (also referred to as a memory palace) to access different paths and rooms. The method of loci applies the regions of the brain that are specific to spatial learning in order to understand and remember non-spatial information. Even unconsciously, memories of navigating a website are catalogued spatially with paths of scrolling, clicking hyperlinks, and opening windows.

When we consider the deep connection between perception and the space, we can begin to understand the experience of digital space as an extension of our embodied experience. The importance of the body is a constant in the physical world, but often discounted in the digital realm. American legal scholar Julie Cohen applies this understanding in the context of how digital information is legally governed. In her 2012 book, Configuring the Networked Self, Cohen argues that humans do not “experience ‘information’ in the abstract; rather, the world both off- and online is apprehended through the lens of embodied perception.” She goes on to write that, “Embodied experience remains important even in contexts that seem to be entirely virtual. Although popular and academic literatures on virtual worlds celebrate escape from bodies, participants in virtual worlds continually supply reminders of how important they consider bodies and body images to be” (Cohen, 2012). For Cohen space is not defined by walls or volume. It is defined by perception. She writes, “space is experienced... in terms of situatedness and orientation, and the vehicle for apprehending space in this way is embodied perception... Space in this sense is relative and mutable; it is simultaneously apprehended through embodied perception and produced by our own actions” (Cohen, 2012). Perception is tied to our bodies, even in unembodied realms. The Cartesian ideals of existence outside of embodied, spatial reasoning are not a reality of our current digital systems. Instead, we perceive through the lens of embodiment.

In writing “Utopian Body,” Michel Foucault examines the infinite lens of the human body as an experience. It is the space through which the world enters into perception. He writes of the body, “it too possesses some placeless places, and places more profound, more obstinate than the soul, than the tomb, than the enchantment of magicians. It has caves and its attics, it has its obscure abodes, its luminous beaches. My head, for example, my head: what a strange cavern that opens onto the external world with two windows... What happens inside of this head? Well, things come to lodge themselves inside it.” (Foucault, 1968). The body is the center for gathering information. Foucault relates all forms of existence and experience to the body, from fantasy to reality.
The body is often left out of discussions about digital media. However, architecture is constantly examined through the lens of the body. Unembodied, philosophical questions about new media can be difficult to answer in a time when each new technological system brings new controls and frameworks. Theorists find themselves post-rationalizing systems that have gone viral before they can be effectively designed or analyzed. However, looking to architecture, we can begin to understand how these questions have been studied in physical, immutable terms for centuries.

Architectural theorists write explicitly about connections between the physical and the perceived, often using the embodied experience as the lens. Since the age of Vitruvius, the body has been used to organize and describe architecture. It has found different meanings throughout time as cultural perceptions shift. During the Renaissance, Leonardo Da Vinci and Leon Battista Alberti sought to understand mathematical proportions in the human body as a key to the workings of the universe. Le Corbusier, the modernist master architect, famously created Le Modulor, an anthropometric scale of proportions which he used to govern the functional and aesthetic aspects.

Contemporary architectural theorist, Juhani Pallasmaa, who is notable for his defense of instinctual and haptic embodied experiences - far from digital media - has criticized modern architecture for gratifying the visual sense and ignoring the other embodied senses. In The Eyes of the Skin, Pallasmaa cites Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy that the human body is “the centre of the experiential world,” and it has the unique ability to achieve “a world of interacting senses” (Pallasmaa, 2005). Digital media likewise spoils the spectacle, assuming that the screen is an untraversable physical barrier between the user and the digital space. As with architecture, humans are largely unaware of the implications of these environments. Pallasmaa's argument to defend “the authenticity of the human experience” (Pallasmaa, 2005) is as applicable to physical space as it is to digital space.

Recent architectural theory describes architecture as a series of experiences set in a largely uncontrolled framework, which is the city. The movement of the body throughout the city has become the form of reading as well as authoring the architecture. Situationists International, a group of avant-garde activists, experimented with this concept. In the 1950's and 60's, they created psychogeographic maps through the process of a dérive. Guy Debord defined the dérive (which literally translates to “drifting”) as a “technique of rapid passage through varied landscapes... In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations... and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters there” (Debord, 1956). During the Situationist dérives, the process of wandering through a city, specifically Paris, became a form of authorship. The city of Paris exemplifies the ad hoc nature of a city – an assembly of spaces with many different authors working over centuries of time. The only mode of consuming the city is through a series of experiences that affect the perception of the city as a whole. The pedestrian chooses his or her path, and thus authors the city.

In media theory, this roaming authorship is described by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their rhizomatic model, which is considered to be one of the first theories to address the emerging model of the internet. The rhizome represents non-hierarchical multiplicity and multiple levels of authority. Deleuze and Guattari write that “there is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author). Rather, an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders.” (Deleuze, 25). It is only in the merging of writer, text, and reader that an authorship emerges. This concept can be found in architecture – the architect being the writer, the inhabitants being the readers, and the building being the text. Thus, the human inhabitant is the final intrinsic key to completing the experience.

This interactive text, authored by and made authentic by the human, can be found even in Pallasmaa’s fundamental argument. He writes “I experience myself in the city, and the city exists through my embodied experience. The city and my body supplement and define each other. I dwell in the city and the city dwells in me.” (Pallasmaa, 2005). When conversations about digital media take on this sensitivity for the human condition, we may find less doubt, less fear, less confusion about the recent explosion in digital systems. As we have discussed, perception and experience are tied to our bodies, even in non-physical interactions. For that reason, much of Pallasmaa’s writings about the importance of the embodied experience and interface with architecture can inform digital media, as do many if not all architectural writings. For centuries, architecture has been our way of participating in and shaping the embodied world. Because perception is tied to our bodies, we can apply spatial and architectural theories to digital space.

One example of this cross-media understanding comes from an architecture collective named Archigram. Their 1964 proposal for the “Plug-in City” was a superstructure in which anything could be plugged into. By Deleuze and Guattari’s later definition, this framework would be deemed rhizomatic. Archigram’s “Plug-in City” is made and re-made by the users, constantly to changing needs. This architectural extreme has inspired built architecture, but remains highly theoretical. According to architectural historian Simon Sadler, Archigram “contended that architecture should not create fixed volumes of space to be mutely
inhabited, less still shaped masses of masonry, but must provide the equipment for ‘living,’ for ‘being’ (Sadler, 2005). Archigram’s exploratory paper architecture “redefined the purpose of architecture” (Sadler, 2005). In the context of the “Plug-in City,” the internet can be seen as the framework in which websites are plugged into the larger context. They saw this rearranging city as a social space, with implications on spatial justice, mass media, and technological development. In their 1963 exhibition “Living City,” Archigram argued that “architecture is only a small part of city environment in terms of real significance; the total environment is what is important... we must perpetuate this vitality or the city will die at the hands of the hard planners and architect-aesthetes” (Cook, 1973). In relation to digital space, designers and programmers are the architects of our city, and should maintain the “vitality” of our digital city.

Media theorists may recognize the structure of the city in the internet, and many may see this as fragmentation. New media theorist Douglas Rushkoff writes about “fractalnoia” and the disorientation that comes with quickly changing digital media (Rushkoff, 2013). Looking to architecture can orient this conversation and provide an established method for studying interactive digital spaces. We perceive digital space through the lens of embodiment and therefore begin to carry our norms and preconceptions with us to the digital world. Looking to architecture, we can begin to understand how our perception and norms can be affected by our space, and our modes of interaction with space are carried with us into digital space.

CITATIONS:


Archigram, a cutting edge group of architects formed in the 1960’s, is widely known by the design community for their neo-futuristic, pro-consumerist, and technology focused illustrative design speculations and solutions for post-war Britain. Often, if not always, using a high tech and infrastructural approach to their speculations, the members of the Archigram group investigated ideas related to modern living, modularization, technology, mobility, and mass consumerism as related to many of the issues and questions that Britain was facing during the 1960’s and 1970’s.

The Archigram Remediation Project began with the idea of investigating the role of the living unit in Archigram’s body of work—focusing on projects such as Cushicle [1972], the Walking City Living Pod [1972], and ultimately the simpler and less abstract Gasket Homes project [1972]. This was proposed to be investigated through a more experiential and 3D perspective manner, rendering Archigram’s often abstract hypothetical projects in to a less infrastructure oriented proposal and more towards a human scale.

Through the process of modeling, assigning materials, and subsequently rendering the speculative project, larger questions and themes started to emerge shifting the focus of the project — largely the role of the superstructure in the group’s body of work, a consistent architectural model that is present in their larger city scale projects. The degree of viability and realization of these projects came to mind — thinking about how these often fantastical ideas that resembled those of the digital age and many of the futuristic films today would be interpreted and thought of today. The questions the project aims to answer then became the following: Were these projects conceived to be actually built or were they simply a romanticization

Image right | Cushicle design by Mike Webb // ARCHIGRAM by Sir Peter Cook and Archigram Group. 1972.


Image right | Walking City living pod design by Ron Herron // ARCHIGRAM by Sir Peter Cook and Archigram Group. 1972.
of a technology focused society working at the scale of the city? Are Archigram's ideas about large-scale infrastructural urban ideas still relevant today? If so, how are these being manifested and studied by our field?

Simon Sadler's *Archigram: Architecture without Architecture* discusses the first question outlined above, stating that the group’s magazine was a reaction towards what the architecture profession of the time was miserably failing to do. The group broadly contended that architecture should not create fixed volumes of space to be mutely inhabited but must provide the equipment for ‘living’ and ‘being.’ The extent to which the architecture community was doing this revealed to the group that a technological modernism was the solution (Sadler 5). Not only do I see the group’s projects as a reaction towards post-war Britain but I would argue that the projects themselves were illustrative extremes of this technological modernism that the group saw as the solution. This extreme I would argue was not to be taken literally but as a mere fantasy of what they were interested in at the scale of a city.

Archigram's Plug In City is a prime example of this reaction towards the static, non-progressive, non-affordable, brick and mortar housing that was in 1960's London. The scheme included flexible conglomerate housing that was ‘plugged-in’ to a larger city mega-structure, commenting on the ‘dreariness that is often associated with regularized housing systems’ (Cook 36). Besides this, the way the group communicated the project demonstrated this exactly — none of the drawings are consistent, showing that the system is not meant to be definitive but flexible. As stated before, this was not necessarily meant to be taken literally as a built project but as an idea for current issues the group was looking at. Arguably, this could be translated to a more flexible housing unit than the one seen in 1960's London, similar to how many cities and offices are proposing today. My Capstone project for instance contains flexible housing that is not necessarily defined by specific spaces but has minimal walls in the main living area and shifts all permanent service areas to the side, allowing for more a more flexible live-work accommodation.

What does this all mean in terms of today? Are Archigram's ideas still relevant and how are these large scale infrastructural ideas being studied by our field?

The answers became clearer when I participated in an interdisciplinary studio with graduate students. The I-11 SUPERCORRIDOR is a highway being proposed and studied by both Arizona and Nevada officials as a way to connect both states and as a major trade route that would span Mexico, the United States and end in Canada. During the studio, many if not most of the same issues and ideas discussed and illustrated by Archigram in the 1960’s were discussed and subsequently illustrated in context with the highway infrastructural project. My personal project was one that focused on energy being the main component that would feed a new urban core, supplying employment, housing, entertainment, and a variety of transportation options. The scale was very similar to that of archigram where it was the vast majority of Downtown Tucson near the I-10 Highway. Besides this, the proposal was meant to be smart, in that the architecture had a dialogue with the public and what was going on in the city. Depending on the amount of energy collection,
the architecture would change and users would subsequently be able to use the architecture to be informed about their city and themselves.

Along with this, many of the proposals took a very similar superstructure approach where many of the transportation and housing options were housed within a larger whole and network. Similar to the spirit of Archigram, these ideas were taken to be incredibly futuristic and non-viable but were often praised for being illustrative solutions as to what can be possible.

Besides the design studio, most big firms are currently looking at issues at a very similar scale than that of Archigram. BIG (Bijarke Ingles Group) for instance has multiple large scale proposals for both New York and Copenhagen dealing with infrastructure and transportation — illustrating a very utopian future where the negative issues the cities are dealing with (in this case sea level rise and city connectivity) are solved with design.

Archigram’s cutting edge and avant-garde ideas were ahead of their time in the 1960’s and even today. The speculative projects were not only this but are evidence of a not to be taken literal romanticization of a superstructured technologically advanced urban environment. Not only are these ideas and scale still relevant today in terms of social and design issues but are similarly still being proposed by design firms and various other professionals. This not only demonstrates the timelessness of Archigram’s radical thinking on city scale projects but also demonstrates the need to continue thinking about critical design at a similar scale.

CITATIONS:


MOVEMENT THROUGH SPACE
in SKETCHUP and PHILIP THIEL’S THEORY

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The main idea that Philip Thiel was investigating in his numerous works during the 1960s was dedicated to the experience of movement through space. Today, SketchUp animation is the simplest and easiest media to represent the complexity of the process of movement.

According to Thiel, there are two spaces that define the experience a user gains from the three-dimensional world. 1 One is a physical space, and another is a perceptual space. 1 The physical space is established by structural parameters such as “column”, “wall”, “beam”, “truss”, “plate”, “cable”, etc. 1 Organized, those parameters form the physical qualities: the tension, compression, shear, bending and torsion. 1 The perceptual space which to Thiel, has a strictly visual structure, allows understanding the relative position, size, direction, number(s), shape, color and texture. 1 The change in position involves distance, direction, and time. 1 The way a user experiences them in combination depends on the rate at which he changes his position over time. 1 The perceptual space transforms over time and movement that places the user in a relatively new space. 1

Objects, surfaces, and screens shape the perceptual world. 2 Those attributes they define each other though relativity and interdependency. They help to understand the rate of motion and the direction. Thiel proposed a sequenced notation of spaces where the experience is recorded through the circulation in space. 2

Objects are two or three dimensional forms that shape the space in a larger scale by existing as independent or separate entity. 2 They serve as a horizon line, the border line or as limits. 2 Surfaces are flat two dimensional demarcations that forms the space furthermore. 2 Screens are closely spaced objects which help to understand the scale in space. 2 Altogether, these elements communicate the condition of space. 2

In “An Experiment in Space Notation” Thiel uses the succession of separate images to represent the continuous and connected experience as perceived through movement in space. 3 On the set of images on the left hand side Thiel represents the movement in the rate of the motorcyclist on the road. 3 Where on the right he gives us the rhythm of images one gets as a pedestrian. 3

Diagramming is another method Thiel uses to communicate the idea of a movement. His diagrams reveal the concept of distance over time. 1 He gives diagrams in a two-point perspective manner or as a top view for better understanding of the concept.
'However, the most explicit diagrams that are dedicated to the perception of the space are the coding diagrams that he uses in his book called “People, Path, and Purposes.”

Thiel breaks down the actions that happen in the space into small separate actions that he calls “coding.” Coding in architecture is an important concept in understanding the program and the user. Thus, the complex actions can be explained in the diagrams that would be place in the sequential manner. Another term that Thiel introduces to describe the sequence of the program spaces or actions is the “Behavior Circuits.”

In the “People, Paths, and Purposes” Thiel explains the movement though space using the term called “Behavior Circuits.” Thiel characterizes the concept as obtaining the space through the sequence of user perception activity occurring at the scale of the giving room, building, campus, block or the region. In other words, the complex term involves the setting and the actions. Thiel uses diagrams to break done the actions and the setting into the logic of sequence. The perception through the motion depends on the obtaining the successive locations over time, along a given routine.

SketchUp offers several tools which simulate the movement through space. They are the animation, walk, and the look around tools. With the “look around” tool one can move his head around and observe the space. The view is framed by the program’s window. The “walk” tool is another option to perceive the space. It allows the view to remain on a eye level height and point to the spot the he wants to proceed to. The transition between the original and the final spots resembles moving on a faster than the average walk speed. The animation tool allows you to remember views as “scenes” and then connect them in a sequential animation. The transition from one to another picked scene will occur by default. The accuracy of the movement in animation tool depends on the accuracy and number of the selected scenes. The more spots you choose to move to the more detail the animation be. The animation tool not only allows recreating the human movement but also allows to “fly” over the building to observe it from height. Thiel describes unrealistic viewpoints (bird’s eye perspectives) along with a standard drawings (plans, sections, elevations etc) as useful and necessary tools to explain arrangement, circulation, size, form in other words, to give one the idea of what the building look like.

However, some of the essential representations can be lost in SketchUp simulation. First of all, the animation tool is not flexible when it comes to the description of the sense of time. The only options to control the time that is given in the animation tool are transition time between scenes and the scene view time. The realism of the obtaining the space over time is lacking.

Also, the quality of the experience of movement through the space starts to resemble the “floating” through the space. The persen seem to shift from space to space in unrealistic manner in a slow motion. The general visual render quality of the animation are far from reality.

SketchUp animation tool could be improved if Thiel’s idea of the photographic sequence was possible to apply. That would add up the visual realism and help to determine the essential elements of the space: objects, screens, and the surfaces.

Also, more flexible control over the time would add one more step to the closeness to the actual experience. In this case, Thiel’s diagrams of distance, direction, and time would be an ideal solution. By simply inserting the value into the right graph, we would get a controlled option for an observer.

However, do we actually need the realistic representation in the SketchUp animation as long as the fundamental objects, screens and surfaces are true? The experience that one obtains by watching the animation reflects the perceptual world that Thiel was talking about. The perceptual world opens up a more broad understanding of the space. It deals with the relativity of the objects in three-dimensional space, which, in fact, is more important than the human pace or condition of the color of the render.
The animation creates a complete new world, separate but still connected to the original conditions.

Beatriz Colomina in her "Le Corbusier and Photography" relates to the same issue of the realism in photographs and the film. She argues that although the film could alter the realism, it can also add to the meaning of the scene. She talks about Dziga Vertov’s movie “The Man with the Movie Camera” in which a human eye appear superimposed on the reflected image of a camera lens, indicating the conceptual barrier between the human perception and the mechanical lens. According to her, the photograph is an exact reproduction of the reality, there is no additional layer of information to it that would help to understand the actual meaning.

Thus, the animation in SketchUp is not the actual representation of a real space, but rather a simulation of it. Although the animation is not real, it gives an important holistic notion of depicted scenes. In addition, it makes it possible to relate parts to the whole in otherwise impossible situations, such as birds-eye view or even walk through the objects. Instead, animation creates a new reality that tells the important story of movement which involves the delicacy of the concepts that Philip Thiel was concerned with.

CITATIONS:

Tools used: SketchUp Pro


FURTHER READING:
