

**FORMS OF INQUIRY:
THE ARCHITECTURE OF CRITICAL GRAPHIC DESIGN**



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2007
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ROBARTS

EDITED BY ZAK KYES & MARK OWENS
ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION LONDON

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Forms of Inquiry, edited by Zak Kyes and Mark Owens, is based on a stunningly simple and beautiful concept: instead of seeking architects' opinions regarding graphic design (isn't there enough architectural opinion already these days?), it turns the tables and brings together some of the world's most important critical voices in graphic design to ask them for their view of architecture. It's a neat twist, with many useful lessons for both sides. Each participant in this collection has been asked to reflect not only upon architecture in relation to their own work, but also (and perhaps more importantly) upon the relation of both architecture and graphic design within (or as) larger forms of contemporary culture.

The surprising, delightful and sometimes utterly bewildering responses to this provocation give us a catalogue that is nearly schizophrenic in its form. Ostensibly, *FOI* is an invaluable compendium of graphic design talent (most especially for architects who lost track of the medium sometime around Max Bill, Otl Aicher or the invention of Helvetica). More unexpectedly, this book offers architects a subversive, contrary view of architecture culture.

One could easily subtitle this collection 'Architecture as Seen by Graphic Designers'. And it's a very strange view indeed, for the ways in which the various contributions uncover inspiration in some of the most unlikely episodes of modern and contemporary architecture.

In what other kind of (non-fiction) architectural book might we find not just links, but productive links, between Muriel Cooper's use of a typewriter, Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language*, conspiracy theories around the World Trade Center, Neufert diagrams, Louis Andriessen's music, Pruitt-Igoe's collapse, spraypaint, Le Corbusier's early efforts in photo manipulation, choreographic notation, or typefaces derived from Sol LeWitt sculptures? The list reads like a Borges essay on creative one-upsmanship.

Thanks to the insights of this group of graphic designers (who have generously provided the content) as well as that of the AA's Art Director Zak Kyes (who provided the invitation co-editor Mark Owens and graphic designer Wayne Daly, *Forms of Inquiry*) is a good deal more than a book about critical graphic design: it is a post-critical, post-disciplinary deconstruction of the all-too-serious solidity of architecture culture itself. That such a convincing effort to destabilise architecture would require the deadpan observations of a bunch of designers who spend their days arguing about obscurities like kerning, the relative importance of Jan Tschihold, signage systems, hyphenation (or is it hypen-ation?), paper weights and things like InDesign plug-ins — well, that already says more about the depth of convergence between architecture and graphic design cultures than any semi-serious introduction I could offer here reflecting upon modern

architecture's long (and well-known) dependence on modern media — upon Mies's appropriation of commercial photography, Le Corbusier's theft of collage and cubism, Eisenman's axonometric-eccentricities, Kahn's smudgy charcoal tracings, Niemeyer's photogenic pencil sketches, OMA's oblique narrative paintings, Zaha's fluid calligraphy, etc., etc.).

Above all, this is a book that should inspire architects for the way it presents architecture and architectural knowledge as a live (and lively) medium for use, appropriation and reinvention. At the same time, it should help to break down contemporary graphic designers' relative reluctance to critically inquire into the relationship between their distinctively paper- and digital-based design realms (from the making of book pages to the design of graphic identities, billboards, signage and other forms of communication) and the ways in which these creep into and through the domains of architectural and urban space in cities.

Paradoxically, all revolutions in architectural thinking begin with the initial discoveries made by architects in the graphic spaces of their own invention and imagination. It remains a truism that architects don't actually make architectural space: they simply invent within the graphic space (of drawings, notations, animations and other media) through which their ideas are conceived, developed, recorded and communicated to a world — of clients, builders, inhabitants and, most especially, other engaged architects. Accordingly, it remains a

mystery to me why so little attention is paid by architects to that singular discipline dedicated to the production of graphic space, namely, the world of contemporary graphic design. Whatever the reason, this book is an important corrective. I am proud we at the AA School can re-present the topic without having to look back to the 'golden days' of the 1960s, 1970s or any other decade (everyone has their favourite). Instead, this is a collection that only looks forward, featuring work done this season — and, in the case of some of our contributors, as recently as last week (graphic designers, like architects, live by the deadline). It's a thrill to be able to bring the topic and debate back into architecture culture, and in a form like *Forms of Inquiry*, where it returns anew. I hope this book and the exhibition that accompanies it will carry the debate forward.

Forms of Inquiry is an all-too-rare example of the positive benefits of juxtaposing parallel disciplines, not for the overt lessons architects imagine they can learn through appropriating or emulating something else, but simply for the strangeness of view that such a juxtaposition can offer the culture of architecture itself. Sometimes it is others who are best able to animate the walls (and not just boundaries) of a field of human knowledge as stable and serious as architecture. In its own modest and quiet way, this book charts a path forward into a world where architects might one day stop simply trying to act as if they were graphic designers and instead learn to learn from graphic design itself. To do so would be to

bring the premise of *Forms of Inquiry* full circle, as an invaluable collection of razor-sharp, ambitious graphic designers who are able to convincingly demonstrate how much they have already gained by learning from architecture.

Brett Steele
Director, AA School
London, September 2007

methodology — putting you there pursuing paths without a certain knowledge where they will lead. It is with this distinction in mind, the exhibition features works that have often originated as intuitive rather than analytical investigations. The scope of this unifying sense of curiosity led to a myriad of different media and graphic forms, including print and curatorial projects, installation, typography, interactive works, publications and speculative proposals. Devising headings through which we understand this variety of approach has itself become a form of inquiry that recognises the arbitrariness within graphic design as a discipline. And although not offered as a set of new categories, the show groups featured projects under three general headings. The first, *Typographics*, takes as its starting point the flat and spatial potential that operates between the traditionally thin space of typography and the thick architectural space of cities and buildings. This conflation of graphic and architectural space implicates the human voice (Paul Ellinger and Michael Worthington), the extent of graphics in built form (Karel Martens & David Bennewith and Radim Pesko), and the subprogram of the 'hard' and 'soft' interfaces of our environment (Hirshon and Hudson-Powell).

The second section, *Modes of Production*, highlights recent work in graphic design that has been specifically influenced by architect

Forms of Inquiry emerges from a desire to draw attention to a number of recent developments in the field of graphic design that highlight its increasingly fertile relationship with architecture. Broadly, this involves a loose network of fellow-travellers whose work mobilises graphic design as a specifically *critical* activity. This imperative itself borrows from the architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri's notion of the expanded role of the critic as someone exploring the multivalent, complex and inherently subjective world around them. More specifically, it involves work that is motivated by a shared impulse to reframe the circumstances surrounding contemporary graphic practice by using intuitive modes of investigation to probe the boundaries of the discipline and to explore the mutual exchange and shared lineage between graphic design and architecture.

In the interest of clarity (but partly also to encourage a certain obfuscation) we have adopted the term 'inquiry' to describe this work, in particular to distinguish it from the ubiquitous incentive to 'research', which has long carried with it a variety of assumptions and interpretive baggage. The distinction is important; for, unlike empirical research, with its appropriation of the paradigm of scientific data-gathering and problem-solving, or the iterative experimentation of architectural modelling, the term 'inquiry' suggests an almost anti-methodological

methodology — posing questions and pursuing paths without necessarily knowing where they will lead. Curated with this distinction in mind, the exhibition features works that have often originated as intuitive rather than analytical investigations. The strength of this unifying sense of curiosity has led to a myriad of different media and graphic forms, including writing and curatorial projects, installations, typography, interactive works, publications and speculative proposals.

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experiments (from Le Corbusier's *L'Esprit Nouveau* to the radical 'little magazines' of the 1960s and 1970s) that questioned the role of architecture and education by taking publications and their distribution as sites for debate and exchange. This work draws the designer out from behind the screen, in the process dissolving the traditional client/designer relationship in favour of the designer reconfigured as editor, publisher and distributor. By utilising new modes of production, these designers expand the limits of a studio practice (Dexter Sinister, Åbåke), distribute their own information through self-initiated publications (TASK, deValence) and present a matrix of new critical positions through the use of archival and curatorial tactics (Project Projects, Will Holder).

While the first two sections might be said to focus on the specific components or building blocks of graphic design practice, the work in the last section, Methodologies, explicitly takes up graphic design itself as a way of working. In this way, these diverse methodologies expose the negotiation and motivations concealed by designed communications. Such approaches range from the adaptation of the theoretical protocols of 'paper architecture' and architectural proposals (Metahaven, Manuel Raeder, Experimental Jetset), and collaborative projects with architects and choreographers (Julia Born, John Morgan), to graphic interventions within architectural space (Mevis en van Deursen, James Goggin).

Within these three broad groupings

we have invited each of the featured designers to provide two contributions: a representative example of previous work and a written inquiry into an architectural subject which serves as the foundation for a series of newly commissioned prints for the Architectural Association. This new work aims to re-examine the increasingly overlapping practices of graphic design and architecture and in so doing hopes to compile an admittedly selective genealogy of the architectural canon as seen through the field of contemporary graphic design.

A final section serves as a kind of primer or reader, gathering together a selection of essays, interviews and other writings, both new and previously published, that might stand as representative examples of some of the allied discursive forms that proceed alongside and complement the featured studio work. Just as surely as the projects gathered in the exhibition aim to expand our notion of design as a critical activity, the work in this section enlarges the scope of what might count as design criticism. These writings can thus be understood as expanded inquiries in and of themselves, taking up and further developing issues explored in the exhibition itself.

As a supplement to the exhibition we have also invited an international group of independent editors and publishers to curate a Reading Room to be installed in the AA's Front Members' Room. This collection will amass new contributions as the show travels and includes independent scholarly

publications, books, 'zines and other printed matter that exemplify graphically driven modes of inquiry, with a particular emphasis on those that investigate the connections between design and architecture. A separately bound publication documents these contributions, serving as a kind of suggested reading list or annotated bibliography.

Conceived as an ongoing investigative project in its own right, with associated talks and events, *Forms of Inquiry* has been commissioned by the Architectural Association as part of its continuing mandate to cultivate discourse on contemporary visual culture and its relationship to architecture. The work collected here begins to map out this field of possibilities, both material and methodological. Still, the intersection of graphic design and architecture is a rich domain that remains underexplored, and it is hoped that this exhibition will serve, not as a summary statement, but as a provocation to further debate and creative exchange.

This publication would not have been possible without the support of Brett Steele, Director of the Architectural Association. Brett has guided the ideas behind this exhibition and also shown a continuing dedication to the graphic design work carried out in the AA Print Studio and its involvement in the intellectual life of the school. This book has been produced through the AA Print Studio with a team of collaborators including graphic designer and Reading Room coordinator Wayne Daly and editors Clare Barrett, Pamela Johnston and Thomas Weaver. The *Forms of Inquiry* exhibition has been coordinated with AACP's Shumon Basar and the AA Exhibitions department with Vanessa Norwood, who provided the impetus for this project, Simone Sagi, the picture researcher for this publication, and Lee Regan, the exhibition's coordinator.

Zak Kyes & Mark Owens
September 2007

Typography has long been considered one of graphic design's most arcane and mysterious areas of expertise, discussed in hushed tones rapt with bibliographic minutiae like kerning, leading and the fine distinctions of type families extending back to the earliest printed texts. Indeed, with the democratisation of desktop publishing software over the past two decades, knowledge of typography has become one of the lynchpins for shoring up the increasingly fragile boundaries of the discipline of graphic design. A cornerstone of design pedagogy, the mastery of typography, we are taught, is what distinguishes the professional designer from the talented amateur or manual-trained 'layout artist'.

At the same time, under the influence of critical developments in literary theory, urbanism, architecture, computer science and allied disciplines, typography has emerged within the discourse around graphic design as a fungible, expanded category. Letterforms, we have come to realise, are not only to be typeset and read on the printed page, but also experienced in the city as scripted spaces and voices on the subway, visualised on digital platforms from computer screens to mobile phones, and created using a combination of new tools and software. Consequently, even as Typography with a capital 'T' has been consolidated as a body of specialised knowledge, the category of 'the typographic' has come to implicate not only the forms of letters themselves, but also the human body, urban space and a host of 'soft' and 'hard' technologies. Grappling with these insights from the intersection of graphic design and architecture, the projects in this section take this expanded understanding of typography as the starting point for a variety of material, phenomenological and technical investigations.

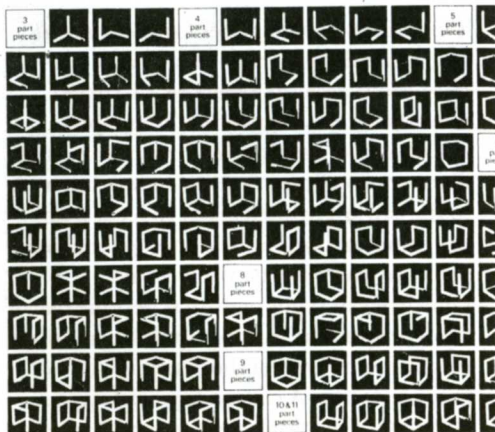
Jürg Lehni's Hektor, for example, is a spraypaint output device that operates using a custom-designed plug-in for Adobe Illustrator. Hijacking the pre-scripted, vector-based protocols of the program's default software, Hektor's drips and uneven lines (written on the walls of galleries and buildings as a kind of architectural performance or installation) mimic the letterforms of graffiti even as they generate complex designs that would be impossible to execute by hand. In the process, Hektor manages to infuse the typographic precision of the machine with something of the imperfections of the human body. Meanwhile, Paul Elliman's podcast radio programme, 'Voices Falling Through the Air', works the other way around. Designed to be read by Emma Clark, best known as the station-announcer voice of the London Underground, Elliman's script imbues the unique rhythms of the human voice with the regularity of digital typography as it is experienced in the space of the city.

These examples (to take just two) might be said to mark out the poles of a new terrain of architectural and typo/graphic investigation — from written words to spoken language and back again — that the designers in this section take as their point of departure and domain of inquiry. Operating from within this expanded field of typography and architecture, the projects collected here establish diverse positions which challenge the provenance of typography as a discrete category and propose new possibilities for graphic design as a critically engaged practice.

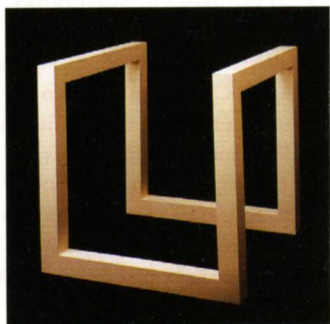
RADIM PESKO

Sol LeWitt Typeface

JACK (no work all play) is set in Sol, a typeface created as a continuation exercise of Sol LeWitt's 1974 project entitled '122 Variations on Incompleted Open Cubes', which consisted of 122 views of unfinished cubes made from wooden planks. The character set of Sol is defined by the spatial potential of a cube. Here, the new definitions are dependent on the viewer's imagination and ability to recognise letters in seemingly abstract compositions. JACK is a product of leisure time.



Sol LeWitt: Incomplete open cubes, 1974



'DDD / We shift gear into present tense' exhibition, Tallinn, Estonia, April 2005

The Overlook

You are it, not my daddy.
You are the hotel.
(Danny in *The Shining*)

This inquiry is concerned with architectural spaces intended for relaxation, leisure and isolation. As an example, the selected images are of the mountainside chalet hotel featured in Kubrick's 1980 film *The Shining*, based on the horror novel by Stephen King.

These images show the Timberline Lodge Hotel upon which Kubrick's hotel, renamed 'The Overlook', was based. For the filming of *The Shining* the facade of the Timberline was reconstructed in London as a film-set.

In Stephen King's novel, the hotel manager Mr Ullman describes the hotel's plan:

The Overlook has one hundred and ten guest quarters. Thirty of them, all suites, are here on the third floor.

Ten in the west wing, ten in the centre, ten more in the east wing... [On the second floor] forty rooms, thirty doubles and ten singles.

And on the first floor, twenty of each. Plus three lines of closets on each floor, and a store room which is at the extreme east end of the hotel on the second floor and the extreme west end on the first. Questions? (...)

Now lobby level. Here in the centre is the registration desk. Behind it are the offices. The lobby runs for eighty feet in either direction from the desk. Over here in the west wing is the Overlook Dining Room and the Colorado Lounge. The banquet and ballroom facility is in the west wing. Questions?

The print based on this inquiry looks at the way in which graphic elements from Kubrick's *The Shining* are used within architectural spaces to suggest emotional and mental spaces.

Three different carpet patterns have been selected from various locations in the film: the entrance hall, corridors and room 237.

Shown actual size, these patterns are represented in order of their appearance and significance in the film. Seven captions, also featured in the movie, indicate a lack of sense of time and connection to the world outside this space.

Layered and consciously distorted during the working process, all these elements create a possible construction for a film's future poster design.

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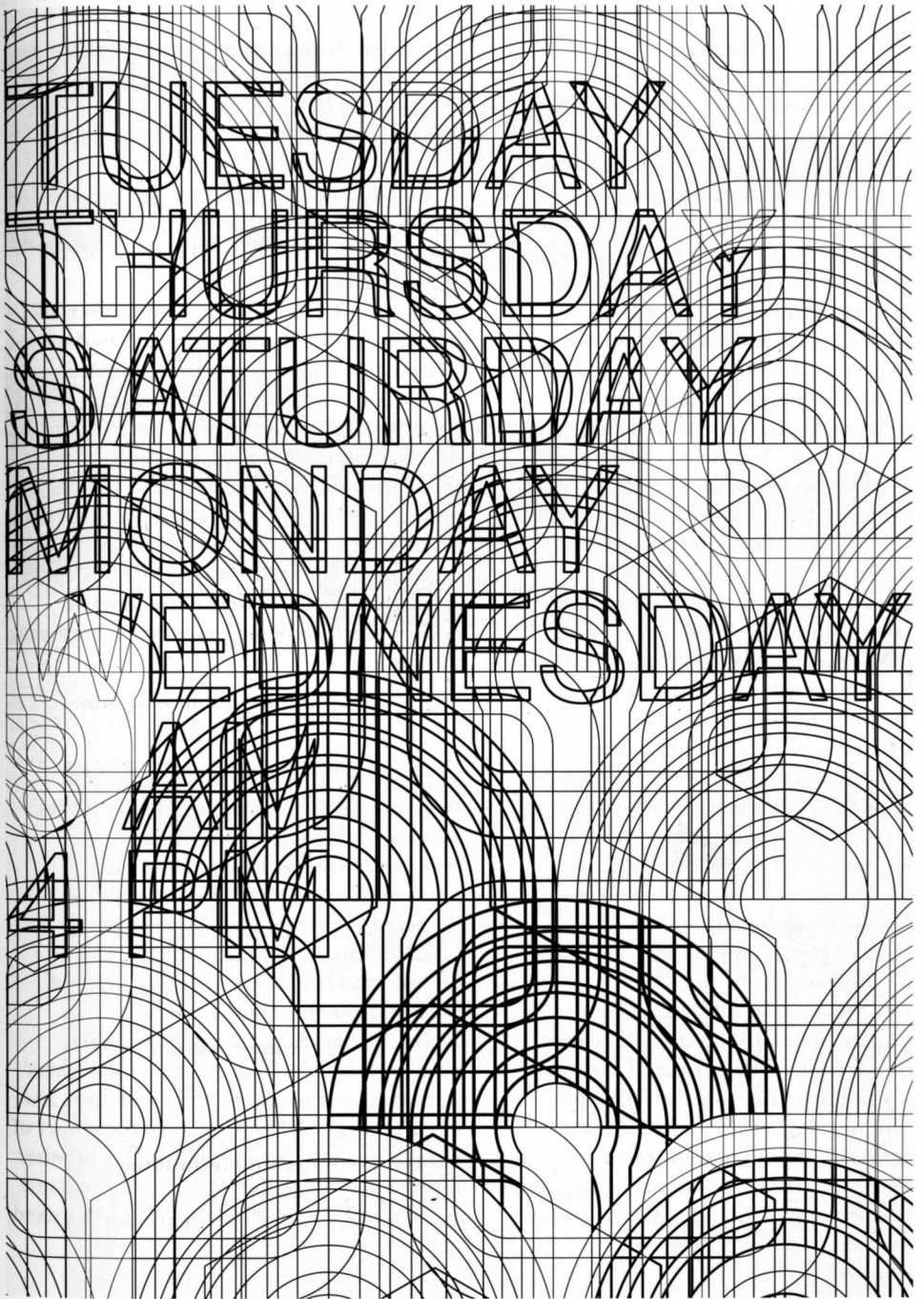
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Right: Reconstructed front of the
Timberline Lodge Hotel, from
Stanley Kubrick, Kinematograph
no. 20, Deutsches Filmmuseum,
2004 (p. 198), EMI-Elstree
Studios, London



Timberline Lodge, Mount Hood, Oregon. Photo: Radim Pesko



Radim Pesko for the Architectural Association, 2007

Hektor

Hektor is a portable computer-driven spraypaint output device. It was created in collaboration with Uli Franke for Jürg Lehni's diploma project at the École Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne in 2002.

Hektor's light and fragile installation consists of only two motors, toothed belts and a holder for regular spraycans. The can is moved along drawing paths just like a human hand. During operation, the mechanism sometimes trembles and wobbles, and the paint often drips.

Hektor was created with a certain attitude towards design and the use of tools. Intuition played an important role in the search for a new output device that goes beyond the limitations of today's computer-, screen- and vector-graphic based design and conveys its abstract geometries in a different way from normal printers. The aim was to provide a new tool with an inherently distinctive aesthetic.

Hektor's software is based on Scriptographer, a plug-in for Adobe Illustrator which was created by Jürg Lehni and made freely available. Scriptographer gives the user the possibility to extend Illustrator's functionality through a simple scripting language. It puts the tool back into the hands of the user and confronts a closed product with an open source philosophy.

Both Hektor and Scriptographer are comments on today's desktop publishing — where product standards and softwares influence aesthetics. Together, they are a call to not simply accept the limitations and predefined ways of working of current software, but rather make the reappropriation of tools and the invention of new ones part of a contemporary vocabulary.

Event: Hektor meets Dexter Sinister

Place: Swiss Institute, New York

Designer: Dexter Sinister and Jürg Lehni

Date: 6 September 2007, 18.00–24.00

In collaboration with Dexter Sinister, Hektor was used to reproduce eight Lissajous curves in the exhibition space and hallway of the Swiss Institute in New York.

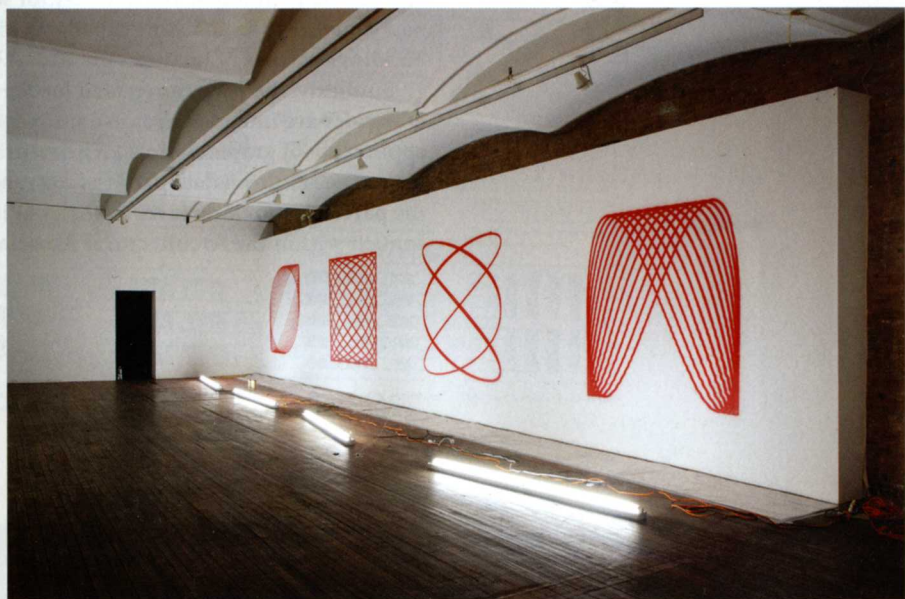
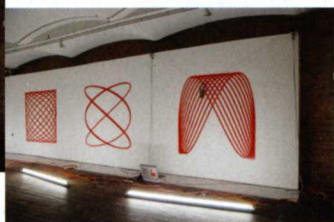
'Lissajous' is a mathematical term coined by Jules Antoine Lissajous in 1857 to describe a curve that results from two harmonic oscillations, of which one controls the X and the other the Y movement. The resulting figures span from simple to complex, through a range of basic types, all depending on whether the two oscillations are harmonic or out of sync.

In mathematical terms, a Lissajous curve is the graph of the system of parametric equations which describes complex harmonic motion:

$$x = A\sin(at + \delta), \quad y = B\sin(bt),$$

There is a link between these curves and Hektor's way of working. As Hektor draws any one of these figures, it has no extra motion. Whenever Hektor moves it is painting, because of the sine and cosine nature of these shapes. And just like any Lissajous curve, Hektor's motion can be described as two values x, y (the length of the belts) as a function of t (time).

During the show, microphones were used to record the high-pitched, sometimes screaming sounds of the stepper motors and amplify them back into the room, as a sort of *mise en abyme*. These sounds are yet another form of describing Hektor's movements and again create complex harmonies when mixed in the room.



Hektor in collaboration with Dexter Sinister at the Swiss Institute, New York City. Photo: Sophie Ballmer

Ernst and Peter Neufert: *Architects' Data*

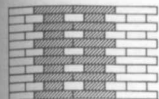
As an extension of my work with Hektor, this inquiry examines the graphic conventions used in architectural drawing to represent various levels of information, such as material and construction methodologies. As in most other industrialised fields, architecture has seen an increased separation of tasks and specialisations over the past century, necessitating the development of common languages and standardised systems. In order to increase efficiency and avoid misunderstandings, conventions have been agreed that are understood and followed by all elements in the chain, from the architect to the draughtsman to the builder.

It is also possible to read these technical notations as patterns in their own right, highlighting elements of architectural information. The graphic forms used to represent architectural spaces in printed form can be elliptically transferred onto the actual surfaces that they reference, offering an opportunity to reconsider patterns and architecture and the role of a machine like Hektor. As a means of applying concepts of visual communication and printing to architectural elements, Hektor is linked to precedents such as supergraphics: billboard-sized graphics that formed integral, communicating elements of buildings, exempt from any commercial message.

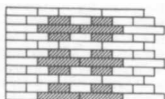
While this investigation was underway, work began on a new enlarged version of Hektor. This version will have the ability to work on surfaces as large as twenty metres by twenty metres. This expansion raises the question of graphic content, since pieces on this scale are more likely to be permanent and situated outdoors. The new Hektor will be a supergraphics machine capable of giving buildings patinas of texture.

Similarly, the patterns created for *Forms of Inquiry* are intended as a case study for the application of graphics at an architectural scale. The resulting data patterns reference the particular architectural qualities of its context within the Architectural Association.

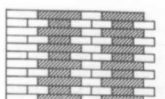
MASONRY BONDS



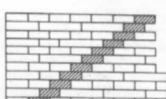
1 English bond



2 Variation on English bond



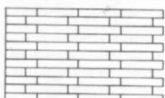
3 One stretcher, one header; alternating with course of headers



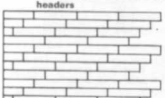
4 Two stretchers, one header; alternating with course of headers



5 Half-lap stretcher bond



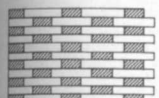
6 Quarter-lap stretcher bond



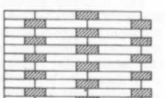
7 Stretcher bond with 1/4 lap rising right



8 Stretcher bond with 1/4 lap rising right and left



9 Flemish bond: 1 header, 1 stretcher; alternated each course



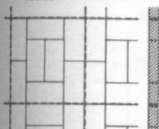
10 1 header; 2 stretchers alternating coursewise



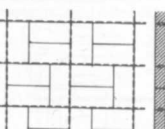
11 1 header; 1 stretcher alternating coursewise with 1/2 bond rising right and left



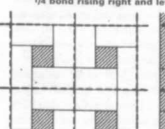
12 1 header; 1 stretcher alternating coursewise with 1/2 bond rising left



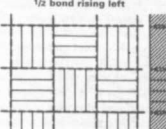
13 1/2 brick thick (brick on edge) reinforced wall with 8 brick panel



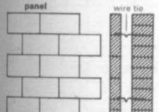
14 As 13, with 3 brick panel



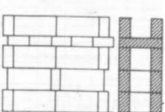
15 As 13, with 4 1/2 brick panel



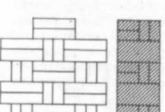
16 Reinforced brick wall, 1/2 brick thick with 4 brick panel



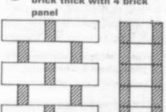
17 Brick on edge external leaf linked by ties to internal leaf



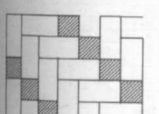
18 Cavity wall with 2-1/2 brick leaves, tied by a connecting header course, and alternate header bricks on edge



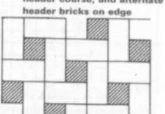
19 Ornamental brick wall



20 Cavity wall of 2-1/4 brick leaves bonded by header bricks on edge



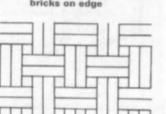
21 Floor finish of whole and half bricks



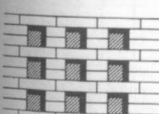
22 As 21 with different pattern (other versions possible)



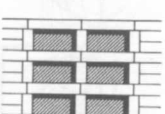
23 Heavily loaded floor finish with bricks on edge (herringbone pattern as in parquet)



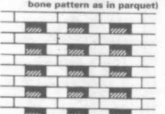
24 As 23 with quarter pieces (weave pattern)



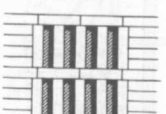
25 Brickwork with gaps (honeycomb) for light or air admission (holes 1/2 - 1/2 brick)



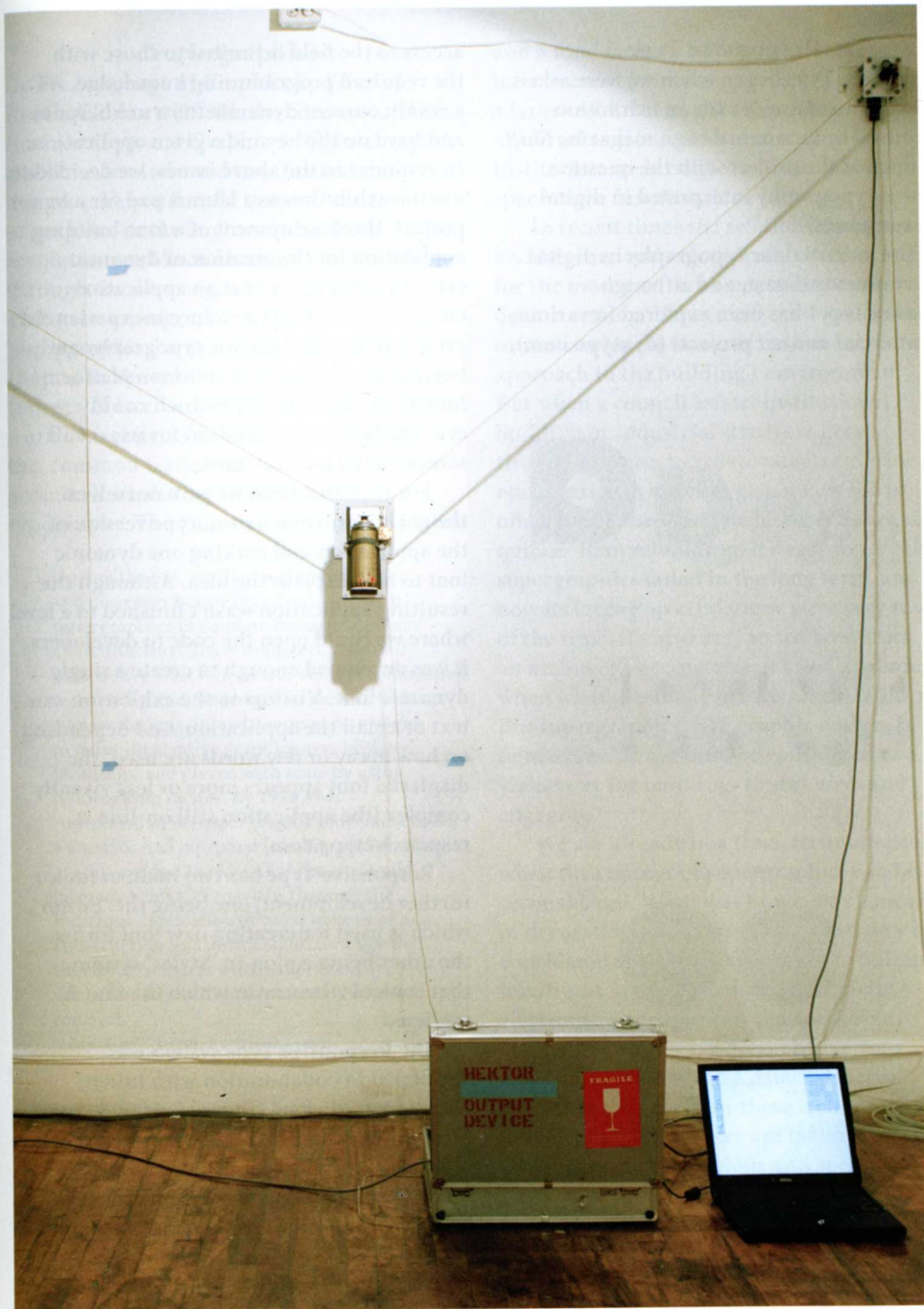
26 As 25 (holes 1/2 - 3/4 brick)



27 As 25 (holes 1/4 - 1/2 brick)



28 As 25 (holes 1 - 1/4 brick)



Hektor is to generate a series of posters at the private view of *Forms of Inquiry*

Responsive Type

Responsive Type began when we were asked to put forward an idea for an exhibition organised by Japanese design magazine *Shift*. We opened the project with the question 'How is typography interpreted in digital environments?'

The potential for typography in digital environments is vast, and although dynamic type* has been explored in various commercial and art projects (dyntypo.com),

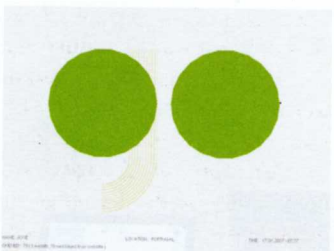
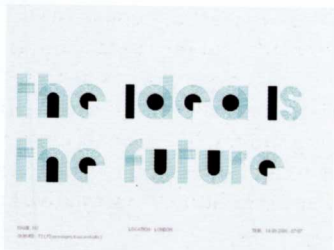
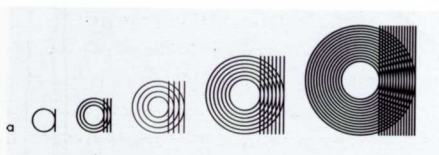
access to the field is limited to those with the required programming knowledge. As a result, current dynamic fonts are bespoke and have no life beyond a given application. In response to the above issues, we decided to use the exhibition as a launch pad for a larger project: the development of a font-building application for the creation of dynamic type, the idea being that an application environment could introduce inexperienced programmers to dynamic typography and begin a move towards a common platform/format for dynamic type which could eventually become standard for use on all screen-based technologies.

For the exhibition we gave ourselves the goal of creating a prototype version of the application and making one dynamic font to help explain the idea. Although the resulting application wasn't finished to a level where we could open the code to developers, it was developed enough to create a single dynamic font. Visitors to the exhibition can text or email the application, and depending on how many or few words are used, the displayed font appears more or less visually complex (the application still on-line at responsivetype.com).

Responsive Type has two main areas for further development, one being the 'Editor', which is used for creating new font forms, the other being a plug-in 'Styler' system that controls the way in which the font is rendered.

The Responsive Type system was developed in collaboration with Julien Gachadoat, Michael Chang, Brian Cort and Michael Zancan. The project took a total of just over two months from the initial formulation of the concept to the program being exhibited at Soso Gallery in Saporro.

*Dynamic typography describes typographic characters that respond visually to an input.



Supergraphics

In *The Language of Graphics* by Edward Booth-Clibborn (1980), the chapter on 'The Environment and Graphic Art' has always stood out for Jody and me. The text and images take you briefly through the history of graphics in the environment, from revolutionary Mexican murals in the 20s, through the neon signs of advertising and on to supergraphics. The term 'supergraphics' only appears once in the chapter in the subtitle 'Supergraphics in the Industrial Landscape', and it's here that the work of architects and designers overlaps, the common traits being a focus on colour, geometric or abstract pattern and typography. The following reference explains:

During the 60s, small groups of architects and designers began experimenting with supergraphics to emulate the spatial effects of architecture. These designers distorted perspective with stripes and arrows, emphasised wayfinding and movement sequences with surface designs, joined community groups to paint illustrative graphics over blighted buildings, and played with scale by using billboard tactics. By 1970, this supermannerist, supergraphic movement had waned, or had morphed into Pop and possibly graffiti art, but the idea that the city could be made bright, even witty, through the judicious application of paint instead of new construction was born and became another tool for developers who had previously advocated demolition as a method of urban renewal.

Marlin Watson, architect.com

Amongst our selected projects it's hard to distinguish which have had supergraphics considered as part of the initial architectural design, and which have used supergraphics as a tool for regeneration. In both circumstances, though, the results are similar — graphics and colour are used to benefit the people occupying the space, and it's this that we found exciting. A shipyard

and a food factory, both potential eyesores, have become points of interest; a school with a large colourful mural stimulates the pupils' visual education, and the corridors of an institution are brought to life to make the space more functional.

In recent times the relationship between architecture and colour has seemed cautious for the most part, with neutrality as the default setting. Using either raw materials or mute colour is in many cases a considered approach to the building's environment. But when a council estate, institutional building or industrial structure grows tired, the option to redecorate its exterior and interior in order to give it new life is often overlooked, despite being cheaper and quicker than rebuilding. It's easy to see why supergraphics failed in the long term, and how its large Pop art designs were very much of the time. It's also easy to see how, from an architect's perspective, it's just a facade, when what you really need is a new building. But supergraphics, like graphic design, is immediate, and should be considered as a viable way for buildings to stay alive and engaging.

We are already in a time, technologically, when the concept of supergraphics can be reconsidered. What was previously a means of decoration post construction can now be considered as part of the fabric of a building: intelligent materials can change colour, electronic wallpaper can change design, augmented reality headsets change your bare-walled room into a palace. It seems relevant to discuss how these technologies will be used, before they are taken over as advertising media. Colour and space could now, more than ever, be used as a way for people to control their own environment.



Shipyards, Gondolys © Jean-Philippe Lenclos



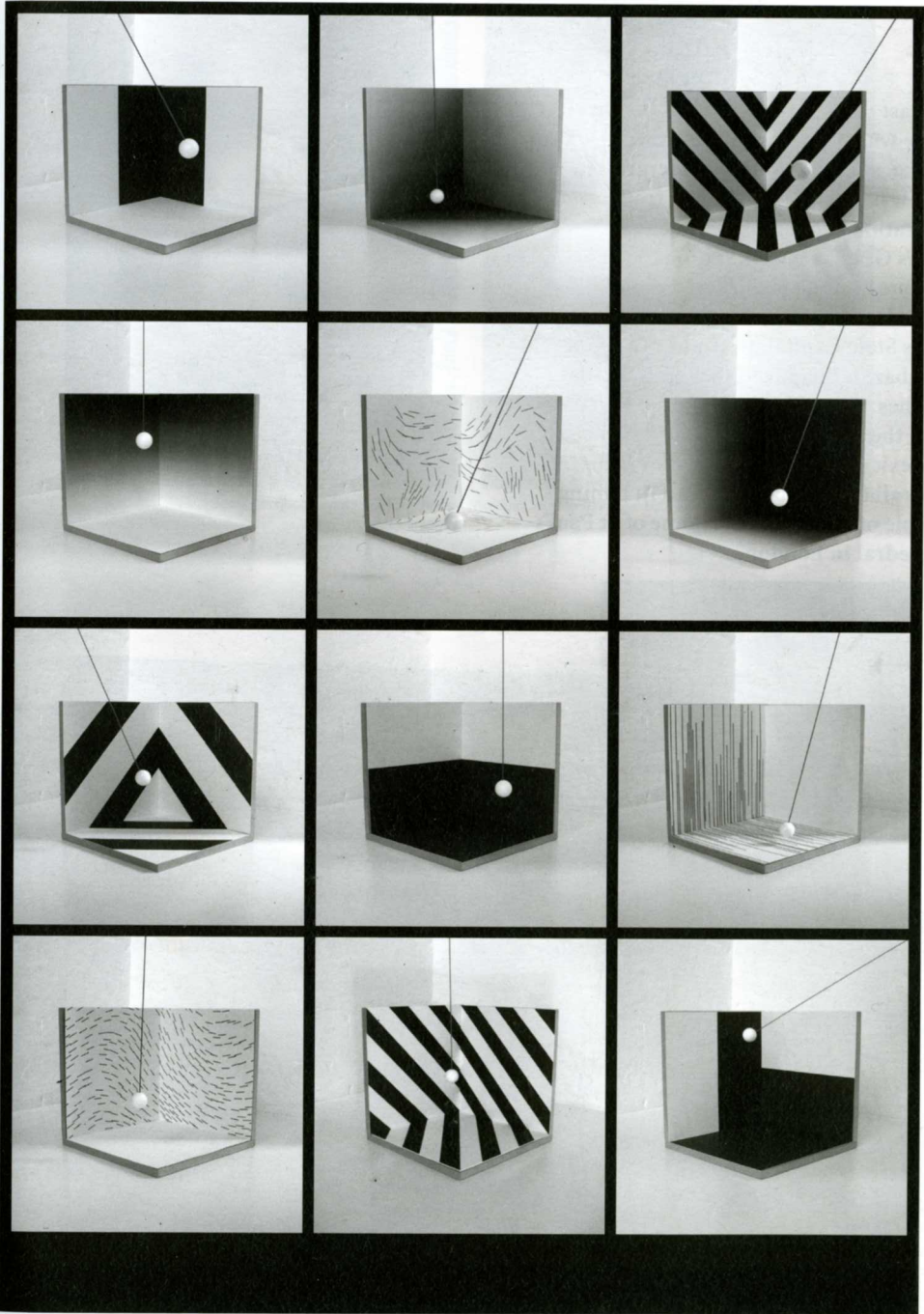
Wall at Robespierre School, Paris © Jean-Philippe Lenclos



Solmer steel plant, Fos-sur-Mer © Jean-Philippe Lenclos



Torres de Satélite, Mexico. Photo: Taiyo Watanabe



Hudson-Powell for the Architectural Association, 2007

**Voices Falling
Through the Air**

Podcast radio programme on the theme of the whispering gallery narrated by Emma Clarke, voice of London Underground. Follow her voice, whispering from location to location: from the Oyster Bar at New York's Grand Central Station to the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne, Turkey; from the Cathedral of Brasilia to the rotunda of the Texas State Capital; from the great Gol Gumbaz in Bijapur to the semi-circular benches of the Charlottenhof in Potsdam; from the ancient ball court of Chichen Itza in Mexico to the Barossa Valley Dam in Australia; from the echo wall in Beijing's Temple of Heaven to the dome of St Paul's Cathedral in London...

(The radio script appears on p. 122)



Grade II-listed sound mirror at Boulby, Yorkshire. Photo: Andrew Grantham



Brass parabolic mirrors, 1800, Teylers Museum, Haarlem. Photo: Paul Elliman



Tian Tan temple, Beijing



Selimiye Mosque, Edirne



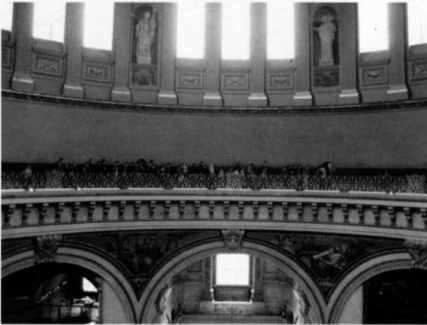
Charlottenhof, Potsdam

The Whispering Gallery of St Paul's Cathedral, London

Continuing an interest in voice, technology, language and the built environment, 'Voices Falling Through the Air' presents the whispering gallery effect as part of a pre-history of the electronically transmitted voice.

Certain features of the physical world, from air to architecture, have always played a part in the distribution or displacement of our spoken word. When Marconi's first radio signals crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1902, they were guided by radio waves that traversed the parallel conducting surfaces formed by the earth and the ionosphere. This guiding action is connected to the way sound clings to a curved wall — the mechanism responsible for the 'whispering gallery' effect in St Paul's Cathedral and the 'echo wall' at the Temple of Heaven in Beijing.

- St John the Evangelist is said to have heard the Book of Revelation spoken to him in a cave on the Greek island of Patmos.
- In Apollinaire's short story 'The Moon King', a device allows sounds from locations all over the world to be heard in the subterranean passages of a mountain.
- Jules Verne used the whispering gallery effect in an episode of the classic tale *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*.
- At Lade near Folkestone on the English south coast a set of concrete listening ears, experimental acoustic radar devices used to give advance warning of enemy aircraft, survive from the First World War.
- Electronic voice phenomenon (EVP): making full use of the term medium, some spiritualists claim that spirit communication requires the use of an electronic device.



Whispering Gallery in St Paul's Cathedral. Photos: Paul Elliman



St Paul's Cathedral, London

st Paul's Cathedral

Whispering Gallery

Featuring:

Voices Falling Thru the Air

MATTINS n'LITANY—7.30 am

...Holy Communion—8 am/12.30pm

Plus...

Evensong—5.00pm

...And Live

BASE JUMPING

£10 Entry fee (Concessions avail.)

DOMINE DIRIGE NOS

KAREL MARTENS & DAVID BENNEWITH

Philharmonic Building Facade, Haarlem

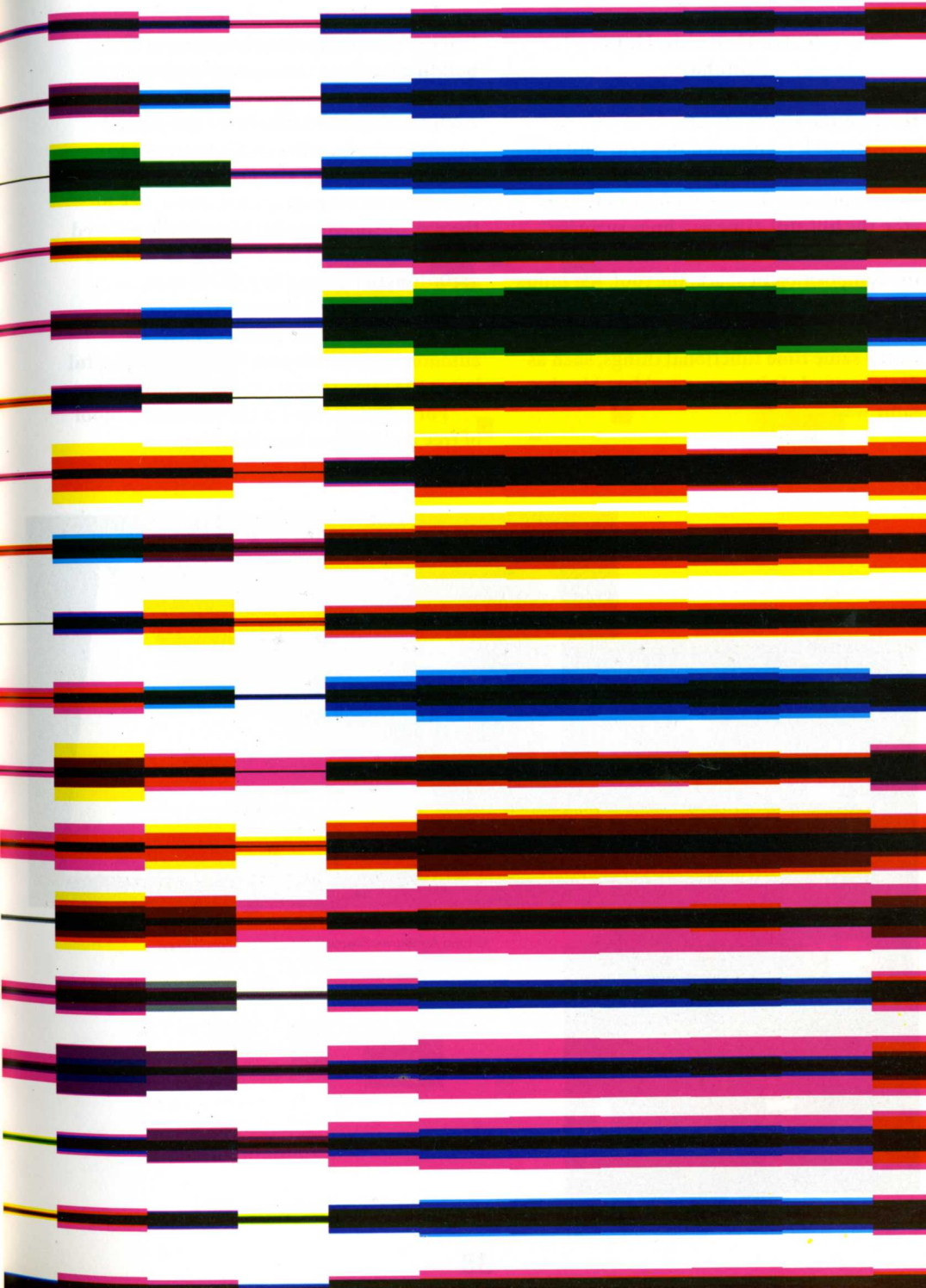
A commission from de Architecten Cie, the design is a graphical translation of the musical piece 'Klokken' (bells or chimes) composed for the occasion by Louis Andriessen. The composition is silk-screened in white porcelain powder over nine glass panels striated along the entrance facade of the building. The translation of music into graphics was made from a sound recording of the whole piece put into the computer, producing a graphically visible sonogram.

To get the right proportion for the facade, the whole composition was condensed and then cut into fourteen bars. On each glass panel there are two parts placed one above the other, to create seven different panels covering the whole facade. By positioning them in an alternating formation, the whole piece can be read both vertically and horizontally, and works in repetition as a canon. For the entrance, the whole composition is divided over nine glass panels.

A visualisation of the whole score, reproduced over sixteen pages and rendered in four colours, was made for the book *Philharmonie, Muziekgebouw van Haarlem*, measuring 270 x 205 mm. The composition 'Klokken' is written for four instruments. Each colour represents a different instrument: magenta for piano, yellow for celestra, grey for vibraphone and blue for synthesiser.



Philharmonic Building, Haarlem. Client: City of Haarlem; Architect: Frits van Dongen, de Architecten Cie, Amsterdam;
Project architect: Udo Garritzmann; Project leader: Henk de Haas



Notre Dame du Haut Ronchamp

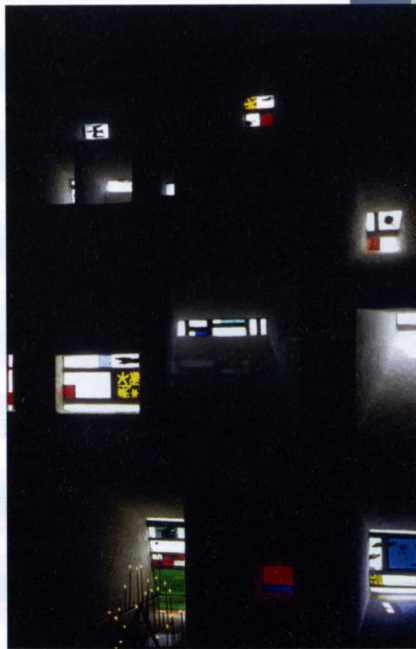
I will remember my visit to Notre Dame du Haut for the rest of my life.

Although we planned this trip with the specific intention of visiting the chapel at Ronchamp, our first sight of the building atop the hill still came as a huge surprise.

Architectural decisions such as the plan, the composition of space, the roof, the influx of light, the use of materials and colour — all have an original solution in this building. At the same time functional things, such as drainage and shelter, are considered in the same way.

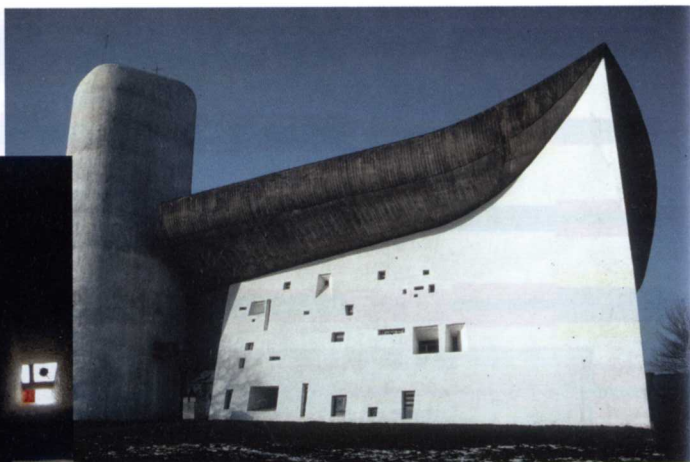
You get the feeling that each element of the building has been considered in relation to the others, and solved in a unique way. Architectural conventions are questioned simply by the fact that they appear not to be there — but they are. From my own viewpoint as a typographer I was struck by the way the openings in the walls are ordered in different sizes. It seems not to be ordered according to any grid or rigid system, as is usual in architecture (and typography). It is more a sculpture with a completely autonomous and utopian character — playful but at the same time strict and erudite.

For me, the chapel is the ultimate symbol of free and independent thinking.



Ronchamp: interior of south wall

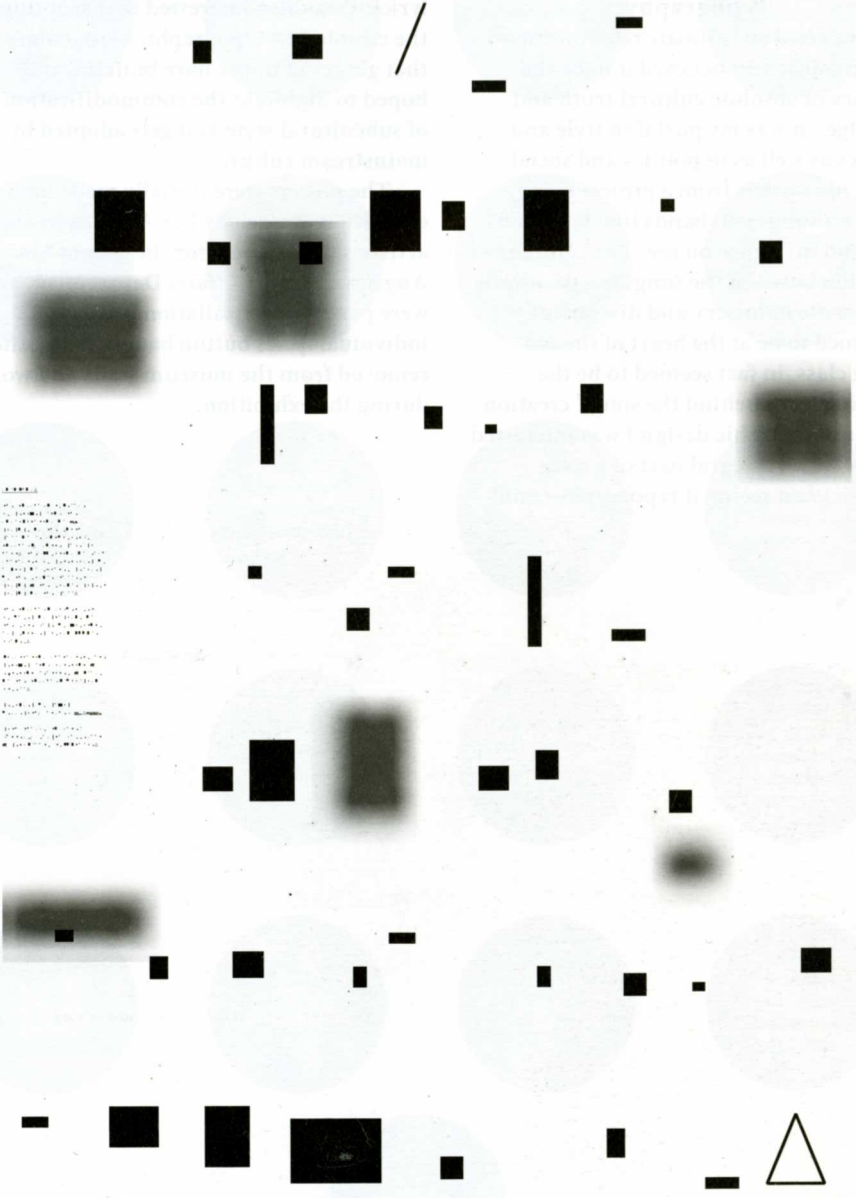
© Chris MacDonald/Architectural Association Photo Library



Ronchamp: exterior detail of windows

© Luisa Auletta/Architectural Association Photo Library

1. **Project Name:** [Illegible]
 2. **Location:** [Illegible]
 3. **Client:** [Illegible]
 4. **Architect:** [Illegible]
 5. **Date:** [Illegible]
 6. **Scale:** [Illegible]
 7. **Material:** [Illegible]
 8. **Color:** [Illegible]
 9. **Notes:** [Illegible]
 10. **References:** [Illegible]



MICHAEL WORTHINGTON

Lyrics, Music & Typography

As a child I had an intimate relationship with pop music and believed it to be the repository of absolute cultural truth and knowledge...it was my portal to style and aesthetics as well as to politics and social issues. This work is from a project using lyrics from songs and bands that have had a profound influence on me. The common connection between the songs is a peculiarly English sense of misery and discontent that seemed to be at the heart of the old working class, in fact seemed to be the motivating force behind the songs' creation. In relation to graphic design I was interested in removing an integral part of a song (the music) and seeing if typography could

act as a poetic resuscitator for the stranded lyrics. I was also interested in disrupting the established typographic vernaculars that genres of music have built up, and hoped to highlight the commodification of subcultural style as it gets adopted by mainstream culture.

The posters were initially made for an exhibition of work by Los Angeles-based artists and designers for the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, and were part of an installation involving individual lyrics button badges that visitors removed from the museum walls and wore during the exhibition.



I DREAMT ABOUT
YOU LAST NIGHT
AND I FELL OUT OF
BED TWICE

I'VE NEVER
HAD A JOB
BECAUSE I'VE NEVER
WANTED ONE

I'VE SEEN YOU
SMILE BUT I'VE
NEVER REALLY
HEARD YOU LAUGH

I'VE NEVER
HAD A JOB
BECAUSE
I'M TOO SHY

I LOOK AT YOURS
YOU LAUGH
AT MINE

I NEED ADVICE
I NEED ADVICE
NOBODY EVER
LOOKS AT ME
TWICE

I'M NOT THE MAN
YOU THINK I AM

I COULD HAVE
BEEN WILD AND
I COULD HAVE
BEEN FREE

I WOULD GO OUT
TONIGHT BUT
I HAVEN'T GOT A
STITCH TO WEAR

I DECREE TODAY
THAT LIFE IS SIMPLY
TAKING AND
NOT GIVING

AM I STILL ILL?

I AM HUMAN AND
I NEED TO BE LOVED
JUST LIKE
EVERYBODY ELSE
DOES

I KNOW MY LUCK
TOO WELL

I'LL PROBABLY
NEVER SEE YOU
AGAIN

I'D LEAP IN FRONT
OF A FLYING BULLET
FOR YOU

I STOLE AND I
LIED AND WHY?
BECAUSE YOU
ASKED ME TO

I'M TOO TIRED
I'M TOO SICK
AND TIRED

I'M FEELING VERY
SICK AND ILL TODAY

I DON'T WANT
TO GO OUT
TONIGHT

I DON'T OWE
YOU ANYTHING
BUT YOU OWE
ME SOMETHING

TAKE IT,
ITS YOURS

INQUIRY

Blur Building

I leave the shore and slowly shuffle across the walkway into the mist. The illusion grows stronger as I approach the cloud. I climb aboard the blur and slowly the mountains on the horizon grow vague and far away. The cloud muffles voices as well as light; the other raincoated figures become formless and androgynous, vanishing in the haze. Perhaps this is what it feels like to lose one's glasses. With the dulling of outer senses comes inner reflection. I feel calm and euphoric as I ascend the ethereal cloud with the other plastic-clad figures. As we climb through the fog, sunlight grows stronger and visibility greater. I break through the thinning nebulae and am suddenly wide awake on top of the

cloud, looking down at its misty veil trailing across the lake. The amorphous figures now look human. Everything feels real, normal. I'm acutely aware that too many people are too close to me. The volume is too loud, the edges of everything too defined, features of faces are too sharp. I quietly sink back down into the depths of the stratus, searching for a quiet place to disappear. I close my eyes and stretch my arms out wide.



Photos courtesy Diller Scofidio + Renfro



Michael Worthington for the Architectural Association, 2007

MODES OF PRODUCTION

By its very nature, graphic design is primarily concerned with giving shape to ideas and information provided by others. Indeed, the process of negotiation that underpins day-to-day design practice provides many of its challenges and satisfactions (not to mention its frustrations and disappointments). But what happens when the designer assumes the role of editor, publisher and distributor outside the constraints of the familiar client/designer relationship? Taking such a position challenges the historically service-based model of graphic design, reliant as it is on supplied content, external requests and the division of work-flow into discrete specialisations.

By nimbly operating within the pre- and post-production stages of graphic design, the designers in this section take as their conceptual horizon the previously separate activities of writing, editing, production and distribution. Through a variety of interventions, including self-initiated publishing projects, local DIY outreach initiatives, one-off events and small-scale retail operations these designers consolidate the discrete functions of design production and expand the category of activities that might be said to constitute a graphic design practice. In the process, they open up both the physical bounds of graphic design's working-in-the-world and the possible functions of the design studio itself.

As is typical of graphic design, these broader aims are often pursued incrementally, by way of seemingly modest gestures. Dexter Sinister's 'Just-In-Time Workshop & Occasional Bookstore', for instance, is run from an unassuming, low-ceilinged, 300-square-foot basement storefront on New York's Lower East Side. After hours, the studio hosts readings, film screenings and book release parties for intimate gatherings of friends, clients and associates. And on Saturdays the

doors open from 12-6pm to sell a carefully curated selection of self-published, bootleg, limited edition and hard-to-find titles from a corner bookshelf. While Dexter Sinister could be said to expand the definition of the studio, the creators of *Sexymachinery*, 'An Architectural Production', have enlarged the notion of what constitutes a publication. Founded in 2000 by three students at the AA, Shumon Basar, Dominik Kremerskothen and Stephanie Talbot, *Sexymachinery* soon incorporated close collaborations with the newly formed graphic design collective Åbåke. Nominally a magazine, the subsequent thirteen numbered issues were created in association with Åbåke and a host of participants, and have included print publications, exhibitions, talks, a website, conferences, a live event hosted at the Bethnal Green Working Men's Club and a celebration of its ultimate demise.

Separately, activities such as these can be seen to operate from within the interstices of graphic design as it is normally practised in the physical space of the studio. Taken together, they signal a shift to a consolidated role of the designer/publisher who creates, edits, curates, distributes and, most importantly, participates. As a dynamic, critical response to the traditional service-based activity of graphic design, this new role trades a dialogic, client/designer position in favour of establishing new modes of production that are simultaneously more flexible, more open and more complex.

Just-in-Time

At the beginning of the twentieth century Ford Motor Company established the first widely adopted model of factory production, the assembly line, which broke down the manufacture of a Model T automobile into its constituent processes and assigned these to a sequence of workers and inventories. This approach realised significant efficiencies as it used the increasingly specialised skills of each worker at each stage of manufacture. Large inventories, skilled labourers and extensive capital investment were required. Design revisions were expensive (if not impossible) to implement and there was hardly any feedback loop with the surrounding economy. Complicit with its early-capitalist context, manufacturing at this scale necessarily remained in the hands of those with the resources to maintain it.

By the mid-1950s, Toyota Motor Corporation of Japan began to explore a more fluid production model. Lacking the massive warehouse spaces required to store inventories for an assembly line, Toyota developed the just-in-time production model and inverted the stakes of manufacturing. By exploiting and implementing a fluid communications infrastructure along the supply line of parts, manufacturers, labour and customers, Toyota could maintain smaller inventories and make rapid adjustments. A quicker response time was now possible and products could be made when they were needed. All of the work could be handled by a larger number of less specialised workers and design revisions could be made on-the-fly without shutting down production and re-tooling. The result was an immediate surplus of cash (due to reduced inventories) and a sustainable, responsive design and production system — smaller warehouses, faster communications networks, responsive and iterative design revision and products made as and when they were needed: just-in-time.

It isn't difficult to imagine a correspondence between these two models (assembly line, just-in-time) and contemporary modes of print production. The prevailing model of professional practice is firmly entrenched in the Fordist assembly line. Writing, design, production, printing and distribution are each handled discretely by specialists as the project proceeds through a chain of command and production. Recently, laserprinters, photocopiers, page-layout softwares, cellphones and word processors have split this model wide open. A project might reasonably be written by the publisher who begins a layout and works with the designer who commissions a writer and sources a printer able to produce fifty copies by Wednesday.

In the basement at 38 Ludlow Street NYC we have set up a fully functioning Just-In-Time workshop, challenging waste and the current state of overproduction driven by the conflicting combination of print economies of scale (it only makes financial sense to produce large quantities) and the contained audiences of art world marketing (no profit is really expected, and not many copies really need to be made). These divergent criteria are too often manifested in endless boxes of unsellable stock taking up space which needs to be further financed by galleries, distributors, bookstores, etc. This over-production then triggers a need to overcompensate with the next, and so on and so on. Instead, all our various production and distribution activities are collapsed into the basement, which doubles as a bookstore and a venue for intermittent film screenings, performance and other events.



Photos: Jason Fulford



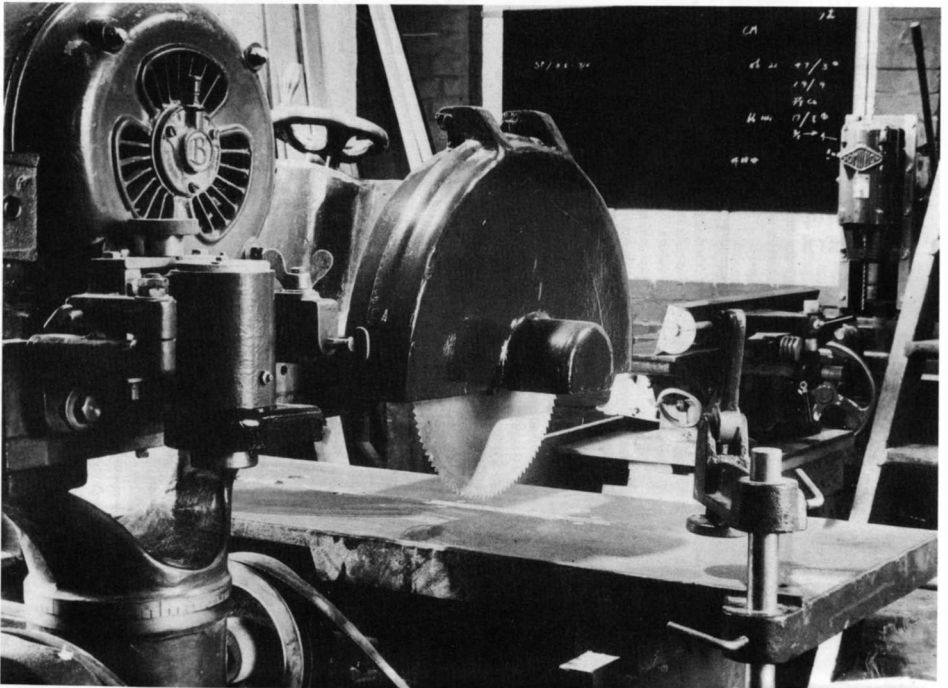
Photos: Jason Fulford

Norman Potter *Models & Constructs*

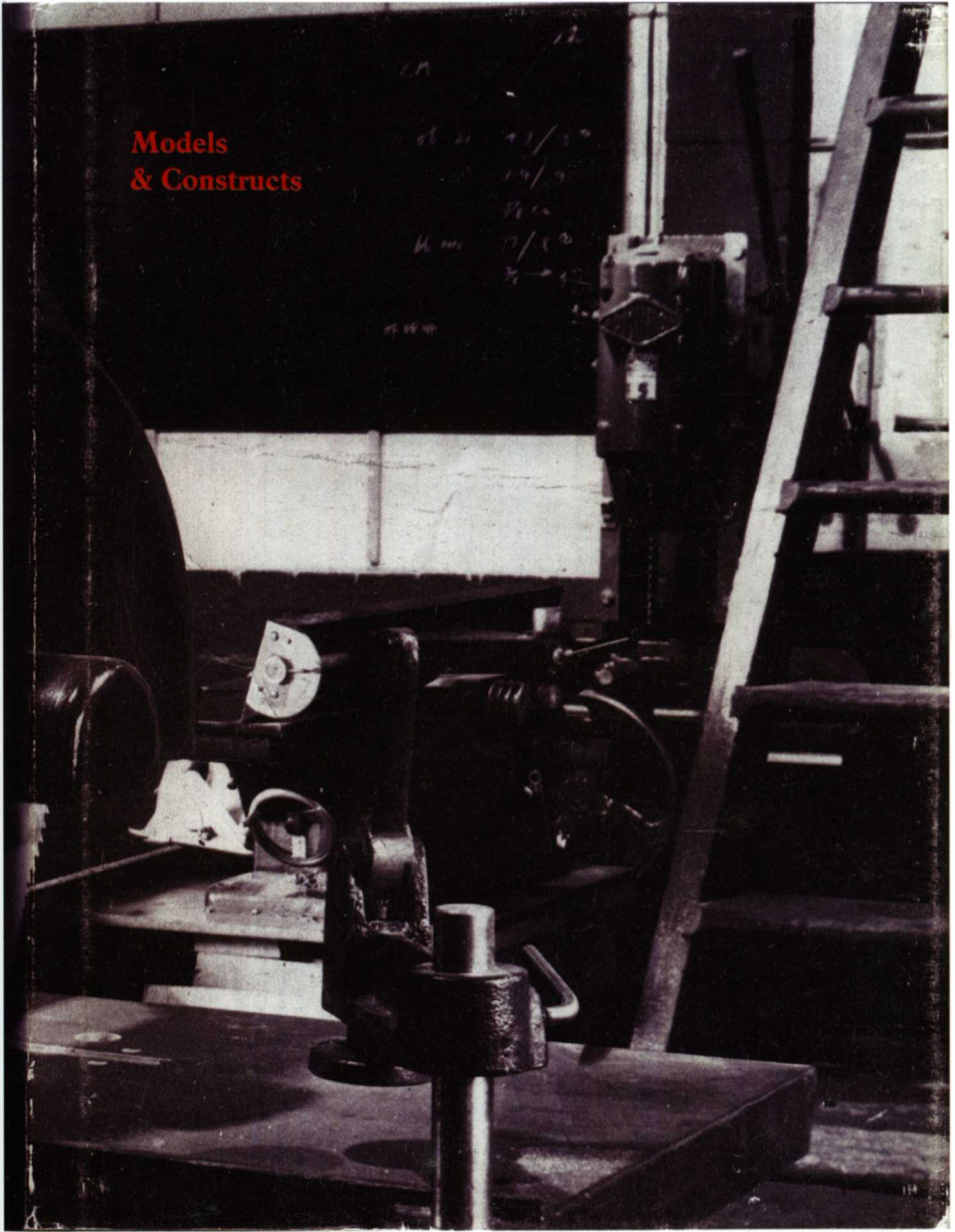
There is a certain sense in which we are wholly involved in metaphor and in which a small construct such as this — local to its context and wholly a one-off — may have some value also as a model, which will then be a model of address, of attitude and approach, rather than one of outcome or consequence. I do not want to strain its credibility further than that. In a more diffuse way, the same might be said of a small workshop. I hope however that by veering so alarmingly between the general and the particular, and between the realms of metaphor and practicality, I have suggested to you that every technical possibility has a wider equivalence, and a positive need

to seek relationships with its neighbours. There are many roles for your own future workshops, and I hope you will occupy them with devotion, intelligence and high good humour. Good luck with your inheritance!

Text extracted from *Models & Constructs* by Norman Potter, Hyphen Press, London 1990



Norman Potter's workshop. © Estate of Norman Potter, 1990



**Models
& Constructs**

Cover, *Models & Constructs* © Estate of Norman Potter, 1990

Precepts of the Literalist Movement

- o Start always at zero. The facts. Concern, response, enquiry.
The place and the situation. The means. Contingent affirmation
in a world without precedent. Anonymity. Particularity. No
truck with taste, style, eclecticism, magazines, picture books.
Universals: number, relation, geometry, sense-data.
The Modern Movement starts with zero!
- 1 Begin at the beginning; a fresh start
- 2 Seek always the resident principles
- 3 Find them where they belong – in the job itself
- 4 Expose the elements
- 5 Imply the components
- 6 Propose discourse
- 7 Be clear full spare consistent and sufficient
- 8 Take pains
- 9 Ask questions
- 10 Affirm contingently
- 11 Contingency respects situations [must? – Np]
- 12 Equate means, constraint, opportunity, response
- 13 Refer always and at all levels
- 14 Reach out – nothing to be self-contained
- 15 Be functional – all parts must work for their living
- 16 Be just, and let justice be seen to be done
- 17 Be taut but not tight; the work must breathe
- 18 Be literal; there must be nothing else
- 19 'It was so; I was there, and I saw it'
- 20 Make, do, go; scorn to publish: encounter!

High hopes were in the air. Drinks were served in the machine shop. The Dominion presided with silent but massive authority – looking the part; lesser machines stood, as it were, to attention. I circulated nervously, topping up the glasses, and trying without seeming to, to keep them off the machines. It was all very worrying. Could such expectations possibly be satisfied, and where was the next hire-purchase payment coming from? Local credit was yet to be negotiated, and I had spent most I had in stocking up with timber, plywood, dowel, ironmongery, and all the other 101 items that a workshop needs to actually do any work.

However, spurred and perhaps emboldened by this event I lost no time in issuing the Literalist Manifesto. As a statement it is innocent of (so to say) experience; of the day-to-day adaptations I have already mentioned that gave a new pliancy to my interpretations of modernist principle. Essentially the precepts held good, however, and were faithfully followed. For artists and designers the value of these smaller movements, like watches, is that they take the pulse of the times, and concentrate the mind wonderfully in attending to necessary tasks. They are European phenomena; the only English equivalent would be the 'little magazines', often running to only two or three issues, which presumably did the same job for literary folk.

It cannot be said that the English Literalists attracted a great deal of attention or support, then or since. A clue to their obscurity, perhaps a decisive one, is to be found in the final precept, which forbids any published account of itself (or indeed, of much else). Something of this no doubt derived from my earlier workshop days. Nobody ponce about in a dusty workshop with a camera. It would feel ridiculous. When a job is finished, usually late, it is quite enough to see it out of the door, and sort things out rapidly for the next one. Much, if not most, of our work passed unrecorded (including the largest job I ever did, taking months) and this didn't seem strange at the time, but quite ordinary. This book would be almost entirely unillustrated but for a box camera wielded unobtrusively by Caroline Potter, who had both the loyalty and the interest.

There were also the ideological issues, however. Design journalism was felt to be a Trojan horse in the citadels of modernity, and perhaps the most persuasive enemy of promise. Such a view remains tenable;



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Information Wants To Be Free.
Information also wants to be expensive.
Information also wants to be free because
it has become so cheap to distribute,
copy, and recombine—too cheap to
meter. It wants to be expensive because
it can be immeasurably valuable to
the recipient. That tension will not go
away. It leads to endless wrenching
debate about price, copyright, 'intellectual
property', the moral rightness
of casual distribution, because each
round of new devices makes the tension
worse, not better.

Stewart Brand, 1987

73735 45963 78134 63873
02965 98303 90708 20025
98859 23851 27965 82394
33866 62570 64775 78408
81666 26440 20422 05720

15838 47174 76866 14330
89793 24378 08730 56522
78335 22466 81978 87323
16281 46207 11698 99314
75002 80827 53867 37797

99962 27601 62686 44711
84543 87442 50023 14021
77757 54043 46176 42391
80871 32792 87989 72248
30500 28220 12444 71840

from *A Million Random Digits*, 1955

UNDERGROUND SECULAR XMAS
MUSIC FOR THE MASSES
ARRANGED BY ALEX WATERMAN
(IN ABSENTIA)

THE UNCERTAIN STATES OF AMERICA READER
DOT DOT DOT 13

MAGNETIC PROMENADE AND OTHER
SCULPTURE PARKS
SOLUBLE CHAIRS

The children of Marx & Coca Cola.

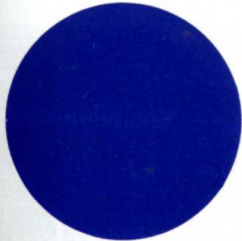
Jean-Luc Godard, 1966



Keep thy shop, & thy shop will keep thee.

Benjamin Franklin, 1735

Vs.



Dexter Sinister
Manifesta 6
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Fax +357 22 432531
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Manifesta 6 will take place in Nicosia, Cyprus
from 23 September to 17 December 2006.

Dexter Sinister cordially invites you to
KELLER IM KELLER
To celebrate this opening of the Kunst exhibition at Artiers Platz
Christoph Keller will host a late night of sampling high end alcohol
distilled on his farm Stiklemble in rural Germany, with cheese
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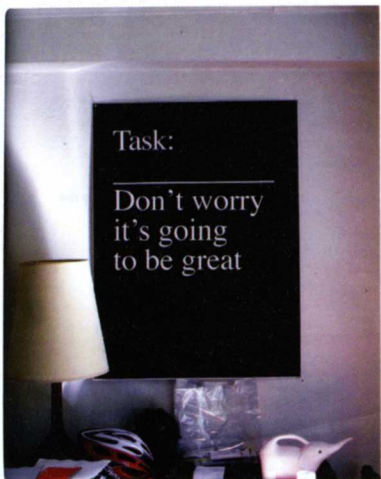
Dexter Sinister for the Architectural Association, 2007

TASK: EMMET BYRNE, ALEX DEARMOND & JON SUEDA

Task Newsletter

Task Newsletter uses design as a starting point to talk about other things. Just about everything in daily life has a designed product (or byproduct) somewhere in its story. These earnest, unassuming 'artefacts' are evidence of strange and interesting worlds that often go unnoticed. We want to create a point of access to the people and products that inhabit these worlds. As most newsletters do, *Task* looks to discover a community in the naive optimism of independent distribution. *Task Newsletter* #1 is sixty-four pages of original material about graphic design, featuring stories concerned with partnerships, secret community

lunches, designing type in the 'sticks', activist calendars, and using the Apple Store as your office. Interspersed with these stories is a spine of informal editorial by-product — this issue's spine, titled 'The Eclectic Slide', considers the virtues and pitfalls of eclecticism. We hope that the content has not become obsolete in the year and a half this publication has taken to complete (prematurely that is, as a periodical becomes obsolete the moment it is printed). If it has, finding and marking the exact moment it 'spoiled' might be somewhat enlightening. Regardless, we can still look back to the original agenda we defined in January 2006: 'Task utilises design as a perspective, designed objects as evidence of larger systems, and designers as researchers.' How we go about doing this will be refined and expanded in future issues as we investigate wide-ranging topics and themes that are of interest to our subscribers.



Cat Lovers Against the Bomb

"Pet Peeve: Human Ambitions of Power"

As with any love affair, I suppose you start by describing the first time you saw someone: It must have been in the winter of 2004, by (toy) wife and I were in line at the Seward Coop in Minneapolis. It stopped us in our tracks, there amongst the new-age wall calendars: Cat Lovers Against the Bomb.

It was a moment of clarity. We immediately, contemporarily, grabbed the calendar, flipped through it (the only copy on the stand) and put it in our basket. It was love at first sight.

We've lived with a C.L.A.B. calendar on the kitchen wall ever since. For this is the best and best-loved calendar I've ever found to friends and family — always with a fleeting sense of panic: "Will they get it?"

The Cat Lovers Against the Bomb wall calendar has been designed, edited and produced by a group of peace activists in Lincoln, Nebraska since 1984. Proceeds from sales of the calendar support Nebraskans for Peace, a group founded by rural anti-war activists during the Vietnam War.

The calendars are virtually indistinguishable from year to year, frozen in an aesthetic that suggests the days of 1960's desktop publishing. The core premise is that almost anyone

can take a picture of their cat, send it in, and get it published. Amateurism is celebrated.

As Loyd Park, one of the originators of the calendar put it: "The catty kittens with bones around their neck in various color are what some want. For us, we prefer cats just as they are — our pots and computers are pictures of them — you get what you do and how they act."

The results are always consistent and best for unanticipated reasons. A typical C.L.A.B. calendar has 12 photos of cats, but the cats are not necessarily the best. Consider one of our best: a little Photobomb had been employed. Best of all the photos give you a glimpse into the world of both the cat and the owner. One chilling image showed a cat sleeping in a dish drainer. Sometimes you can't walk for the next month so you can move on.

The calendars include a mixture of cat facts and peace facts for almost every day. For example: October 26, 1999: "In Wyoming, a cat survived 6 competitions in garbage truck on way to county landfill." or December 13th, 1985: "Cat Babushka woke her pregnant owner during an insulin reaction, saving both lives." There's also punny commentary in the lower left corner of every month. "Purr-ceive

Progressives Take the Lead," "Feline Friends Forever," "Sensing Ways to Avoid Cat-astrophe," and my favorite: "Pet Peeve: Human Ambitions of Power."

When I emailed Loyd, I told him that I like in that one for the cat color photography. He said, perhaps "No, we've had no history of good color. The possible, dynamic effects of good black and white photography are hard to duplicate in color." Amen.

—Alan DeKromard

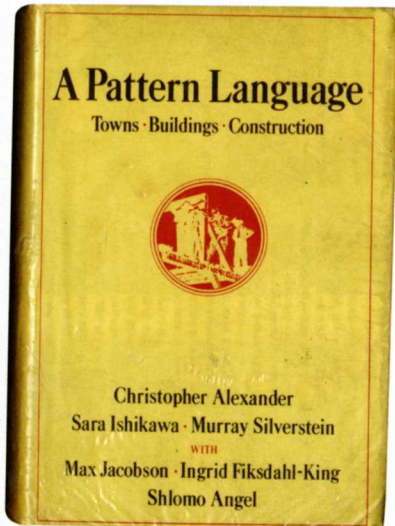


A Pattern Language

A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction by Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein of the Center for Environmental Structure of Berkeley, California and its accompanying website serve as a companion to our inquiry.

Pattern Language describes a collection of 253 highly structured patterns divided into three broad categories: towns, buildings, and construction, and suggests that the same set of laws can be applied to structures at any scale. As a practical guide to help citizens understand their environment (and even build their own houses), this book encourages a democratisation of information that relieves the architect of his/her role as the exclusive idea-provider. In turn, Alexander advises architects to consider new projects in a global, everyday and political context, emphasising their obligation to shape society in a responsible manner.

Task Newsletter uses Alexander's 'Green-Making Sequence' pattern as a starting point. The author clearly outlines the steps needed to turn an unused neighbourhood site into a green, cooperative meeting space, starting by identifying local flora and ending with petitioning the city for future subsidies. As with all of his patterns, it should be appreciated first and foremost for what it is: a deceptively simple and literal strategy for improving one's environment. At the same time, the knowledge that his patterns are applicable to any endeavour encourages the reader to simultaneously translate them into any personally relevant context — in our case, the structure of a publication venture: a newsletter.



A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction
Oxford University Press, 1977



245 RAISED FLOWERS*



... outdoors there are various low walls at sitting height—**SITTING WALL** (243); terraced gardens, if the garden has a natural slope in it—**TERRACED SLOPE** (169); and paths and steps and crinkled building edges—**PATHS AND GOALS** (120), **STAIR SEATS** (125), **BUILDING EDGE** (160), **GARDEN WALL** (173). These are the best spots for flowers, and flowers help to make them beautiful.



Flowers are beautiful along the edges of paths, buildings, outdoor rooms—but it is just in these places that they need the most protection from traffic. Without some protection they cannot easily survive.

Look at the positions that wildflowers take in nature. They are as a rule in protected places when they occur in massive quantities: places away from traffic—often on grassy banks, on corners of fields, against a wall. It is not natural for flowers to grow in bundles like flower beds; they need a place to nestle.

What are the issues?

1. The sun—they need plenty of sun.
2. A position where people can smell and touch them.
3. Protection from stray animals.
4. A position where people see them, either from inside a house or along the paths which they naturally pass coming and going.

Typical flower borders are often too deep and too exposed. And they are so low the flowers are out of reach. Concrete planter boxes made to protect flowers often go to the other extreme. They are so protected that people have no contact with them, except from a distance. This is next to useless. The flowers need to be close, where you can touch them, smell them.

Therefore, instead of putting the flowers in low borders, on the ground, where people walk, or in massive concrete tubs, build them up in low beds, with sitting walls beside them, along the sides of paths, around entrances and edges. Make quite certain

**11:
LEARN
ABOUT
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LOCAL
FLORA.**

<http://www.tasknewsletter.com/publishlocal>

Sexymachinery, An Architectural Production

Sexymachinery has had thirteen incarnations since 2000): a few printed magazines, exhibitions, participatory performances, live events, art direction, temporary office spaces, conferences and a website. The past is well documented on sexymachinery.com.

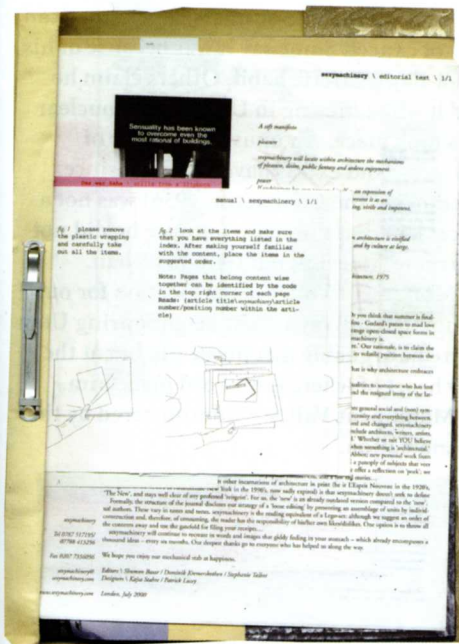
Otherwise, here is what we said regarding the latest issue: 'Everything ends', promised the last season of HBO's *Six Feet Under*. The end is sad, the end is joy. The end is dead, long live the end. This is the last *Sexymachinery* ever, as George Romero could say, or Tina Turner. Better going with a bang than going forever. This event is part of a series of live interventions at the Serpentine Gallery.

Contents: The End as the beginning, Things which refuse to end, cliffhangers, spin-offs, sequels, prequels, ellipsis (...) and et ceteras.

Founded by Shumon Basar, Dominik Kremerskothen, Patrick Lacey, Kajsa Stahre and Stephanie Talbot. Current members: Shumon Basar, Dominik Kremerskothen, Patrick Lacey, Benjamin Reichen, Kajsa Ståhl and Maki Suzuki.



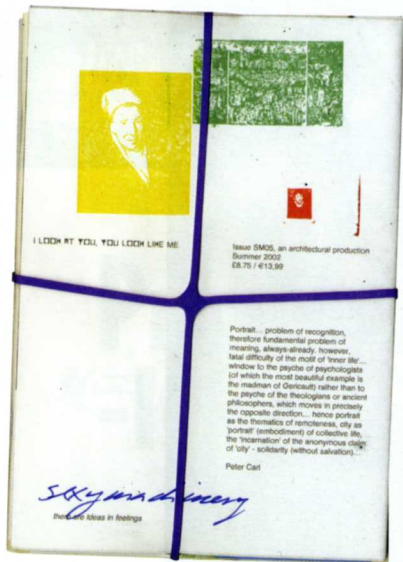
Sexymachinery 13, *The End*, conference at the Serpentine Gallery, London, 13 June 2007. Photos: Åbäke



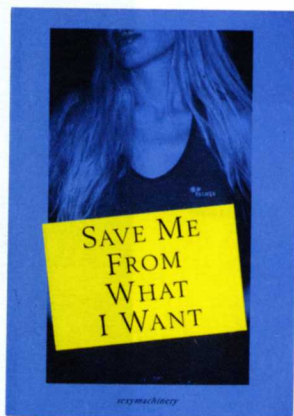
Sexymachinery 1, Summer 2000



Sexymachinery 4, Winter 2001



Sexymachinery 5, Summer 2002



Sexymachinery 9, Winter 2003

INQUIRY

Pruitt-Igoe

16 March 1972: Richard Nixon is US president, but not for much longer. In St Louis, the first blocks of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project are blown up — Charles Jencks claims this is the day that modernism died. The architect of Pruitt-Igoe, Minoru Yamasaki, won't live to see the destruction of the World Trade Center, which he also designed.

Our choice of date is the beginning of the destruction, rather than the end. A naive reflex to celebrate the start of something new, rather than the demise of modernism. Come to think of it, news of modernism's death has arguably been exaggerated.

Architects only wear black, so do heavy metal headbangers. Our Pruitt-Igoe t-shirts will be sold in the AA shop during the show and worn by invigilators.

John Wayne, the quintessential American, died of cancer. Some say it was because of his 100-a-day cigarette habit. Others claim he 'got' it while filming in Utah, where nuclear tests took place. An unusual number of cast, crew and extras have also died since. The movie (*The Conqueror*, 1956) was not a success, perhaps because for once he did not incarnate America, but Genghis Khan.

Monument Valley is the location for our monument to Wayne, not neighbouring Utah where he arguably met his death, but at the very heart of where John Ford made him.

Monument Valley is administered by the Navajo nation.



Pruitt-Igoe t-shirt. Photo: Åbåke

PRICE \$19.95

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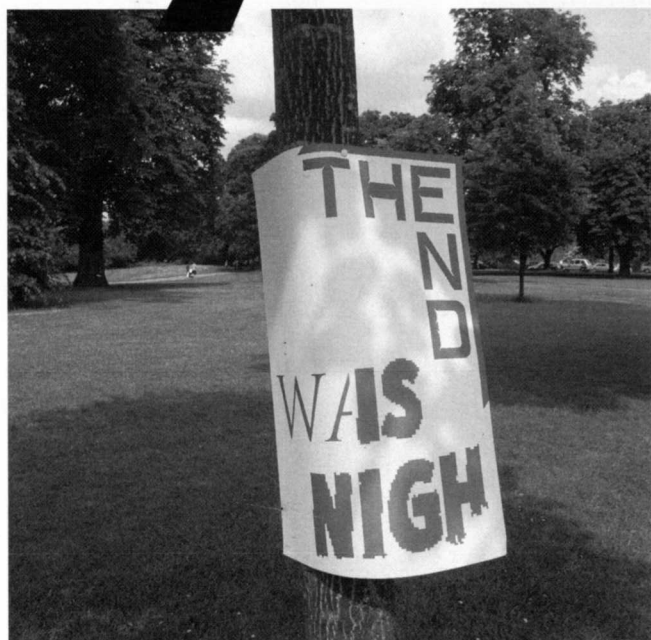
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PRAVITT -190E



Åbåke for the Architectural Association, 2007

Marie Louise

Marie Louise is not a news magazine; it is a tool we needed.

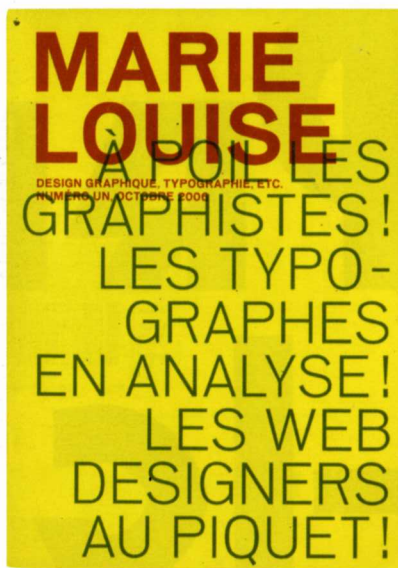
We will invite contributions from practitioners who make or analyse the visual environment in which we live and whose work, words or positions seem strong and relevant.

We will particularly ask graphic designers to express their thoughts.

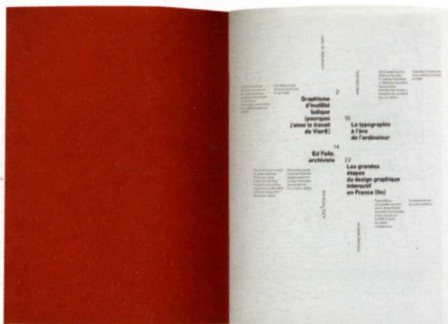
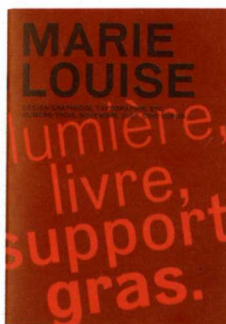
We will publish interviews, theoretical (or not so theoretical) texts, recent and past texts, some of them never before published in French.

We wish *Marie Louise* to be alive and to become a useful, polemical platform. (Alexandre Dimos and Gaël Étienne, editorial to Issue 1)

Marie Louise is co-published by Éditions F7, École Régionale des Beaux-Arts de Valence, Lux, scène nationale de Valence.



Issue 2 cover



Issues 1 and 3

Marie Louise est un outil dont nous avions besoin. Notre résidence à la scène nationale de Valence nous permet de tenter cette expérience. Nous y produirons les trois premiers numéros. Marie Louise n'est pas une revue d'actualité.

Nous inviterons des personnes qui font ou analysent l'univers visuel dans lequel nous vivons et dont le travail, les mots ou les partis pris nous paraissent forts et pertinents. Nous solliciterons notamment des designers à prendre la parole.

Nous donnerons à lire des entretiens, des textes théoriques ou non, récents ou pas, pour certains encore inédits en français. Nous privilégierons la subjectivité.

Nous utiliserons dans ces trois premiers numéros les quatre graisses du caractère Dodo Grotesk. Nous espérons que Marie Louise sera vivante et qu'elle deviendra une tribune utile, polémique et de mauvaise foi.

Alexandre Dimos et Gaëll Étienne

2

STEFAN SAGMEISTER
Tweedledee, Tweedledum.
Mon année de design graphique
sans clients

Stefan Sagmeister est un graphiste new-yorkais d'origine autrichienne. Il a travaillé pour de nombreuses agences de publicité et pour les Rolling Stones, Live, Reed, Talking Heads ou David Byrne. On peut dire qu'il a une année sabbatique.

10

PETER BILAK
À propos de typographie.
À la recherche d'une théorie générale
du dessin de caractères

Peter Bilak vit et travaille à Paris. Il est directeur de la recherche pour les objets adhésifs et enseignant de la typographie à l'École nationale supérieure de design de Paris (ESD). Il est également professeur invité à L'Atelier national de recherche typographique (ANRT). Pour Marie Louise, il propose une réflexion sur la typographie religieuse dans la création graphique et typographique.

16

PHILIPPE MILLOT
Relire et relier

20

ÉTIENNE MINEUR
Les grandes étapes du design graphique
interactif en France
(épisode 1)

Étienne Meneur est graphiste spécialisé dans le design d'objets interactifs. Il vit et travaille à Paris. Il a cofondé en 2000 le studio de design interactif et a conçu de nombreux sites dont celui d'Henry Mynke. Premier article d'une série de trois écrits pour Marie Louise.

Peter Bilak est typographe et graphiste d'origine autrichienne installé à Paris depuis 2000. Il a travaillé pour de nombreuses agences de publicité et pour les Rolling Stones, Live, Reed, Talking Heads ou David Byrne. On peut dire qu'il a une année sabbatique.

INQUIRY

Maison Standard, Meudon

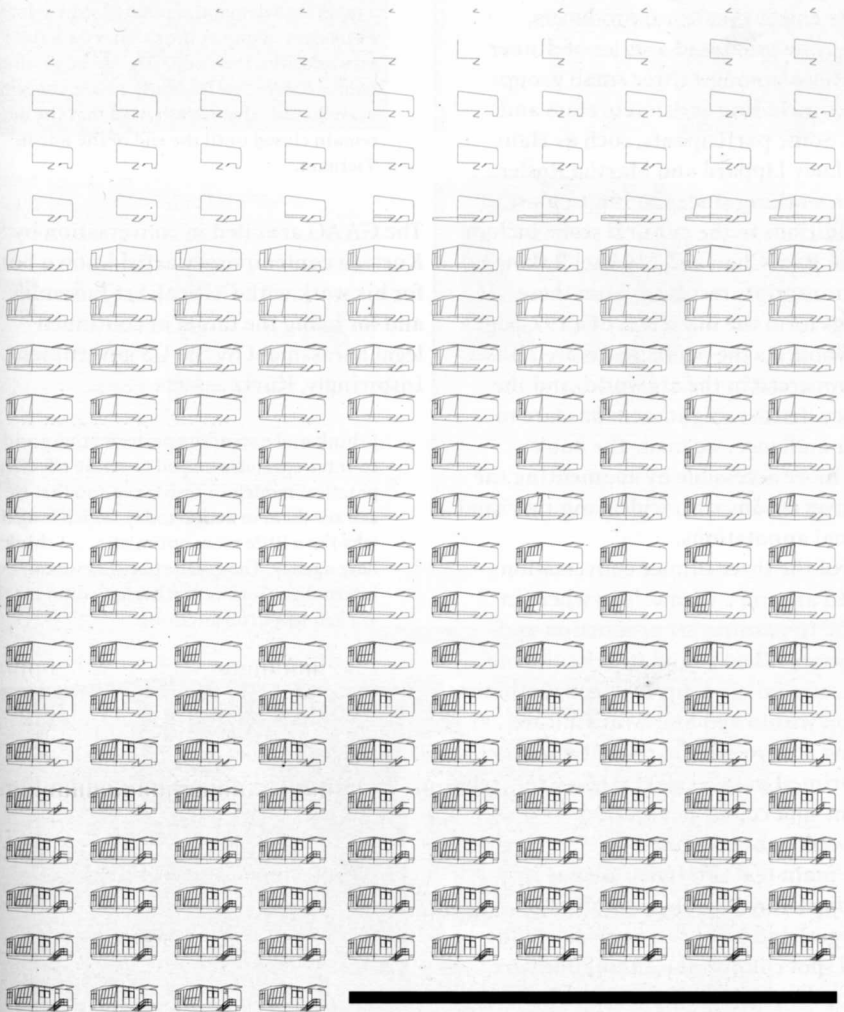
Jean Prouvé (1901–1984) was not strictly an architect or a designer or an engineer, but all of those things at once. Having trained as a metalworker, he set up his own studio in 1924. Until 1952 (the year when his factory was bought up), he worked there producing chairs, furniture, aluminium structures, modular houses and portholes. After this he continued to practise his trade as a designer. Each of Prouvé's constructions has a functional role which determines its form. His style resides not in some kind of beauty but in the intelligence and the generosity of his work. The example of the 'standard house' developed in response to the postwar housing shortage, was based on modules one metre wide. It was designed to be assembled in forty-eight hours.

Prouvé's work is characterised by the modesty of its materials (aluminium, wood) and intention (social vision), and by an economy of means and a reduction of the stages of construction. Jean Prouvé appeals to us through his attachment to the context in which his work is set, through his engagement with his projects, his rebuttal of gratuitous architectural gestures and effects of style. We admire the way in which he dealt with problems.

We approach a designer's work through the attention he pays to the constraints and problems of each project. For us, the solution often lies in the brief itself, in the question posed by each commission. Our first step is therefore to bring this question to the fore and respond to it. Nor do we shy away from doing research for our commissions; it is no different from the other work we do for our clients.



Jean Prouvé in Meudon. Photos: Francis Jonckheere, Ony One



PROJECT PROJECTS

Who Cares

Who Cares was published in 2006 by Creative Time, a New York public art organisation established in 1974. As a way of bridging perceived gaps amongst generations of politically engaged cultural producers, Creative Time organised a series of dinner conversations amongst three small groups of invitees including artists, curators and scholars. Some participants, such as Hans Haacke, Lucy Lippard and Martha Rosler, have been working since the 1960s; more recent additions to the cultural scene include Julie Ault, Paul Chan and Michael Rakowitz.

The transcripts resulting from these gatherings form the main text of a 192-page 6.5 x 9" book. As the participants are all deeply immersed in the art world, and the topics they discuss might seem obscure to a broader audience, we made the book's contents more accessible by augmenting the three conversations with wide-ranging visual and textual annotations.

Each of the three dinner conversations is grouped around a theme: 'Anywhere in the World' (regarding art production and globalisation), 'Beauty and Its Discontents' (on a perceived dichotomy between aesthetics and action within art) and 'War Culture' (regarding art production during wartime). Each is printed in two colours: black ink, plus a different spot colour per section.

The book's annotations are referenced from the main text through a change in typography (from Akzidenz Grotesk to Delta Jaeger) and colour (from black to the sectional spot colour); the annotations are printed in the page margins and include a variety of texts (both quotations and editorial comments) as well as images (artwork, photographs, documents, scanned objects, etc.).

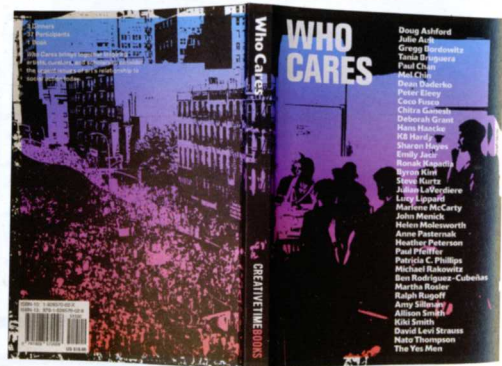
One particular highlight of the annotations is a photograph of Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche of the Guerilla Art Action

Group (GAAG) removing Malevich's Suprematist composition *White on White* from MoMA's wall in 1969. In place of the painting, they left

a manifesto demanding that MoMA sell the equivalent of one million dollars worth of artwork from their collection to be given to the poor, decentralise the museum's management until directly democratic, and that the museum remain closed until the end of the war in Vietnam.

The GAAG are cited in conversation by Steve Kurtz, a contemporary artist known both for his work with Critical Art Ensemble and for being the target of continued legal harassment by the US government. Inspiringly, Kurtz asserts

I think understanding performativity and counter-spectacle helped to create effective practical models of resistance and that we can see them in action today, which is again, why I'm a little more optimistic.... I think we have agency. The greatest lie that we can ever internalize from authoritarian culture is that we are helpless to do anything.



Anywhere in the World

PARIS

THE WORLD

BHOPAL

"Dow 6000"

WALTERS & PETERSON PHOTOGRAPHY

1. **THE 1980s** were a time when the world was in a state of flux. The end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the rise of the AIDS epidemic were all major events of the decade. The world was a place of uncertainty and change.

2. **THE 1990s** were a time when the world was in a state of flux. The end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the rise of the AIDS epidemic were all major events of the decade. The world was a place of uncertainty and change.

3. **THE 2000s** were a time when the world was in a state of flux. The end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the rise of the AIDS epidemic were all major events of the decade. The world was a place of uncertainty and change.

APPROX is the idea that the world is a place of constant change and flux. It is a concept that is both simple and complex. It is a concept that is both old and new. It is a concept that is both familiar and strange.

THE 1980s were a time when the world was in a state of flux. The end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the rise of the AIDS epidemic were all major events of the decade. The world was a place of uncertainty and change.

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WHO CARES

Doug Ashford
Julie Aull
Craig Bandowitz
Tania Bruguera
Paul Chini
Mel Chin
Dean Dodierko
Peter Eley
Coco Fusco
Chitra Ganesh
Deborah Grant
Hans Haacke
Kil Hwang
Sharon Hayes
Emilly Jacir
Ronak Kapadia
Syon Kim
Steve Kurtz
Julian LeVerdiere
Lizzy Lipbord
Marlene McCarty
John Menick
Helen Molesworth
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Heather Peterson
Paul Pfeiffer
Patricia C. Phillips
Michael Rakowitz
Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas
Martha Rosler
Ralph Rugoff
Amy Sillman
Allison Smith
Kiku Smith
David Levi Strauss
Nato Thompson
The Yes Men

CREATIVETIME

MEL CHIN

9-11/9-11

JENS HAANING

حيه قمح
أصعب جازي
وكان كل جازي
تأكله، فاد جازي
العقلية لعلاجه
بمنفاله، سمجوا له بالخروج
إلى منزله، راي مجموعه من
الشعار بعد إلى تحوله:

الدجاج... يا إلهي الدجاج تورد
أخفني يا امرأة، أخفني يا امرأه
هل عدت إلى منزلنا يا جازي؟
ألم نقيم إند بسبب جازي حين؟

COCO FUSCO

A Room of One's Own

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Fantastic Architecture

Fantastic Architecture, by Wolf Vostell and Dick Higgins, was published in 1969 by Higgins's own Something Else Press (New York), following a German edition as *Pop Architektur*. The book attempts to 'restore a spirit of aesthetic research to architecture' through a disparate set of visual and textual propositions by prominent Fluxus, Conceptual and Pop artists, almost all of whom are outsiders to the discipline of architecture.

Each artist's contribution is presented on full-bleed, black-and-white spreads, while the book's editorial voice is primarily dispersed across a series of numbered 'captions'. Frequently reading more like topical mini-manifestos, these captions are printed in small, bold Helvetica on vellum sheets intermittently overlaid with pages of artwork. Vostell's own writings are also printed on vellum, though they appear as reproduced hand- and type-written sheets.

Notable pieces in the book include Gerhard Rühm's 'Plan for building a new city of Vienna', which proposes spelling out the city's name, 'W-I-E-N', as four monumental typographic buildings. As inhabitable, hermetically sealed signage, each of the buildings would accommodate a specific function, such as city administration, meditation, sexuality, and death. Hans Hollein, one of the few practising architects included in the book, presents several collages from his project 'Aircraft Carrier City', in which a ship is transformed into an urban formation set in a range of landscapes. The computer-generated poem 'House of Dust', by Alison Knowles, achieves a strange sort of poignancy through its thirty-three randomly combined four-line stanzas, each describing a house's building material, location, lighting and inhabitants.

Some contributions, such as those by John Cage, Robert Filliou and Diter Rot, are

reproductions of informal postcards, letters, or notes directly responding to the editors' call for projects, thus rendering the book's editorial process transparent.

The final piece in *Fantastic Architecture*, 'An Appeal for Fantasy' by Dadaist Raoul Hausmann, begins with a critique of 'sedentary' architecture and a call for an architecture of 'imagination' — an architecture literally unbounded by gravity. The piece culminates in Hausmann's ultimate task for humanity: to plane the world's mountains, dig 200-mile-deep trenches, and detonate all American and Soviet atomic bombs within these mines, thus throwing the earth out of orbit and allowing it to 'visit the brother stars in our universe. Without fail!'. As a coda, the book's endsheets echo this cheerfully apocalyptic sentiment, displaying roughly half-toned photographs of nuclear detonations seemingly as a celebratory slate-wiping step towards, in Wolf Vostell's words, 'the realisation of utopias [that] will make man happy and release him from his frustrations'.



FANTASTIC
ARCHITECTURE
VOSTELL
HIGGINS

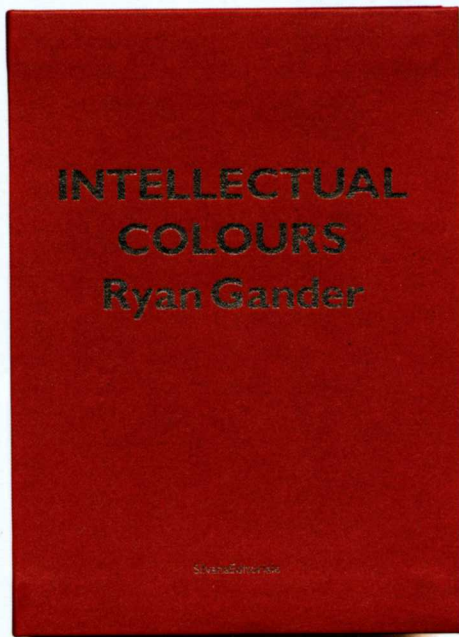
SOMETHING ELSE PRESS

when i see or think of (~~it~~ i mean: if i see,
either in front of my eyes or behind my eyes)
~~what you call architectural~~ ~~of the~~ ~~concern~~
what you call architectural ^{stuff} - i forgive it,
and when i ~~have~~ have seen it and ~~with~~
have forgiven ^{it} (and sometimes even while
i see ^{or think} and forgive) - i forget it.
isn't this fantastic?
~~the~~ (the architecture of forgiving and forgetting.
this ~~architecture~~ ~~you~~ should call ~~it~~)

Diter Rot, from a letter to Dick Higgins, April 4, 1967

Intellectual Colours

Intellectual Colours deals with failed utopias, with a focus on the Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau, designed by Le Corbusier for the World Fair of Decorative Arts in 1925, transported to Bologna and rebuilt in 1975, and restored by Gander in 2006. The original meanings of the pavilion as a symbol of the modernist utopia projected towards the future, and the idea of World Fairs as prototypes of virtual entertainment, dictate the underlying structure of the book. The book was conceived as three bound issues (one year's volume) of Will Holder's *Catalogue* magazine (1999–2004). Each of the three issues of *Catalogue* has been edited to stand in its own right, yet all are associatively linked to one another as a reconsideration of a past (utopian) project.



Cover, *Intellectual Colours*

Catalogue number 7 reprints 'Three Reminders to Architects', written and published by Le Corbusier in 1924, at the time of the conception of the Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau.

Catalogue number 8 documents the 'Nine Projects' from the perspective of two moments in time, allowing for a re-reading in parallel with two essays written about them.

Catalogue number 9, 'Resolve', contains commissioned texts dealing with notions of utopias and institutional practice, accompanied by stills from 'IBM at the Fair' (Charles and Ray Eames), a film illustrating the impossibility of transferring (human) movement from film to the printed page.

As such, the book self-consciously attempts to question the notion of books and publishing as representing ideologies, proposing a model which itself is under continuous scrutiny and re-evaluation.

Intellectual Colours is a document of Ryan Gander's exhibition 'Nine Projects for the Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau', held between 31 March and 14 May 2006 as part of the Coming Soon MAMbo + Museum Shows curatorial programme curated by Andrea Vilianni, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna. The book was edited by Will Holder and Ryan Gander and printed, bound and published by Silvana Editoriale, Italy.



7
 (FIFTY YEARS LATER)
 NEW ADVENTURES IN...
 (New Curtains for
 L'Esprit Nouveau)

Full length curtains, produced, as described in the above legal document for the large window of pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau, with a print on both sides, meaning that they are visible from the interior and the exterior of the building. The print on the curtains is an abstract repeated pattern. The pattern is taken from a painting produced specifically for this purpose, by the Great-Grandchildren of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) and Yvonne Gallis. The conditions of the production of the painting would be to provide the child with a set of paints mixed corresponding to the colours of the original colour scheme of the interior paint of pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau, allowing the child to produce a painting in those colours.

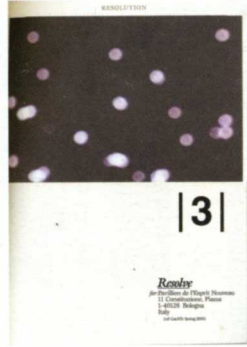
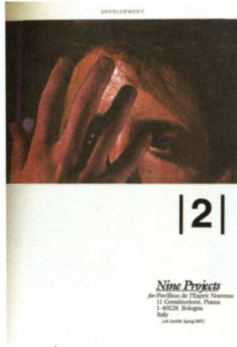
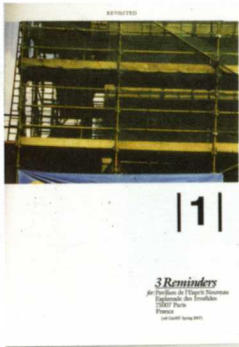
In the end, Gander listens to his own premises and positions the mechanism or rather the protocol, i.e. the detailed set of instructions which must be followed in order to transform L'Esprit Nouveau into a time machine. 1925 generated 1977, and 1977 generated 2006... as well as 2006 generating 2056... ad infinitum

8

IN THE SHADOW OF...

An architectural computer model of the building will need to be made, over which the position of the sun on the initial date of conception of the pavilion in 1925 will be placed, plotting the shadow of the building on the grass next to the pavilion. This shadowed area will then be marked out on the grass in reality and will be resseeded with a thicker variant of grass seed; it will also be fed and not cut for the duration of the exhibition. The effect will be a subtle thickening of the area of the building's shadow.

Spread from Catalogue no. 8 in *Intellectual Colours* by Ryan Gander and Will Holder



Covers of Catalogue nos. 7-9



Spreads from Catalogue no. 8

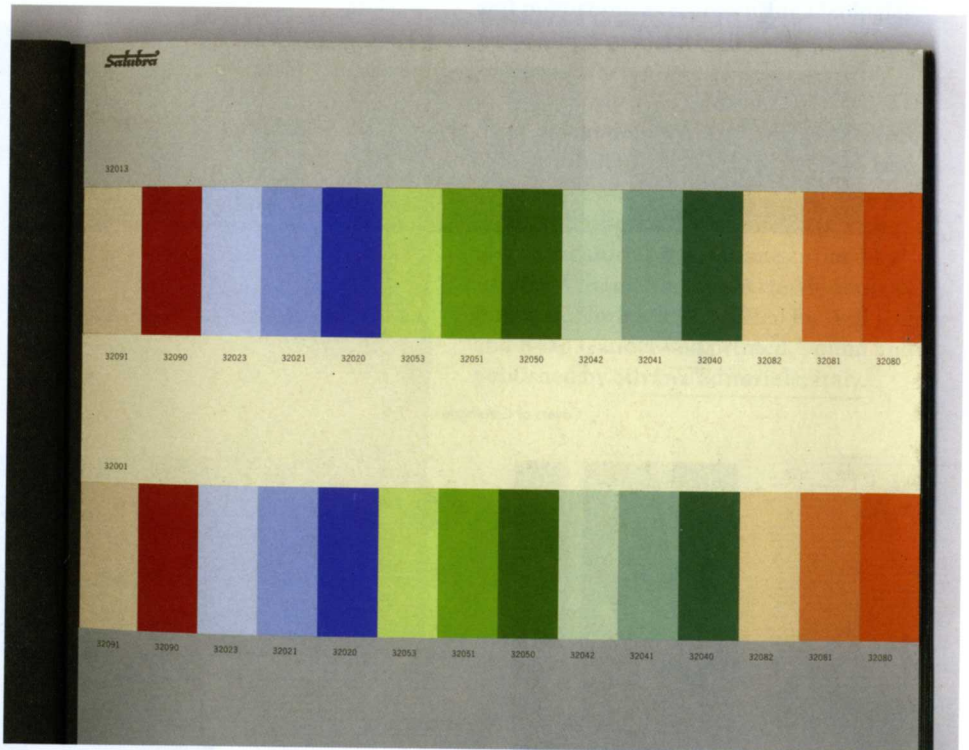
Analysis and Synthesis (Spot the Difference)

In Kandinsky's class we were given a real vacation assignment, but it isn't bad. A square, 30 cm by 30 cm, is to be divided up into 5 by 10 cm rectangles. The following colours are to be used: three primary, three secondary and three uncoloured (black, white, grey). The arrangement of the coloured rectangles is entirely up to you as long as they are horizontal and vertical, not diagonal. It's also up to you how often you use each colour, so long as every colour is used at least once. The task is as follows:

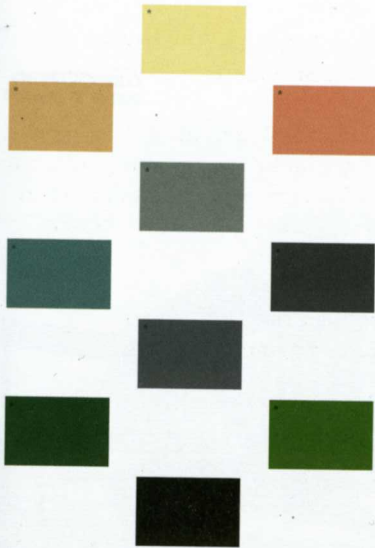
1. Emphasise the centre
- * 2. Balance top and bottom

In the final session he did not say much new, just something about the tensions in the square; I myself did not understand it completely, and I think it's not that important anyway...

Unidentified Bauhaus student
(possibly Hans Thiemann)



'Colour keyboard' for the Salubra wallpaper company, from Le Corbusier's *Polychromie Architecturale*, Birkhäuser, 1997



1925 Expo: a reversed time capsule. The last intervention inside the building seals the space-time trajectory that we have been tracing here. *Comic Cosmology* (2005) is a video that turns the logo of the World's Fair of 1964-65 in Flushing Meadows New York (when the Westinghouse *Time Capsule II* of Kronaur was buried to be opened in 6939 AD) into an animated cartoon by taking away the planet earth from it, leaving the stars to orbit around its invisible body. Such a gesture withdraws the spatial representation of the present in 1964, and thus creates a spatiotemporal void that renders comical the now outdated representation of the future.

Looking back at the four-dimensional map we have been tracing, Gander's interventions on the Pavilion in Bologna can be conceived as a set of steps towards the potential activation of the space-time continuum enveloping the pavilion. This is achieved through the use of projections into the past and into the future and the manipulation of interconnected concepts. This operation would not be as successful if we were not able—through a science-fictional suspension of disbelief—to concep-

tually identify the second version of the pavilion as one travelling through time and space. But it is precisely through the artistic insertion of the fictional realm over the conceptual surface of space-time that we successfully visualise the multilayered continuum, a possibility of our understanding. In this sense, the *Nine Projects for the Pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau* is a single work that uses space-time as a conceptual support.

The artistic strategies that the artist selects to formulate his aesthetic and conceptual hypotheses beyond this show revolve around notions and structures such as space-time capsules, constellation, camouflage, puzzles and loose associations. These are turned into unstable four-dimensional frameworks that he activates in the production of his work. Gander's structures develop over a variety of axes that, instead of setting up binary oppositions in the tradition of structuralism, aim to open up diverging, often still empty directions. So if on the one side there is the spatiotemporal lines of investigation, on the other intercepting links intermittently include fiction, invented characters, a missing

Spread from *Catalogue no. 8*

Cut to music video of the fictional band PERC GREY (2001) (in black and white)

Cut to sequence of Le Corbusier's 'intellectual colours', each screened for the same duration, cumulatively lasting the length of the following anecdote. Formal male voiceover:

The architect Le Corbusier had a very specific palette of colours which he used on a number of occasions to decorate the interiors of his buildings. This palette—evident on the interior of Le Corbusier's *Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau* in Bologna, the 'Empire'—was comprised of eleven colours which have been described as 'vibrant', 'brilliant' and 'natural'. They were only ever used on the interior of buildings to reflect their surroundings—such buildings, whose so-called 'rationality' was restricted to pure white or raw concrete.

Early one spring morning while sitting in one of the steps of the *Passillo* talking with the architect I colloquially referred to the colour scheme as Corbusier's 'intellectual colours'. As far as I know there's no previous record of the colours being so named, at least in the space, with a matter of fact sobriety, the name began to stick. Le Corbusier himself believed greatly in the suggestive power of words, in the formal language of naming, going so far as to say that, 'once one has clearly named the colours, one can speak of a certain red with the same reactions as one would of the A of a building block'.

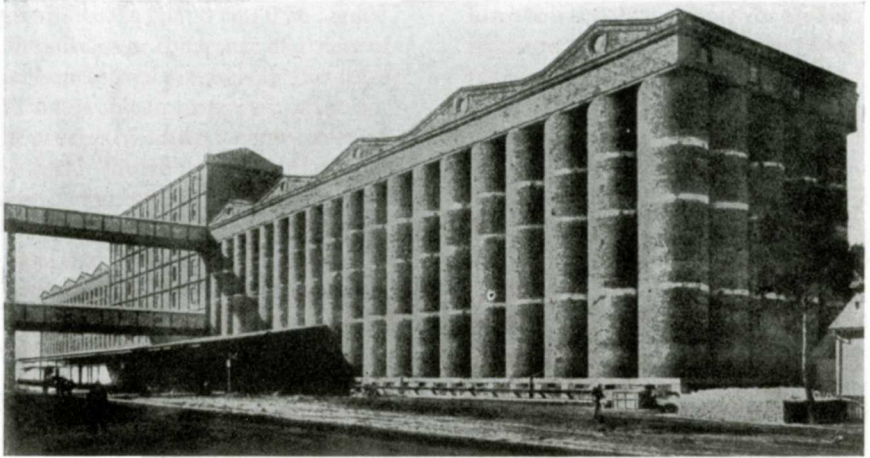
These intellectual colours remain: light pink, Pantone 660C; a mid pink, Pantone 750C; a dark pink, Pantone 471C; a light grey, Pantone 420C; a dark grey, Pantone 3617C; a mid brown, Pantone 430C; a dark brown, Pantone black 50; a light blue, Pantone 649C; a mid green, Pantone 377C; a 50% black, and a pure white.

Notes on nothing at all. The first test screen was devised around 1958, about five years before the first television ever made available to the public. It consisted of a simple pattern generated to test the equipment—with no colours, of course.

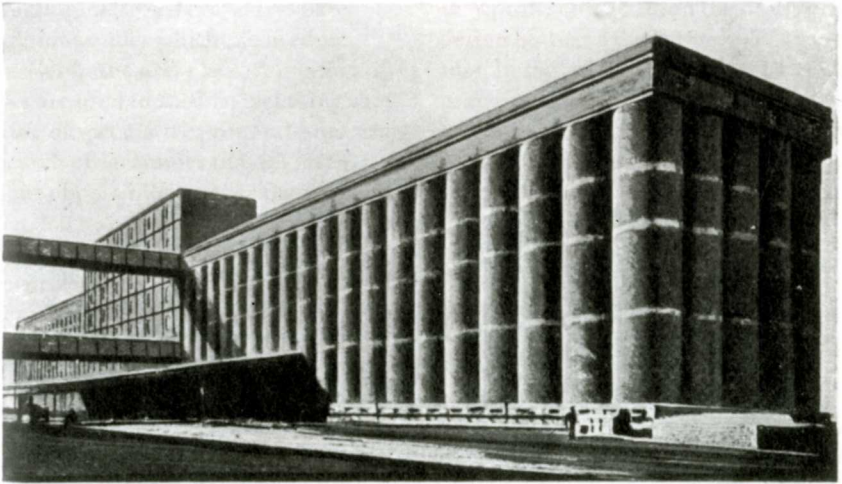
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GETREIDESILO
BUNGE Y BORN



BUENOS AIRES



CANADIAN GRAIN STORES AND ELEVATORS

Will Holder, *Form of Beauty* (Cambridge MA, Autumn/Winter 2007),
for the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London.
(With special thanks to Ed Bottoms)

Aspirant in Architectural Culture (ed. Nigel Coates & Will Holder), (London: Routledge, 2007)
Translated as *Form of Beauty: Towards a New Architecture* (London: John Bodo, 1977, Reprinted, Dover Publications 1985)
Aspirant in *Form of Beauty: Towards a New Architecture* (London: John Bodo, 1977, Reprinted, Dover Publications 1985)
Aspirant in *Form of Beauty: Towards a New Architecture* (London: John Bodo, 1977, Reprinted, Dover Publications 1985)

METHODOLOGIES

For most people graphic design is only legible in the form of a singular, finished artefact, whether it be a book, poster, exhibition design or logo. In fact, it could be argued that the success or coherence of a piece of design is measured precisely by the degree to which it is able to cover over or screen off the process by which it comes to exist in the world. The whole behind-the-scenes apparatus of graphic design systems, style guides and standards is largely put in place to do just that: to ensure that the final designed object is free of any evidence of the preconditions of its making and closed off to the vagaries of chance.

The designers gathered in this section invert this process of erasure and treat graphic design, from the start, as an open methodological and material process. Rather than simply crafting a finished product, their practice interrogates and lays bare the conditions under which the need for design arises in the first place. A number of strategies are used to do this, including the fashioning of speculative proposals, models and research programmes that set forth conditions of possibility rather than criteria to be met. Such approaches are often adapted from the realm of architectural practice, so it is not surprising that the connections with architecture — both in terms of procedure and by way of collaboration — are explicit here.

The work of Metahaven Design Research is a case in point. Operating as an architecture-meets-graphic design think-tank, Metahaven takes up questions of national and civic branding in the context of globalisation by investigating the possibilities of using the forms of buildings themselves as graphic signifiers. In the process, their work aims to expose the political motivations that are normally 'black-boxed' by the design process. Similarly, John Morgan's work with the

Invisible University, initiated by Archigram's David Greene and continued with Samantha Hardingham (both tutors at the AA), gives form to a set of guidelines for an 'invisible', freeform, decentralised design pedagogy that takes advantage of the possibilities of public space and networked technologies. A desire to accommodate change and dispersal also animates Mevis en van Deursen's identity for the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, which exchanges a single, stable graphic identity for a mobile, material and typographic kit-of-parts that operates both inside and outside the architectural space of the museum.

Taken together, the projects and inquiries shown here explore the productive intersection of graphic design and architectural methodology. Formulating new strategies, models and possible scenarios, they probe and question the limits of graphic design both as a discipline and as a critical tool. In the process they allow us to see graphic design not simply as a set of isolated artefacts or objects but rather as a route through which to access multiple domains of practice and investigation.

Models for the Political

We are designers and researchers. In our work, architecture is a consistent source of inspiration and discussion. More than graphic design, architecture has in recent years provided a series of 'icons' that can only be measured against the unfolding of globalisation.

The first icon we got involved with was Sealand, an ageing wartime platform in the North Sea that was claimed as a sovereign principality in 1967 and has since served as the perpetually renewed phantom image for the idea of something external to western liberal democracy. In the 1960s and 1970s, what caught the imagination was the mere idea that these platforms existed (Archigram were inspired by the forts) and that one could, for example, set up a casino on them or engage in some other James Bond-style activity. In the late 1990s, the 'data haven' became Sealand's guiding new idea — a sanctuary/web server space beyond national and international jurisdiction that would allow for anything. From late 2003 to early 2005 we worked on proposals for Sealand's national identity.

Importantly, in Sealand, notions of a 'bizarre' anarchy and a 'perverse' authority unite. Its distinct silhouette, however, forms a landmark, which makes it liable to be used as an image in the context of a global visual culture.

Globalisation (as an aesthetic-economic regime) consistently favours reflexive monumentality — see the so-called 'Bilbao Effect' — as a means by which aspiring cities lay claim to being 'world' travel destinations, magnets for business investment and cultural hotspots.

Reflexive monumentality also seeks to include architectural landmarks at, or beyond, its ideological borders. This becomes apparent through the roles that former communist (or 'totalitarian') landmarks get

to play in defining their host cities.

The strong ideological and symbolic potential still present in these buildings (if only through their size) brings to the fore a conflict between 'smooth' globalisation and the actualisation of democracy in the here and now — one could say a conflict between a building's use as image and its physical, social and political reality.

Among the largest of totalitarian architectural icons is Casa Poporului in Bucharest, a product of the Ceausescu era. The construction of this government building required the razing of one-fifth of the Romanian capital. Now an attempt has been made to give it a veneer of legitimacy by assigning it new functions — as the seat of the Romanian parliament, as a choice location for trade fairs and congresses, and as a contemporary art museum.

In this attempt to have Casa Poporului do for Bucharest what Gehry's Guggenheim did for Bilbao, it is assumed not only that the Romanian people are ready and willing to let go of the past, but also that the desired effect can be achieved by means of a routine operation.

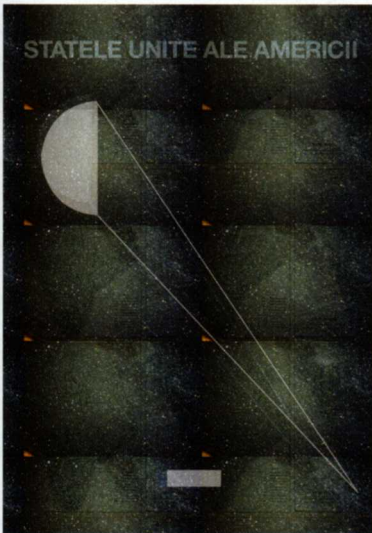
At the same time, Casa Poporului presents the opportunity to rethink public space in the very face of a three-dimensional symbol that is in essence forbidding and anti-public.

An entirely different case is presented by the Ryugyong Hotel in Pyongyang, a 330-metre-high, unfinished concrete structure that North Korea's Stalinist regime intended to become the world's greatest hotel, albeit in a city unprepared to receive tourists. Like Casa Poporului, the Ryugyong Hotel is a pure symbol, a direct translation of totalitarian architectural thinking into forbidding symmetry and immense size. It cannot, however, be directly occupied by any outside conquering force and is structurally unfit for any use.

This does not prevent people in the west from launching visions for this bizarre icon — most notably, through a competition initiated by the Italian magazine *Domus*. In this way, it is being retrospectively inscribed into globalisation. Indeed, the Ryugyong Hotel is, in a strange sense, a future Guggenheim Bilbao.

At present, it is impossible to view the iconography of (former) communist regimes in isolation from the new roles of semi-state actors, the market, the military, the church and ‘criminal’ activities such as smuggling and counterfeiting. The connection between architecture, iconography and the political is — in a very wide sense — key to our work. This work includes models, chessboards, newspapers, posters, stamps, grids, towers and other proposals that attempt to reflect on the twisted state of symbolic power today.

Sealand Identity Project: Daniël van der Velden, Vinca Kruk, Adriaan Mellegers, Tina Clausmeyer/Jan van Eyck Academy; Ryugyong, Forbidden Icon: Daniël van der Velden, Vinca Kruk, Adriaan Mellegers; Museum of Conflict: Daniël van der Velden & Vinca Kruk; Towers & Symbols/Toxic Politics: Daniël van der Velden & Vinca Kruk



Bucharest Poster: USA, 2005



Sealand Models (Deleuze & Guattari and Pringles), 2004



Ryugyong: Time Flag, 2005



Towers & Symbols: Green 1, 2007

Building 7

The World Trade Center complex in Manhattan consisted of a number of different buildings all made by different architects. The structure known as 7 World Trade Center, and alternatively as the Salomon Brothers Building, after its main tenant, was opened in 1987. It was designed by an architectural firm called Emery Roth & Sons, a family business whose approach ranged from 'international style' to 'postmodern', and who most often played the role of the project architect assisting a more famous counterpart such as Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

7 World Trade Center or simply 'Building 7', stood in the shadow of the Twin Towers as they fell on September 11, 2001. The South Tower collapsed at 9.59 am, the North Tower at 10.28 am. But on that day, at 5.20 pm, 7 World Trade Center collapsed too, without being hit by a plane. The reported cause was the damage that had been inflicted on its structure by fire, resulting from debris falling from the Twin Towers.

7 World Trade Center was a run-of-the-mill, almost anonymous office building. It did not have the iconic quality of the Twin Towers and its collapse went almost unnoticed as a footnote to the day's 'real' events.

Yet there is an unsettling series of footnotes to that footnote. In a stunning news report, BBC World television told its viewers that the Salomon Brothers Building had collapsed more than 20 minutes before it actually happened. The building was even visible on screen on the Manhattan skyline, as reporter Jane Standley stood in front and a 'newsbar' reported its collapse. To date, no credible explanation has been given for the report.

7 WTC had been hit by burning pieces of the Twin Towers, but not by a fuel-laden aeroplane. However, it collapsed straight into

its own footprint. According to those who argue that 9/11 was a false flag operation by the US government, the collapse bears the hallmarks of a controlled demolition. And the property developer Larry Silverstein, who owns the entire World Trade Center complex, knew about it, they claim. In one video fragment, widely available on the internet, Silverstein says that he'd decided 'to pull' Building 7 — meaning, in common language, bring it down by explosives. This interpretation of 'to pull' was later denied by Silverstein: 7 WTC had been ablaze and the decision was just to let it burn. But could that have caused a complete collapse? Even those who do not like the conspiracy theories cannot help wondering why the building came down like it did, and why BBC World reported it before it happened.

Unremarkable 7 WTC is an anti-symbol in the 9/11 aftermath, in almost complete contrast to the Twin Towers. The architect of the towers, Minoru Yamasaki had also designed the controversial Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St Louis, which was declared to be a 'failure' soon after its completion and was demolished on 16 March 1972. For the postmodern architect and writer Charles Jencks, this was the day that 'modern architecture died'. The image of the demolition of Yamasaki's Pruitt-Igoe became, with Jencks's help, a small precursor of 9/11: physical destruction as the symbol of the end of an idea.

Slavoj Žižek has written:

The point is not to play a pseudo-postmodern game of reducing the WTC collapse to just another media spectacle, reading it as a catastrophe version of the snuff porno movies; the question we should have asked ourselves as we stared at the TV screens on September 11 is simply: Where have we already seen the same thing over and over again?

The fact that the September 11 attacks were the stuff of popular fantasies long before they



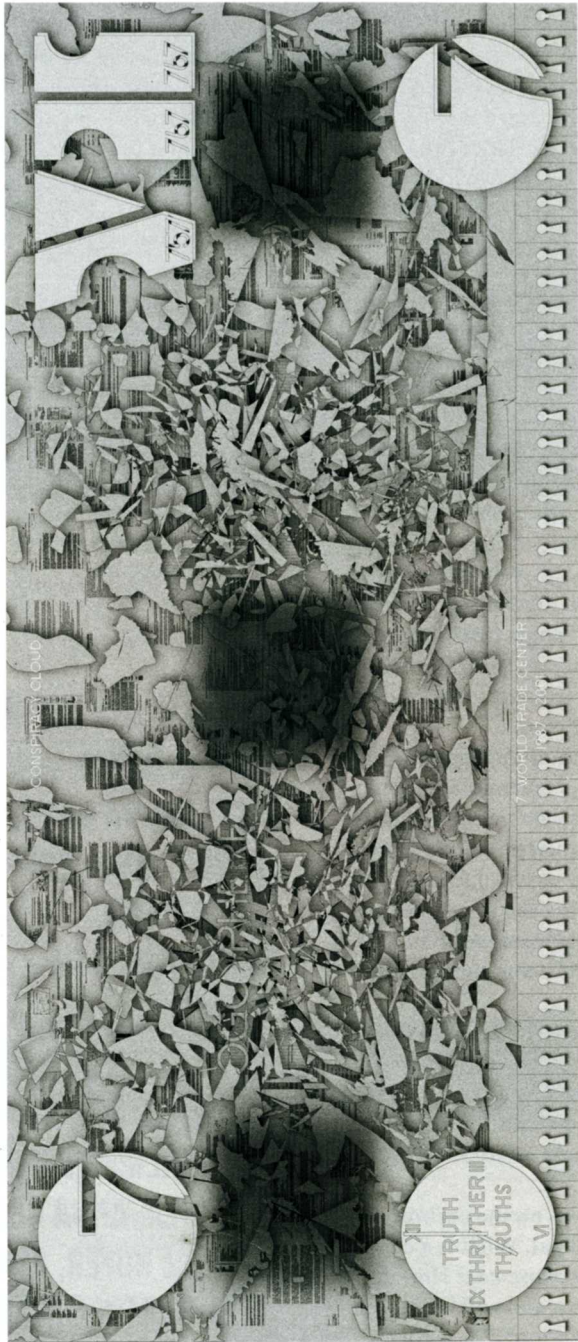
actually took place provides yet another case of the twisted logic of dreams: it is easy to account for the fact that poor people around the world dream about becoming Americans — so what do the well-to-do Americans, immobilised in their well-being, dream about? About a global catastrophe that would shatter their lives — why? This is what psychoanalysis is about: to explain why, in the midst of well-being, we are haunted by nightmarish visions of catastrophes

Is the collapse of the Salomon Brothers Building a disaster? Even though directly connected to the 9/11 attacks, it lacks not only iconic impact but also victims, as it was fully evacuated prior to its collapse. The anonymous corporate architecture of 7 WTC allows for its reading beyond 'iconomy', beyond the regime of destination architecture and city branding. In 7 WTC, architecture is only postponed collapse, the force that makes a structure stand upright until it is inevitably brought down by 'something' (a political or ideological act). Paradoxically, it was the destruction of 7 WTC that rendered it visible. In the meantime, investigations continue into what really caused the collapse. A conclusive outcome seems impossible, as the Salomon Brothers Building is gone forever.

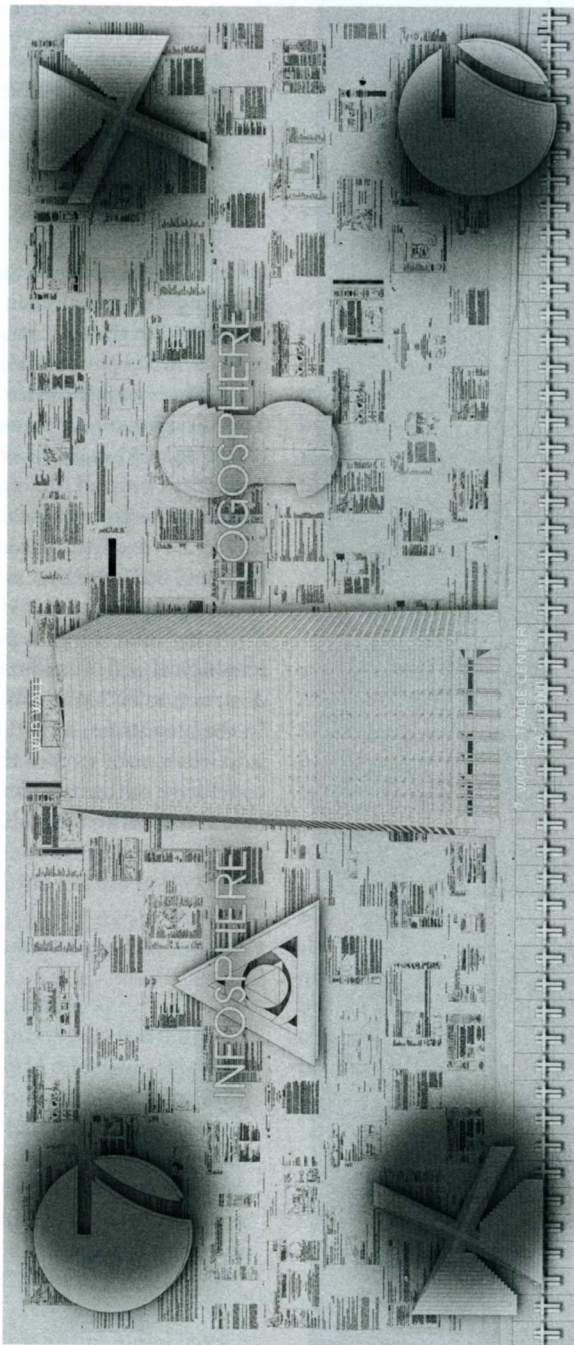
Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, Rizzoli, 1984

Slavoj Zizek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, Verso, 2002

Terry Smith, *The Architecture of Aftermath*, University of Chicago Press, 2006



Side 2



Metahaven for the Architectural Association, 2007 — Side 1

Secret Instructions

Secret Instructions is a collaboration between performer/choreographer Alexandra Bachzetsis and graphic designer Julia Born. The work consists of a set of six scores, a programme booklet handed out to the audience and a performance based on the scores. Transcription, translation and interpretation of language — the common ground of choreography and graphic design — are the main focus of this research.

Secret Instructions deals with the invisible, the unspoken words of a play. The stage directions of six classic twentieth-century theatre plays become the central event on stage. Each author directs their actors in a fundamentally different way, using a characteristic language. While Beckett is known for his explicit, meticulous directions — even defining a 45° angle from left to right of the movement of an eye, Sarah Kane's instructions are less frequent, simple, almost rough in the choice of words.

Six actors are to simultaneously perform the directions reformulated into instructions. It is a repeatable set-up with a number of fixed parameters: the six scores, the sixty-one props (assembled from all the plays), a square marking the stage, and one hour's duration. No performance will look like another, the flexible components alter the piece every time.

The instructions are written in a way that leaves props, people and spatial elements open to interpretation. The actor designates objects that are lying around, chooses other people to execute certain actions, defines the space around him.

Another emphasis is on the definition of the classic, the archetypal. What is a classic kiss? How long does a pause last? How do you enter? Which props can and will be chosen for which type of operation? The actors will define their own language by executing their instructions.

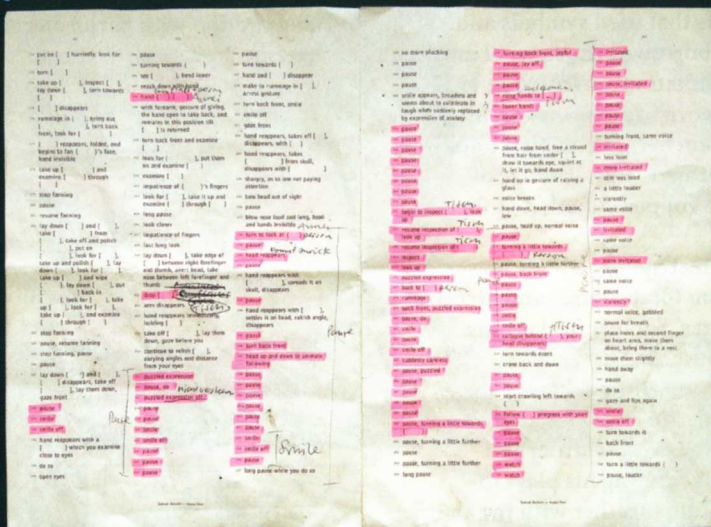
On stage the six individual plays gradually become interwoven into one entity, resulting in a narrative that is partly controlled and directed, and partly subject to personal interpretation and chance. The actor shifts from protagonist, to passive element in the scenario of the others, to the director of the piece itself.

Secret Instructions is an attempt to capture the range between control and chance, determination and ambiguity; both in relation to spoken and written language, as well as body language, its definitions, terms and signs. The method lies within combining the implicit and the explicit in order to achieve a dramaturgy that is not entirely foreseeable.

SECRET INSTRUCTIONS
IST EIN STÜCK VON
ALEXANDRA BACHZETSIS
IN ZUSAMMENARBEIT MIT
JULIA BORN,
AUFGEFÜHRT IN
ZÜRICH
IM THEATERHAUS GESSNERALLEE,
AM 19, 20 UND 21 JUNI 2005,
MIT PHILIPPE BELOUL, PAUL
GAZZOLA, ANNA GEERING,
LORENZ NUFER, ANAT STAINBERG
UND MARTIN ZIMMERMANN.



Stage and props at Theaterhaus Gessnerallee, Zürich
photo: Melanie Bonajo



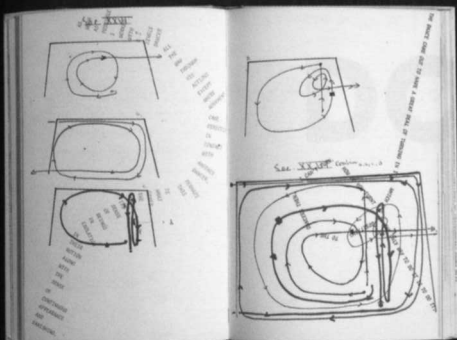
Score used by Martin Zimmermann, interpreting Beckett's
Happy Days, Zürich



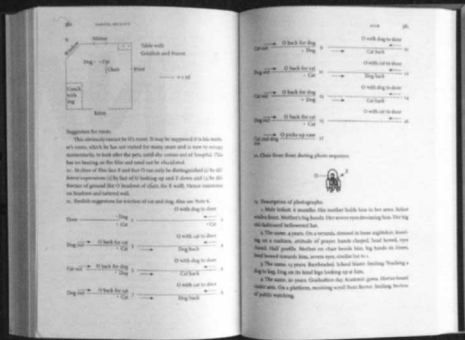
Actors performing in Zürich



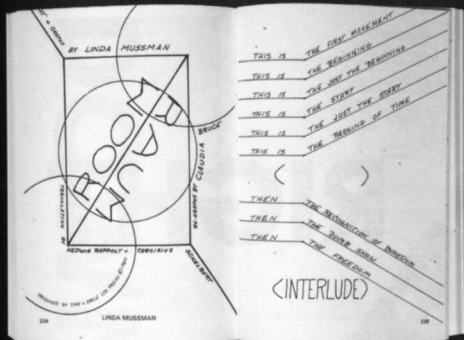
Booklet spread



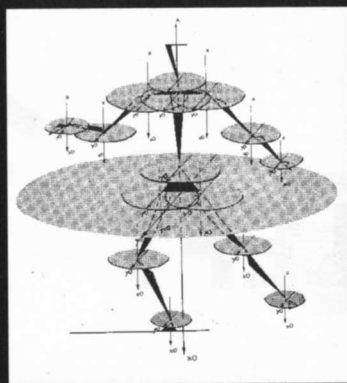
Spread from *Changes: Notes on Choreography* by Merce Cunningham, Something Else Press, 1968



Spread from *Samuel Beckett: Dramatic Works* (volume unspecified) by Samuel Beckett, Grove/Atlantic, pp. 380-1



Spread from *Scenarios*, ed. Richard Kostelanez Assembling, 1980, pp. 234-5



Eshkol-Wachmann system, 'The individual spheres and their relation to the general system'



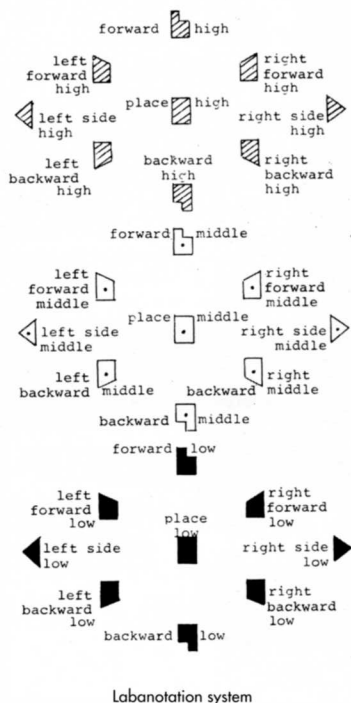
'Hands Up!' from Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Labanotation: The System of Analyzing and Recording Movement*, 1970, reprinted 1989 and 2004

As an extension to the work *Secret Instructions*, which explored the language of stage directions, this inquiry focuses on the spatial dimension of movement instruction.

The mapping of movement is just as elusive as the recording of thought. A countless number of forms have been established that have attempted to solve the problem of recording, preserving and transferring movement into a readable form. Some of the early graphic recordings of dance movements were formed from simple pattern-like floor plans that marked the paths of the performers from a birds-eye view. Later these developed into more complex systems that used symbols and letter codes, or borrowed the signs of musical notation. 'Labanotation', invented in 1928 by the dance theorist and former architect Rudolf von Laban, became the first notation to be designed from the perspective of the performer, as opposed to that of the audience.

Methods of instructing a body on stage have ranged from total control and precision to open structures. Samuel Beckett was known for his serious concern for structure and meticulous description. Late in his career he became an active participant in the theatrical process, re-editing and sometimes even rewriting his plays in rehearsals, working together with the actors. On the other hand, Merce Cunningham was influenced by Zen and Dadasim and deliberately operated with processes of chance in order to liberate himself from the restrictions of convention. Similarly, Richard Kostelanetz's book *Scenario* compiles scripts to be performed that 'induce travellers to take routes they had not experienced before, perhaps making perceptions they would otherwise have missed'. Some of these scores offer mere ideas or suggestions that are entirely open to interpretation, written by artists who had obviously never studied playwriting.

The challenge of transcribing movement can be seen to lie within the simultaneity of its elements: the movement itself in three dimensions, the concept/idea behind it, alignment in space, and time/duration as the fourth dimension. Purely verbal directions without a physical demonstration of the movement or the use of metaphors are rather imprecise. The need for reference is crucial for spatial orientation as well as for communication in general: the meaning of a basic description like 'up' or 'down' can alter depending on the standpoint. These blind spots of language create interesting moments of ambiguity that will be explored in collaboration with performer Alexandra Bachzetsis.



DOWN

LEFT FRONT RIGHT

UP

DOWN

FRONT

RIGHT

UP

LEFT

Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam

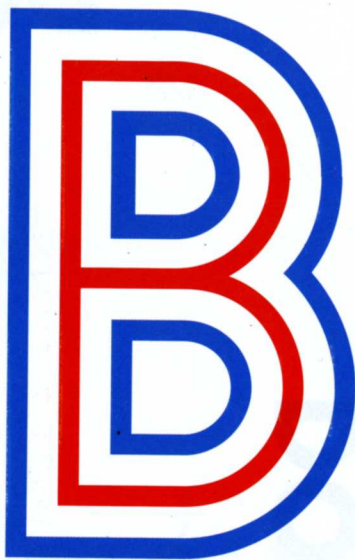
Mevis & van Deursen [MvD], an Amsterdam design studio, recently designed a new visual identity for Rotterdam's Boijmans van Beuningen Museum. Part of the new identity is a custom-made layered font (digitised by Radim Pesko). Armand Mevis and Linda van Deursen explain the project:

The idea was to have an outline B combined with an inline B that would fit into each other and become the logo: a three-line B. From there we started working on a typeface that could reflect the complexity of the museum. [...]

This font follows the structure of the building with its different shells added over time. Outlines can also be added to the logo which directly refers to the specific collecting function of the museum: it can grow.

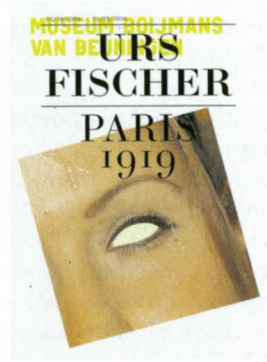
The Boijmans font can also be decomposed, and its variations used to articulate hierarchies of text.

From 'Mexico 1968/Rotterdam 2003' by Peter Bilak,
Dot Dot Dot 7



Boijmans logo iterations

BB-TYPE SPECIMEN

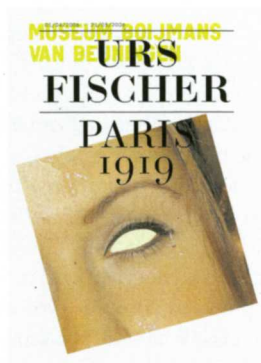


Various Boijmans printed matter



Boijmans exhibition boards in situ

BB-TYPE SPECIMEN



Various Boijmans printed matter



Boijmans exhibition boards in situ

Gerrit Rietveld Academy Amsterdam

The building we chose is the art school where we studied, which was designed by the Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld. In 1918 Rietveld became a member of De Stijl, the avant-garde movement that promoted simplicity and abstraction in art, design and architecture by means of the use of primary colours — red, yellow and blue — as well as black, grey and white. His Rietveld-Schröder house (1924) is the only building realised on this basis. After the house was completed, Rietveld became associated with the Nieuwe Bouwen and his style became more functionalist, as reflected in the art school in Amsterdam. The school is almost an exact copy of the art school in Arnhem (also designed by Rietveld), which was built in 1963. Rietveld died in 1964 and the building was finished in 1967 and named after him: Gerrit Rietveld Academy. Up to now, the building has accommodated different departments such as the foundation year and various free art departments as well as design departments dedicated to different disciplines. Thousands of students have worked in it almost daily for over thirty-five years.

Due to a lack of funding for art education little was done to maintain the building, and it was in a deplorable state for many years. The school in Arnhem, on the other hand, was renovated in the early 90s, but lost its original character with the replacement of its glass. In a way, the lack of money at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy saved the building. Around 2000 the school was declared a historic monument and in 2004 was restored with due attention paid to its original details, materials and techniques. The building is basically a glass house placed over a concrete structure. For the restoration, glass was imported from Romania that had been manufactured using the original technique, by pulling glass, which produces a structure

and colour very different from that of float glass. The interior is mainly painted in three fixed shades of grey which are referred to as Rietveld dark, middle and light grey.* The vitrines are painted in a beautiful, but nowadays rare, splashing technique of middle grey and white.

The restoration brought the building back to its original state and gave staff and students the responsibility for maintaining it. This resulted in rules that are almost unbearable for an art school, especially one with a reputation for anarchy and revolution. At the start of each school year a set of rules is sent out to teachers and students:

WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION:

NEVER COVER THE VITRINES OR WINDOWS

NEVER PAINT OR COVER THE WALLS

NEVER DRILL INTO WALLS, CUPBOARDS,
FLOORS OR CEILINGS

DUE TO THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE
ARCHITECTURE IT IS FORBIDDEN TO STICK
ANYTHING ON THE VITRINES.

The friction between the idea of the building's function (it is designed as an art school, after all) and its status of a monument is interesting, especially in this case where it still maintains the original role.

Students and staff are confronted with this every day: the privilege of working in a remarkable building whose use has become very restricted. Every year there are numerous examples of the rules being broken, and at the end of the year students clean up and repaint the building to prepare for the graduation show. As a result we enter a freshly painted building after each summer break and then the vandalism can start all over again.

* Rietveld light grey for the walls in the stairway (sikkens D 24-2); Rietveld middle grey for the walls of the classrooms (sikkens D 25-3); Rietveld dark grey for the doors (sikkens D 24-8); With some details in white, yellow, red and blue.



Gerrit Rietveld Academy. Photo: Johannes Schwartz

WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION:

**1. IT IS NOT PERMITTED TO
POST ANYTHING ON THE VITRINES
OR WINDOWS.**

**2. IT IS NOT PERMITTED TO PAINT
OR COVER THE WALLS.**

**3. IT IS NOT PERMITTED TO MAKE
HOLES IN WALLS, CLOSETS, FLOORS
OR CEILINGS.**

The Dutch Museum Association was designed by architect and landscape designer Gerrit Rietveld between 1928 and 1932 and was restored in 2002. It is the largest building used for the storage of the Museum of Modern Art in The Netherlands and is designed by Gerrit Rietveld. In 2002 the building was designed as a design monument and was placed in the inventory of the National Heritage Agency. It is the best of what has happened and the architectural heritage of a city of great value to research and education during the present use of the building.

EXPERIMENTAL JETSET

Scale Models on Grey Carpet

This collection of maquettes was produced between 2000 and 2005. Initially not intended to be photographed or published, they were selected by Karen Willey, then a Werkplaats Typografie student, for inclusion in 'Dutch Resource', a project for the Chaumont Poster Festival 2005. Johannes Schwartz took the photographs for the accompanying catalogue.

Creating models such as these is an important part of our design process, giving us the chance to fully investigate the physical proportions of the projects we are working on. Since the way we think is more object-based than image-based (one of the reasons why we would never refer to our work as 'visual communication'), we devote a lot of effort to the making of these maquettes.

While we dislike contemporary, fetishist notions of craft and handiwork (which we see as falsely romanticising manual labour), we have to admit that we derive much consolation from folding, cutting and perforating — physical gestures that allow us to puncture the world of images.

Designing is the act of shaping the material world around us, and creating models is an emblematic example of this. It's utopian in the most basic sense: imagining what is not yet there, sculpting the shape of things to come.





Scale Models. Photos: Johannes Schwartz

Headquarters of the French Communist Party

We knew about the existence of Oscar Niemeyer's headquarters for the French Communist Party (built 1967–1972) for quite some time, but we became particularly interested in the building after meeting Armando Andrade Tudela, a Peruvian artist who is currently making a film about it. His enthusiasm for the building was contagious, so we have visited it a couple of times recently.

One of the things that we find particularly interesting about the building is its symbolic dimension. The idea of a symbolic modernism has always fascinated us, perhaps because it seems like such a paradoxical concept while in fact it's not paradoxical at all. As Reyner Banham shows in his conclusion to *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, many modernist icons (such as Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion) are highly symbolic structures.

Another seemingly paradoxical situation is the synthesis of symbolism and communism evidenced in the building. Again, there is actually nothing paradoxical about that: many commentators have pointed out that communism is loaded with religious imagery. Some even go so far as to suggest that communism is in fact a parody of religion, a farcical imitation of Christianity.

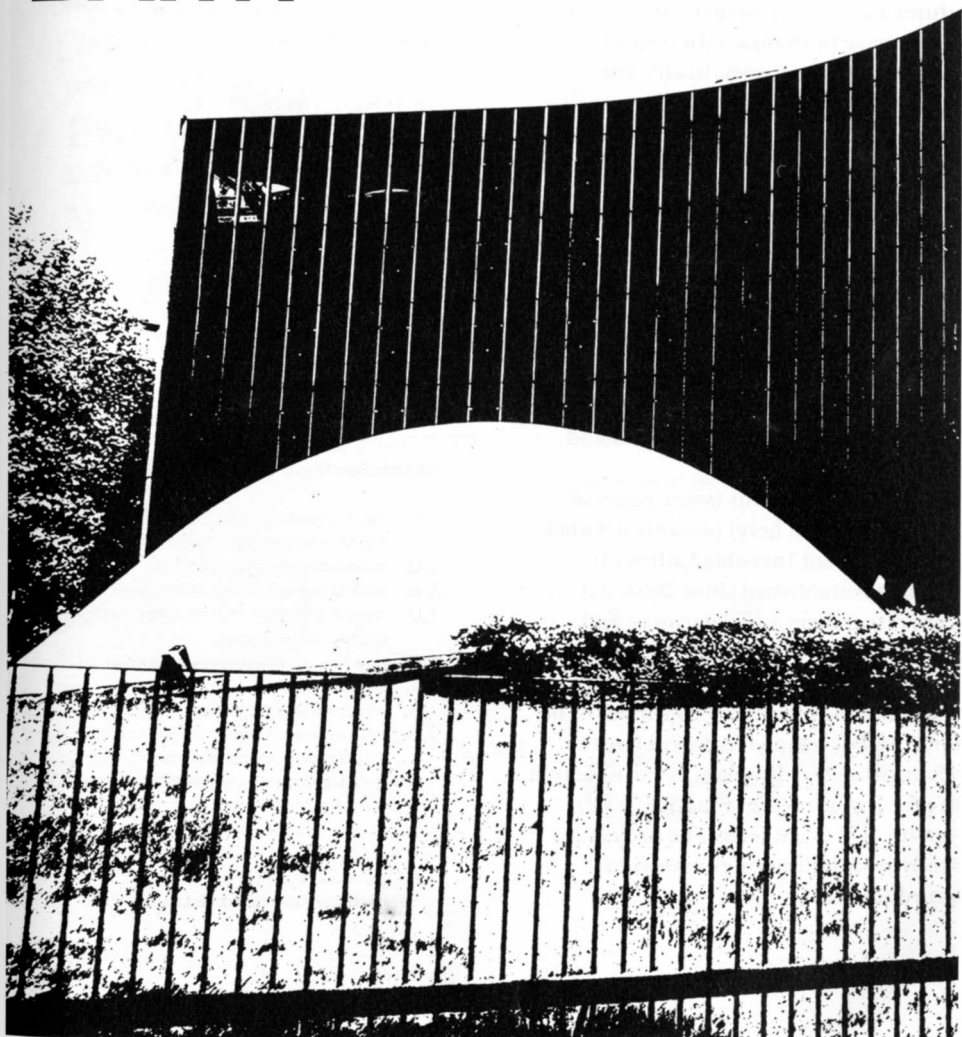
This latter stance is certainly something we disagree with. In our opinion, it's the other way around: rather than regarding communism as a secular ideology appropriating religious concepts, we see religion as an illusory system appropriating secular matter, through rituals and mystification.

In that sense, we see symbolism as a secular, worldly construction, one that has more to do with the human psyche than with the world of gods and spirits. The symbolism at play in Oscar Niemeyer's Headquarters for the French Communist Party is a constant reminder of that. Modernist symbolism, for a secular ideology.



French Communist Party headquarters, designed by the Brazilian communist and utilitarian architect Oscar Niemeyer. Photos: Charlotte Balavoine (Wikimedia Commons)

COME GREET THE DAWN



Experimental Jetset for the Architectural Association, 2007

Invisible University

The Invisible University imagines public space as an electronic surface enclosing the globe. This approach is described as New Pastoralism in order to evoke a setting for creative action about technology and nature.

The Invisible University responds to a specific set of conditions affecting design education. The traditional expectations, structures and infrastructures of a design education have to change with respect to current conditions, specifically: the proliferation of mobile and wireless technology, cheap air travel, overpriced rental accommodation in the UK, a growing global energy crisis and slow deployment of robotics.

The Invisible University exists anywhere, anytime and for as long as you need it to last.

The Invisible University exists only in relation to time and the recording of it, as a demonstration of how technology in all its forms can simultaneously connect people with past, present and future natural and unnatural environments.

The poster prospectus (some pages of which are published here) presents network listings for current Invisible University departments established since 2003. All staff are researchers and determine and coordinate their own timetables.

The IU has no fixed administration.

The Invisible University continues to be explored and developed by David Greene with Samantha Hardingham at the Research Centre for Experimental Practice (EXP), University of Westminster. The project is currently researching a new model for design education.

Newspaper: All IU Departments; President: David Greene; Protagonist: Samantha Hardingham; Graphic design: John Morgan studio; Poster text: David Greene

Further notes on the Invisible University can be found in *Experiments in Architecture*, edited by Samantha Hardingham (August Media 2005) and *Archigram* (Birkhäuser 1972, reprinted Princeton Architectural Press 1999).

The Invisible University and its historical values:

- I. U. means learning as an ecosystem (what on earth might this mean?).
- I. U. means being carbon positive.
- I. U. all data is everywhere, all the time.
- I. U. means architecture is no substitute for face-to-face contact.
- I. U. means a new relationship between man and nature.
- I. U. needs no new buildings.
- I. U. means tune up kits (small robots, cyber-pets and neuro-gardening – see catalogue available from caretaker).
- I. U. means knowing where you are is more important than knowing what time it is.
- I. U. uses less fuel per hour than any other university.

I. U.

Invisible University poster

Philip Johnson Interviewed by Susan Sontag

I can't help but be seduced by Philip Johnson's black-comic exchange with Susan Sontag — described by Marshall Berman as 'pop nihilism in its most insouciant form'. As someone who was encouraged to do 'good work' and join hands with Geddes, Ashbee, Lethaby, Read, Mumford and co, I find Johnson's honest amorality both shocking and refreshing. His voice resonates with self-mockery and self-delight. His candid disclosure offers one way to work and live in the modern world. In the absence of values, his pragmatic pick-and-mix vision offers an abundance of possibilities. 'To be natural is such a difficult pose to keep up.' (Oscar Wilde)

Charles Jencks places Johnson's modern self-awareness under 'camp' — a sensibility Sontag knew a thing or two about. 'I am strongly drawn to Camp, and almost as strongly offended by it. That is why I want to talk about it, and why I can. For no one who wholeheartedly shares in a given sensibility can analyse it; he can only, whatever his intention, exhibit it. To name a sensibility, to draw its contours and recount its history, requires a deep sympathy modified by revulsion.' (Susan Sontag, 'Notes on Camp', 1964).

As the required result of this inquiry is a large-format print — perhaps encouraging 'design as art', just as Johnson appeared to encourage 'architecture as art' — I must not, as Sontag warns, be 'too solemn and treatise-like', or else I run the risk of producing an 'inferior piece of camp'.

SS: ... I think in New York your aesthetic sense is, in a curious, very modern way, more developed than anywhere else. If you are experiencing things morally one is in a state of continual indignation, and horror but [they laugh] if one has a very modern kind of —

PJ: Do you suppose that will change the sense of morals, the fact that we can't use morals as a means of judging this city because we couldn't stand it? And that we're changing our whole moral system to suit the fact we're living in a ridiculous way?

SS: Well I think we are learning the limitations of the moral experience of things. I think it's possible to be aesthetic...

PJ: ... I mean your moral approach is the [Lewis] Mumford one that you're speaking about.

SS: Yes.

PJ: Patrick Geddes, the greatest good, and we must be good and do these things. That criterion leads you into what we have today, so we've retreated, or maybe advanced, our generation — if I can lift you up.

SS: Oh it's nice of you [they laugh].

PJ: To merely, to enjoy things as they are — we see entirely different beauty from what Mumford could possibly see.

SS: Well, I think, I see for myself that I just now see things in a kind of split-level way... both morally and...

PJ: What good does it do you to believe in good things?

SS: Because I...

PJ: It's feudal and futile. I think it much better to be nihilistic

and forget it all. I mean, I know I'm attacked by my moral friends, er, but really don't they shake themselves up over nothing?

SS: Well people do things.

PJ: Do they?

SS: Do accomplish things.

PJ: Do they? What have they done in New York City since the start? You read all the reports the other day in the paper – the chief man said you might as well spend your time writing to Santa Claus as talk about any possibilities of city planning in this city, and incidentally the English that are so good about morals and city planning, and have all these London County Councils and things they are so proud of, have ruined their city in the name of morality. Even worse than New York in this hopeless chaos...

this very same time you're doing one thing, you flip moods, you do something entirely different, quite opposite.

SS: But this is the very essence of modernity [PJ: Sure] in all the arts. I mean you see it even in somebody like Picasso [PJ: Yes, Picasso is rather...] he's the first person who understood the principle of artistic plagiarism. [Goes to flowers]

SS: Yes – and these are real, real –

PJ: Real flowers – real, fake flowers.

SS: Real, fake flowers, of course.

PJ: You see the level of fakeness, that's real [telephone rings] three-dimensional [voice says hello] imitation, yes of an advertised meaning, and it's those various levels of reality that make it all so fascinating...

© BBC, 1965. Quoted in Jencks, *Modern Movements in Architecture*, pp. 208-10

After examining various Pop paintings in Johnson's collection:

PJ: ... Can we look at architecture, or do we always have to look at painting?

SS: No, no, we can look at everything, because it all fits together.

PJ: ...[pointing to works] I'm a plagiarist man – you see, you must take everything from everybody – you see this is copied from Corbusier, that's copied from Byzantine Churches – this is taken from Jaipur, India. This is, I don't know, maybe this is original. It's an underground house. We have some ponies grazing on the roofs, you see one come down to the water, but... it just shows you that at

The Bill-Tschichold dispute

...and the Bill-Tschichold dispute...

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Streit um die Technik

John Morgan for the Architectural Association, 2007

Optik Schröder Book and Poster

The book shows different stages in the existence of this contemporary art collection, for example, the interior of the collector's house, the exhibition itself and the storage space.

We commissioned a photographer to take photos of the exhibition at different times during the day and at night when the museum was empty. The images show the different effects of light falling onto the artworks.

Whilst working on the design for this exhibition I discovered that the collector, Alexander Schröder, not only collected the artworks, but had also collected all kinds of ephemera and personal correspondence related to the artists in his collection. The invites and letters from the past were reprinted for the poster announcing the exhibition of this private collection, giving them a second life.

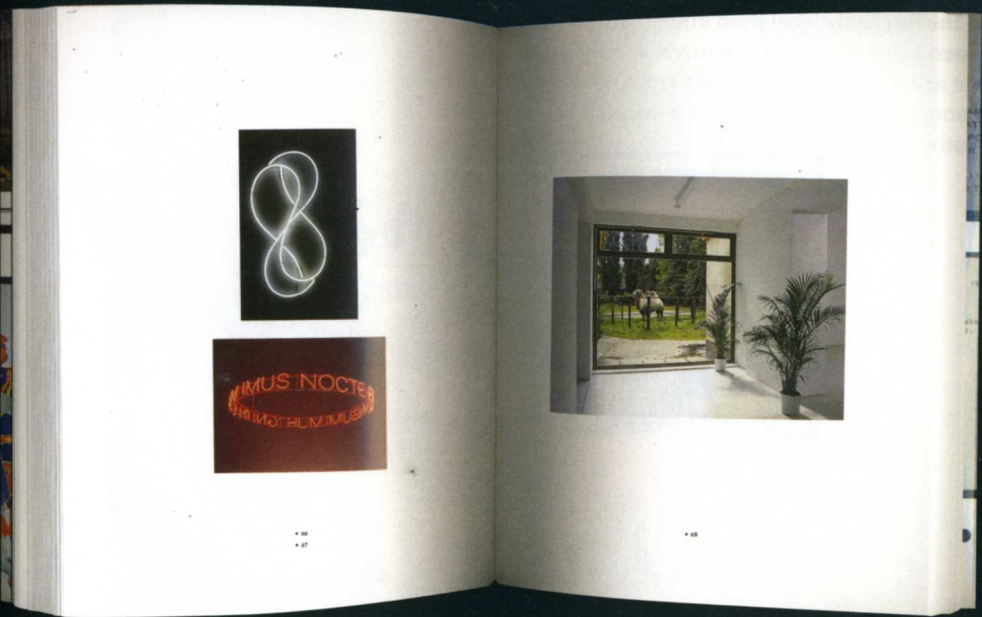
A special font was designed for the poster and book cover.

Optik Schröder: Werke aus der Sammlung Alexander Schröder, exhibition catalogue with contributions from Karola Grässlin, Dominic Eichler, Oliver Koerner von Gustorf und Isabelle Graw:

Published by Kunstverein Braunschweig/
Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König



Optik Schröder poster. Photo: Manuel Raeder



Optik Schröder book cover and spreads

Parangolé

Parangolé* is a series of works by the Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica (Rio de Janeiro, 1937–1980) made up of costumes (capes, banners) that only become a piece of art once they are worn, and preferably while dancing.

I am interested in Oiticica's Parangolé* as flexible architectural elements that can be compared to markets, circuses and other ephemeral architectural devices, in the sense that they are open to improvisation and constant change.

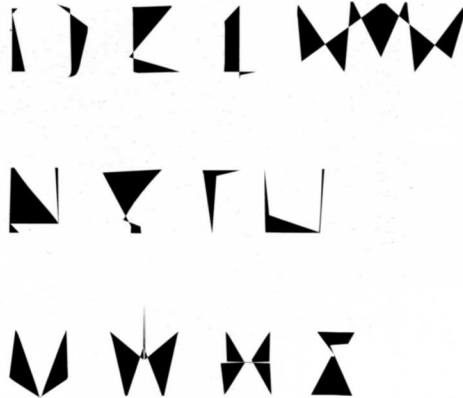
The discovery of Parangolé elements in the urban or rural landscape is also part of 'establishing perceptive structural relations' between what grows in the structural grid of the Parangolé (here representing the general character of colour-structure in environmental space) and what is 'found' in the spatial environmental world. The architecture of the *favela*, for example, has implicitly a Parangolé character. The organic nature of its constituent elements, and the internal circulation and external dismemberment of its structures, ensure there are no abrupt transitions from room to room, and that each part is connected to the other in a continuity.

The same thing occurs in another way with the huts you see on building sites, or with any of those generally improvised, everyday constructions we see around us, such as the popular decorations for fairs or traditional or religious carnivals. One could call all these relations 'imaginative-structural', as they are ultra-elastic in their possibilities and in the pluridimensional relation between 'perception' and 'productive imagination' (Kant) which drives them, inseparable from and feeding off one another.

... There is, as it were, a 'desire for a new myth', furnished here by these elements of art; they make an interference in the spectator's behaviour: a continuous and far-reaching interference, which could implicate the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology and history...

Hélio Oiticica, *Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé*, 1964

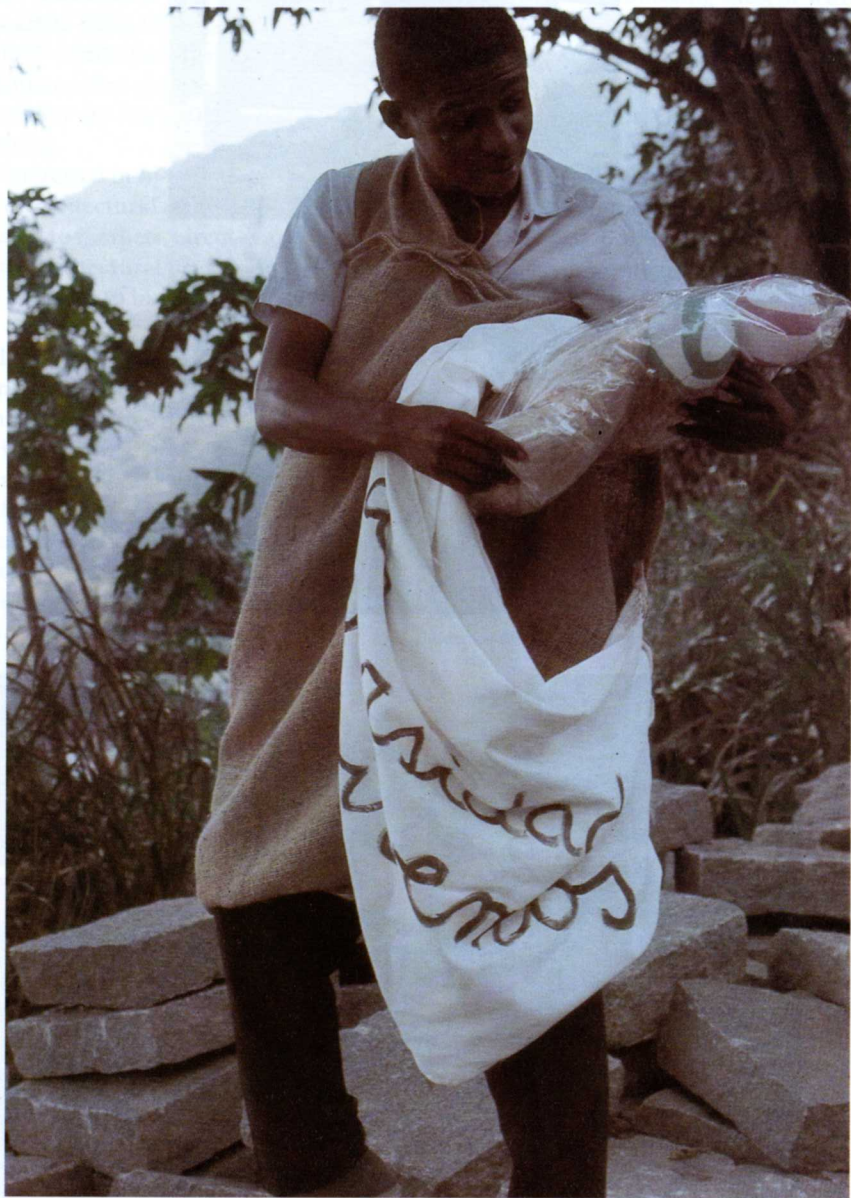
* Parangolé, slang term meaning animated situation and sudden confusion and/or agitation between people.



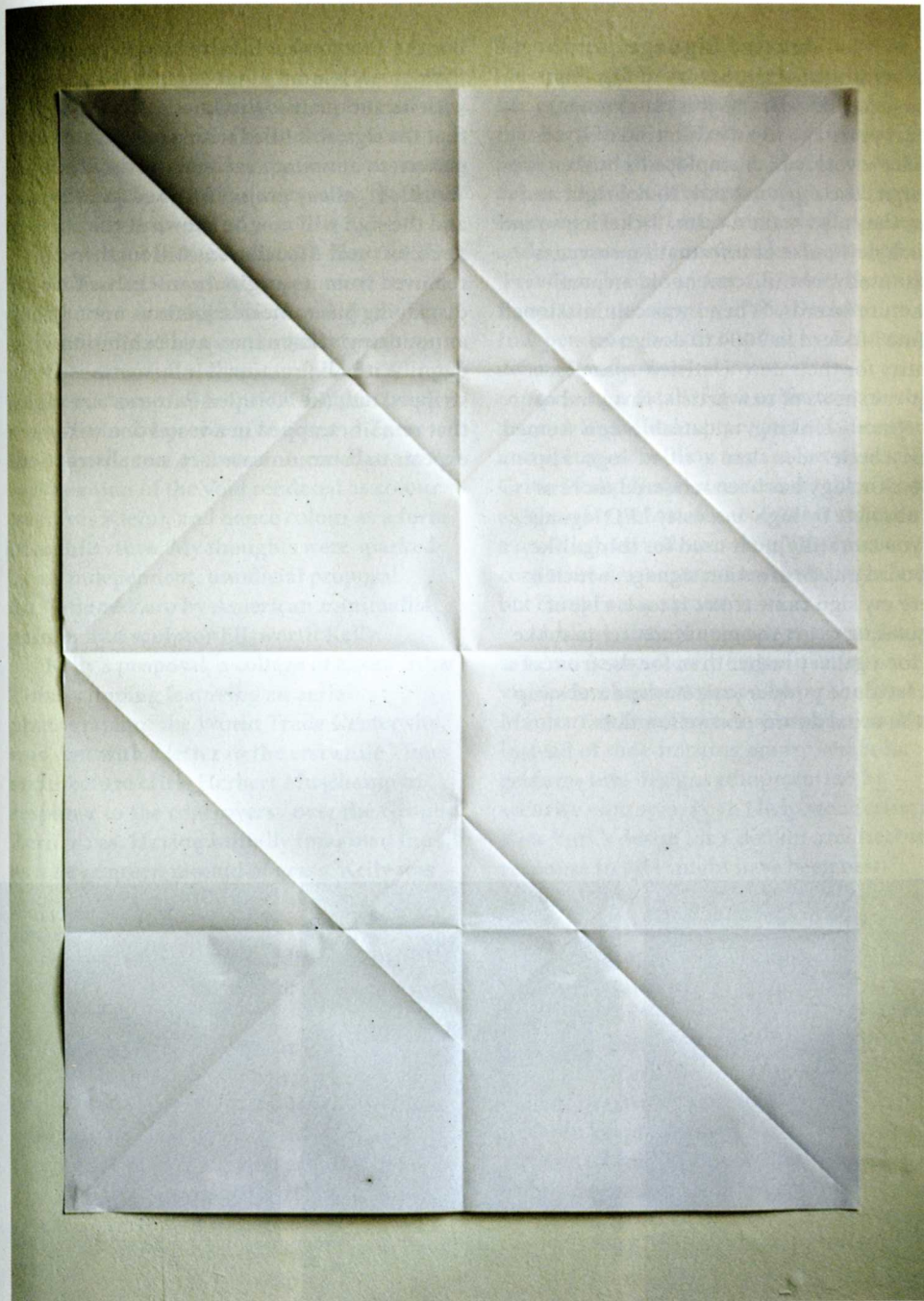
Wounded Bird typeface, 2007



Tarpaulins, various locations in public markets and theatres. Photos: Manuel Raeder



Hélio Oiticica, Nildo of Mangueira with Parangolé P4 Cape 1, 1964
Opposite: Photo by Tim Brotherton



Manuel Raeder for the Architectural Association, 2007

JAMES GOGGIN

Untitled Signage

I was reminded of the beauty of flip-dot signage (or 'flip-disc' as it is also known) several years ago in an exhibition of Ryan Gander's work which employed a broken flip-dot sign. The signs not only look bright and clear, they also make a calm, flickering sound as each new pulse of information cascades horizontally, reminiscent of old airport departure boards. When I was commissioned by Tate Modern in 2004 to design an identity for their new 'Untitled' space for frequent shows of new artists, this kind of anonymous-looking, updateable sign seemed to me a better idea than a 'titled' logo. Flip-dot technology has been rendered more or less obsolete by high-intensity LED signage, but you can still find it used for things like on-board bus destination signage, which is where my sign came from. It took a bit of persuading to get the manufacturer to make one for a gallery rather than for the front of a bus, let alone powder-coat it white and swap out the usual fluorescent yellow dots.

For the Tate project I learnt how to program the sign each month and to make drawings with its antiquated Windows software, so that the sign was filled with a new 'Untitled' pattern to announce each new artist. The 'Untitled' gallery project finished in 2005 and the sign will now be shown at the Architectural Association, still further removed from its original context, neither displaying bus route destinations nor announcing artist names and exhibition dates. With all functional information stripped out, the 'Untitled Patterns' are all that remain, trapped in a vessel one still expects to communicate fact, not abstraction.



Untitled signage at Tate Modern
Photos: James Goggin

Ground Zero Zero

As a graphic designer with an active interest in, but diffident knowledge of, architecture, I have taken the idea of an architectural inquiry literally: to ask some questions rather than attempt a confident statement, let alone provide any answers.

The issue of what to do with New York's World Trade Center site raises many questions — social, political and symbolic — but for me a key question of interest is whether a void, the absence of any building, might be a more appropriate architectural response to the problem of Ground Zero than another set of towers. A corollary of this is the notion of the void rendered as colour (see Yves Klein), and hence colour as a form of architecture. My thoughts were sparked by an independent, unofficial proposal for Ground Zero by American minimalist painter and sculptor Ellsworth Kelly.

Kelly's proposal, a collage of a New York Times clipping featuring an aerial photograph of the World Trade Center site, was sent with a letter to the erstwhile Times architecture critic Herbert Muschamp in response to the controversy over the Ground Zero plans. Having initially imagined the site as a large green mound of grass, Kelly was inspired by the aerial view to instead make a simple representation of flat green space: 'a "visual experience", not additional buildings, a museum, a list of names or proposals for a freedom monument'.

Others have made similar plans and requests for the site to be kept clear: Kelly mentioned artists John Baldessari and Joel Shapiro and, of particular note, Japanese architect Tadao Ando who actually did propose a grass-covered earthen mound reminiscent of ancient Japanese burial mounds, 650 feet in diameter and 100 feet high. Michael Sorkin Studio similarly proposed a park as memorial for the space, stating 'The eloquence of the void at Ground Zero will never be matched'.

The references to burial mounds point to the unpalatable fact that the Ground Zero site is of course a mass grave, albeit one that happens to reside in one of the world's prime pieces of real estate. This is where the debate between development and memorial heats up. Daniel Libeskind's symbol-laden and increasingly compromised centrepiece 'Freedom Tower' (rising 1,776 feet to mark the year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence) is surrounded by a constantly debated and amended 'masterplan' comprising a total of five or six towers with around 10 million square feet of office space and up to one million square feet of retail. Critic Philip Nobel summarises the situation as 'the only politically acceptable solution ... a crowded, mixed-use, shopping-intensive corporate development surrounding a large but compromised memorial'.

A blank slate of colour was never going to be an economically (or politically) viable development proposal for the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, but instead of shoe-horning empty symbolic gestures into designs compromised by security paranoia, I can't help wondering if New York's desire for a defiant architectural response to 9/11 might have been best provided by simply rebuilding Minoru Yamasaki's Twin Towers exactly as they were.

In my graphic design practice, leaving things as found, or even taking things away, can be just as valid a design decision as making something new. Using the problem of Ground Zero as a starting point, Kelly's collage illustrates an interesting possibility for both graphic design and architecture: a coloured void as a means of satisfying public desire and requirement (in this case for an undisturbed memorial and accessible public space), and of communicating a powerful response to a particular situation (humility and remembrance, not hubris and commerce).

The New York Times

Sunday, August 31, 2003

Arts & Leisure

Section 2

PICTURING THE NEW GROUND ZERO



Finding Comfort in the Safety of Names

Lists of the Dead Have Practically Become a Requirement of Memorials. But Really, What's in a Name?

Courtesy The New York Times

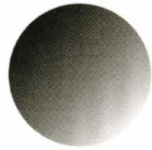
Using the existing structure
of the building,
the new parking garage
is integrated into the
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Arts & Leisure
FINDING THE NEW GROUP 1998

An American Life in Mixed Media
Readers in Pleasant Hill in Northern California Recognize
the American Life in Mixed Media

Stranded on an Isle
of concrete Wires

One Vision: A Hill of Green at Grand Zeros

Downtown
Downtown Derby

With A Dubious Idea
Of Freedom

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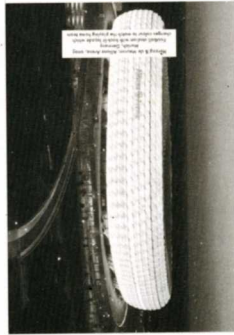
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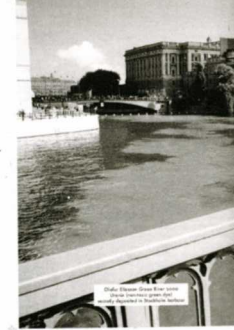
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ESSAYS





VOICES FALLING THROUGH THE AIR
AN IMPULSIVE REPORT (FOR THE VOICE OF EMMA CLARKE)
BY PAUL ELLIMAN

—
Ex auditu fides
(From hearing comes belief)
St Paul, *Romans* 10:17
—

The time had come to exchange our last whispers, for neither of us was ever to hear each other's natural voice.
Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Sharer*

—

Hey, do you like my voice?

Where do you think I am?

I'm riding on a train right now. I'm on the train, as they say.

But then, that's where I always am.

Calling out the stops, a voice on the London Underground.

A voice of the architecture. Like birdsong given human shape, pitched in a wave-form too fast to be held.

You can join me down here anytime. Travel with me.

Am I electricity?

Not the voice part of me, though it's the only part I can give you.

Hey, follow me. Let's get out here at St Paul's Cathedral. Take you to the whispering gallery in the dome.

You know, beginning with the Pantheon in Rome, these great cathedrals were buildings designed for the voice. The Romans perfected the acoustic vaulting of an architectural space.

The dome replaced the vault of the sky, through which voices could fall like stars or angels from, well, the heaven of your choice.

St Paul's is an impressive example. Listen while I telegraph myself from one side of its whispery dome to you on the other side. I'm not supposed to be broadcasting from here, so lowering the voice seems kind of appropriate. Hope the guards don't notice.

When Marconi's first radio signals crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1902, they were guided by the long wavelength radio waves that flow between the parallel conducting surfaces formed by the earth and the ionosphere.

This guiding action is also connected to the way sound clings to a curved wall — the mechanism responsible for the so-called 'whispering gallery' effect. In other words, what happens up here under the roof of St Paul's, or far away on the other side of the world at the 'echo wall' of Beijing's Temple of Heaven, is a clue to radio transmission.

Okay, I'm no expert on acoustics: I'm just the product of it. But even in this age of electronic media I'd say the most impressive of all sound-making mechanisms is still the human voice. And it's clear that architecture, as well as being a sound produced by the voice, is also a sound-producing space of vocal transmission.

From the curved walls of a mouth to the curved walls of an ear, the voice activates the space.

That's where I am. With you in that space.

But there are many of these whispering domes and walls. And since I with my voice can go anywhere — and you with your ear can follow me there — I'll take you to some of them.

Back down into the subway again.
No need for a ticket — I'm a free spirit!

To New York City. And Grand Central Station. Beneath a marble double arch on the lower level, in front of the famous Oyster Bar, where the arch, tiled in terracotta, allows even the faintest whisper to be heard forty feet away across the busy station passage.

Lean into the marble and you might think that the walls are talking to you. You might think that I'm talking to you. Say something back to me. Hmm, very romantic. They say that Charles Mingus proposed to his loved one here. Buy you some oysters?

Catch another train now, up to Boston, and I'll ride with you to the Mapparium. This one's a three-storey-high globe of stained glass. Listening from the bridge that cuts across the centre, the surface of the globe forms a perfect whispering gallery. Because it's a full sphere I can talk in any direction and you can hear me as if you were by my side.

Speaking from the centre of the globe is the strangest thing of all. Hearing your own voice coming back to you in full surround sound. Which is weird if you're only a voice. Like I am.

The Mapparium is designed as a whispering gallery. Other examples might be less intentional.

Wallace Sabine, the American physicist and modern founder of the field of architectural acoustics, refers to the phenomenon as a 'lost art'. Partly because the conditions that enable it can seem so contingent, occurring by chance as often as by design.

In a discussion of the vocal effect, published almost a hundred years ago, Sabine reminds us of the ideas and inquiries of earlier whispering wall enthusiasts – including Sir John Herschel, the English mathematician and astronomer; Lord Rayleigh, the Nobel prize-winning physicist; and George Airy, the Astronomer Royal.

Herschel, for example, had described how, in the Sicilian Cathedral of Girgenti, it was accidentally discovered – to scandalous effect – that whispered confessions were being transmitted 250 feet across the building's great

western floor, to a cornice behind the high altar. Ooh! Though maybe it was intentional – who knows?

For more physical evidence of the unpredictable nature of these secretive susurrations, Wallace Sabine takes us to the Hall of Statues in the Capitol in Washington DC.

The dome of the hall was said, at the time of its original construction, to be an exceptional whispering gallery, 'its ceiling a portion of an exact sphere with its centre very nearly at head level'.

But when the hall was renovated in 1901 after a fire in another part of the building, its smooth wooden ceiling was replaced by fireproof steel and plaster and with recessed panels. The result was a dramatic loss of sound quality.

The voice can be lost as easily as it can be found.

Hey, still there?

Let's leave North America and head south. To Brazil. To the Cathedral of Brasilia; an amazing looking building designed by Oscar Niemeyer.

Sixteen huge concrete sections and a glass roof form a hyperboloid structure. That's the term given to this kind of doubly curved surface. Think of a giant hour-glass or an egg-cup.

Hyperboloid geometry was first applied in architecture by the Russian engineer Vladimir Shukhov at the end of the nineteenth century. Shukhov's calculations encouraged the formation of modernist architecture into all kinds of unpredictable globular shapes.

And, potentially, all kinds of acoustic spaces too.

Though we shouldn't think of our strange, voice-transmitting machines of work, prayer and habitation as exclusively modern achievements. The Greeks and the Romans found ways to strengthen the sound of the voice, by pioneering an acoustic awareness of different kinds of buildings. Aristotle, Pliny and Vitruvius all spoke of ways in which the voice could be transmitted or given more resonance.

This is the Great Ball Court at Chichen Itza in Mexico, an example of Mayan architecture with some striking acoustic effects. A single clap or shout from the centre of the court will produce nine distinct echoes. And in the impressive ball court itself – 545 feet long by 225 feet wide – words softly whispered at one side are perfectly audible far away at the other end.

You heard that, right?

Visitors also describe a curious sound at the pyramid of Kukulcan where a hand clap is echoed back as the chirping voice of the sacred Quetzal bird.

It made me smile to hear science explain the mystery of the invisible mythic bird by mapping its waveform onto the steps of the pyramid. Problem solved. Wonder how it explains this mystery – our own mystery: not so much you and I, a voice and its listener in free-fall around the planet, but the world that our voices and words create.

Keep going?

Let's take a longer journey – to Beijing's Tian Tan. Built in the fifteenth century, this is the most famous temple in China. Here, the Imperial Vault of Heaven is surrounded by a circular courtyard and enclosed by the 'echo wall'.

Listen. If you whisper close to the brick surface, the sound will travel around the wall and come right back to you on the other side of your head. Hello there!

How about Bijapur, in southern India? Home to one of Asia's most spectacular buildings, the Gol Gumbaz. Designed by the architect Yaqut of Dabul, it was built as the tomb of Mohammed Adil Shah, who ordered its construction as soon as he came to power in 1626.

The name is simple enough. It means round building. But the great Gol Gumbaz is one of the biggest single chamber structures in the world, its central dome second in size only to the dome of St Peter's in Rome.

In here a sound can echo eleven times over and be heard from almost forty kilometres away.

And like St Paul's, a precise whispering gallery is activated from a balcony running around the base of the dome.

We're early, it opened at 6 am. Good morning! The voice rings as clearly as any morning bell would, across the Bijapur citadel of Hindu temples and mosques.

Ok, keep up with me and I'll show you an example which seems to combine environments both ancient and modern.

In a remote Australian landscape, five kilometres from Williamstown, the vast retaining wall of the Barossa Valley Reservoir produces a whispering curve 140 metres long.

Speaking quietly from way across the other side I can hear you as if you were standing next to me, a ghostly voice beamed back into the landscape from another place or time altogether. A bit like me, now, talking to you.

Still there? I've moved again.

From the wilderness of the outback with its strange new voices of hydrophonic technology, to voices calling us to prayer in one of the world's oldest cities.

I've brought you to the spectacular Selimiye Mosque in the Turkish city of Edirne – a city founded by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, referred to by writers of the Byzantine empire as Orestia. The mosque, a jewel of Islamic architecture, was commissioned by Sultan Selim the second, and designed by Mimar Sinan between 1568 and 1574.

A Catholic equivalent to the splendour of the Selimiye Mosque might be Milan's Duomo. And just around the corner from this epic Italian cathedral, at the end of a much more humble covered market, is a corner with a vaulted ceiling, known locally as the Palazzo della Ragione – the Palace of Reason.

You might not believe this but a couple of homeless guys are right now living one at each end of its whispering arc. In fact one of them is Italian and the other Albanian and they don't speak the same language until they're asleep.

Hope neither of them breathes too heavily at night.

The whispering wall doesn't come with a translation service. Just a voice falling through the air. Unlike the United Nations, with its software that can beam by heavenly satellite all the translations it needs at the same time. Maybe those UN conferences on immigration and homelessness should work it out the hard way like the rest of us? Who speaks the same language anyway? Who even speaks?

Parlez-vous français?

In Paris. Here we are. The original fortress tower of the first royal 'Castle of the Louvre' was founded in the centre of the city by Philip Augustus in 1190. Its foundations are now under the Louvre Museum or, more precisely, directly beneath us, here in the sumptuous Salle des Cariatides.

The room may well resonate with the echoes of its past, since it offers such a strange whispering gallery effect. Unlike the complete curve of a surface like the dome of St Paul's, this is an example with multiple reflections.

You may not be able to tell, but I'm sending my voice from the bowl of one large shallow antique vase across to a second vase way over on the other side of the room, via the curve of the ceiling above. Excuse my French, but how *fantastique* is that?

Wallace Sabine thought it could be improved by a slightly lower ceiling and deeper vases, but my voice is not complaining.

Anyway, I'm now in Berlin, where that extreme example of a more conventional wall, a form of language that divides and silences, is itself now only the whisper of one.

But let's make a short train ride southwest of the city to Schloss Charlottenhof, in Potsdam's Sanssouci Park.

In 1825, King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia bought this small section of the park as a Christmas present for his son Friedrich Wilhelm and his wife Elisabeth Ludovika. The palace, a

neo-classical villa designed by the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, was completed four years later in 1829.

Schinkel provided the villa's garden with a large semi-circular bench that has the same whispering wall effect. Sitting here listening to the chirruping birds in the lovely park at sunset, sending a few sweet whisperings to you round the slow curve of the long garden bench; the voice seems nothing more than a gentle messenger of romantic tranquility and happiness.

Careful though. Darkness falls. And not so very far from here, the dark fearfulness of the voice lives on in the north tower of the infamous Wewelsburg, a Renaissance castle forged imposingly into the Westphalia landscape.

Completed in 1609 for the Prince of Paderborn, the Wewelsburg is located near the supposed site of the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. Legend suggests that during the seventeenth century thousands of accused witches were tortured and executed within its walls.

In 1934, the castle was acquired by Heinrich Himmler to be used as a ritual centre for the Nazi SS. The vault of the tower, said to serve as the actual 'centre of the world', is an eerie whispering gallery.

It's not clear what purpose (if any) the acoustic effects of the tower served in those grim days. But the Nazis fully exploited the charismatic powers of the human voice in public speeches and through modern broadcast technology. The Wewelsburg is now a museum, one that fills my own voice with fearsome implications.

So here I am instead, transported to the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, The Netherlands' oldest museum, founded in 1784 to house the eccentric collection of the merchant Pieter Teyler van der Hulst.

In amongst the antique scientific instruments and precious wooden display cases of coins and fossils, fallen-star meteorites and (my favourite) the Luminescence Cabinet with its glowing phosphorescent minerals, there are two brass parabolic mirrors dating from 1800.

The soft ticking of a watch, suspended in the focal point of one of the mirrors, is sent across the space of the beautiful oval library to the mirror facing it.

Lean your head into the bowl. You can hear the tick tick tick arriving clearly from the other side of the room – like a time machine negotiating some kind of equinox between past and future.

Parabolic reflectors can transmit heat as well as sound. In the early 1800s a pair just like these were used to spark the whale-oil lamp of the Mersey Lighthouse at Liverpool.

Now follow me back to London. It's only a couple of bounces across the water from Haarlem, but I want to take you via the town of Lade, near Folkestone on the English south coast and another war-time whispering memory.

Transforming the edge of the land into a continuous whispering gallery, a network of acoustic 'listening ears' were installed along the coast between Norfolk and Dorset in the 1920s. They were meant to serve as an early warning system detecting the sound of approaching enemy aeroplanes.

A weathered acoustic bowl sits on the low grassy hills of Romney Marsh near Hythe in Kent, still facing into the sky, a kind of ancient standing stone awaiting a future that must have arrived somewhere else. Others rest like giant concrete ashtrays on Abbot's Cliff near Folkestone, or were carved right into the cliffs above Langdon Bay, just east of Dover.

There are three at Denge near Dungeness – each one an architectural scale-up from the parabolic mirrors of the Teylers Museum. On the Isle of Sheppey's Warden Point, the tide-marked remains of a ruined listening mirror are grouped in fragments on the beach like some broken relic of antiquity.

In their day they certainly worked. Not unlike the way a satellite dish picks up radio waves, sound waves are reflected onto a microphone at the focus of the bowl. But the increasing speed of modern aircraft, and finally the introduction of radar in 1935, rendered the acoustic mirrors obsolete.

At the end of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, the same gathering storm clouds of global warfare hastened the development of all kinds of electronic forms.

While the transmission of voices can seem like a product of modern technology, the voice is something that is naturally conveyed into space. And certain features of the physical world, from air to architecture, have always taken part in the distribution or displacement of our spoken words.

Why is it that when it's possible to see someone throwing their voice across a whispering space it can seem so strange, so uncanny? Yet when the other person is far out of sight, their voice heard on the phone or the radio, it seems like nothing, almost natural.

The whispering wall is a simple reminder that the displacement of a voice is a surprising and complicated thing. Up here in St Paul's, the listener is still aware of the physical identity of the person speaking from the other side, at the same time as being confronted by an abrupt void between the speaker and their voice.

Technology removes that kind of bodily component, recreating a version of ourselves in the form of the human voice: *solo una voce*, only a voice.

Like me.

A few smiling words that take you by the ear and lead you on beneath the city's foundations. Absence and presence at the same time in different directions.

But hey, if you think my voice is a promo for civilisation you could be making a big mistake. A voice that also tells the story of the separation between what is said and who may have said it.

Do I ever stop to wonder where I actually am?

Sometimes I feel like the boy who gets lost in Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*:

'... Where are you?'

'Lost in the most intense darkness.'

'Then I understood it all (he says to himself). To make them hear me, all I had to do was to speak with my mouth close to the wall, which would serve to conduct my voice, as the wire conducts the electric fluid.'

By timing their calls they work out that the boy, Axel, is separated from the group of explorers by a distance of four miles; held in some cavernous vertical gallery of smooth rock. Wending his way down towards the others, he ends up falling, along with his voice, through the space.

He gives himself up to the space, losing consciousness.

Is that what I've done?

Verne was referring to the whispering gallery of St Paul's, but also to a much more ancient and subterranean example found in the caves of Sicily: the mysterious 'Ear of Dionysius', named by the painter Caravaggio in 1586.

It was formed out of an old limestone quarry known as Latomia del Paradiso, close to the city of Syracuse, probably as early as the sixth century BC. A strange, S-shaped grotto with walls seventy-four feet high, and resembling the inside of a human ear.

The voice inside us.

According to legend the tyrant Dionysius established the cave as a prison, using its perfect acoustics to eavesdrop on the whispered conversations of his prisoners.

Hmm.

Confined instead by my own prospect of immortality, maybe I'm not such a free spirit after all.

Through recordings and electronic transmission, technology may have affirmed Marconi's belief that our sounds, once generated, live on forever. Has it, at the same time, trapped us all with its overly clear sense of liberation?

Look, there's someone now, mobile phone

hands-free headset hidden away, they could be talking to themselves. Or maybe to you. Or to the wind, their voice catching a wave along the curve of the planet.

Okay, the voice is air. But it's your own breath and spirit too.

That's what I like.

Whereas me, I'm just a signal that you re-embodiment.

Though, y'know, not unlike you, or your voice, I'm still finding my way.

Go for a ride on a train?

MAKING DO AND GETTING BY

BY DAVID REINFURT

Graphic design now happens on and with a computer — we spend our working days in front of a screen where fundamental production processes are integrally tied to the features and methods of specific softwares. With the emergence of computer-aided design, the relationship between the tools and the finished product has been obscured by a black-boxing of the design process. However, software is not nearly as sealed and impenetrable as it might appear. Poking around this complex assembly, taking apart existing programs and writing new codes offers a way out. The designer who also knows about software can reclaim an intimate relationship with the production of their work by modifying, creating, intentionally misusing, extending and breaking existing programs.

TWO PROTOTYPES

Anthony Froshaug (1920–1984) and Muriel Cooper (1926–1994) are two early models for an emerging designer hybrid who mixes formal strengths with an intuitive and critical relationship to their tools. Both Froshaug and Cooper began designing books, both were teachers, and both were critically engaged with how they made their work — sensitive to the daily conditions and particularities of their work environments. Both were committed to a continuous examination of their tools, forging a close bond to their work, with spectacular results.



Anthony Froshaug, from Royal College of Art newsletter, c. 1962



Muriel Cooper using an SX-70 for self-portrait, 1977

Anthony Froshaug practised graphic design many ways — beginning as a graphic designer and small-press publisher in London, moving to Cornwall, buying a press and setting up as a printer, teaching at the Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm, as well as the Central School and the London College of Printing. Throughout, he maintained a deep exploration into the tools and methods that surround the practice of graphic design. His trajectory took him from an intimate study of typography and typesetting, to letterpress and offset printing, to phototypesetting and not surprisingly to the computer. Froshaug passed away in 1984, the same year that the Apple Macintosh was introduced.¹

I think it was the string-and-sealing-wax approach I liked mainly; and I liked it particularly in relation to computers, which nowadays contain too much hardware for anyone outside the big organisations to afford.²

Throughout his life, Froshaug was fascinated by computers. He studied their history from the first nineteenth-century attempts to Charles Babbage to the IBM 360. With the introduction of the tiny and affordable Sinclair ZX80 in 1980, Froshaug was finally able get his hands on a computer to poke, prod and meticulously examine how it worked. He jumped in head-first, spending hours making painstaking handwritten records and schematics detailing the contents of individual memory registers in his ZX80. Froshaug even

introduced the computer in his teaching, leading London College of Printing students through exercises in designing a typeface appropriate for electronic display.

In his essay, 'Two Antitypes', Froshaug suggested, 'It is sad that Sinclair has not proclaimed the identity of electronic devices and the ingenuity of his circuitry by the use of a transparent acrylic case.' Tellingly, on receipt of his ZX80, Froshaug promptly enlisted the Industrial Design department at the Central School to fashion him a clear cover for his very personal computer.³

Muriel Cooper also spent a career critically examining the tools of her trade. Beginning as a book designer, then as a fellow at the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies, serving as Design Director of MIT Press, and co-founding (with Ron MacNeil) the Visible Language Workshop in the MIT Media Lab, Cooper wasn't interested in computers themselves so much as what one could do with them. In the Visible Language Workshop, Muriel led a team of graduate students and researchers in the relentless pursuit of new forms, techniques and methods for graphic design that were specific to the emerging context of the computer screen. The work produced there from 1975 to 1994 forms the foundation of contemporary interactive design practice.



Muriel Cooper, Poster for MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies, 1972

Cooper's desire to confront the conditions (daily, mundane and technical) of graphic design production was consistent throughout her career. Her 1972 resumé sounds as if it was written by William Morris in 1872: 'Interests and Goals: The significance of participatory and non-authoritarian communication forms in relation to

specialisation and professionalism... Direct, responsive means of reproduction.' In her designs for MIT Press, including the first edition of *Learning from Las Vegas* and the MIT Press logo, she experimented consistently with the forms and methods of book design and production. As she described, 'So I had a little support for this R&D unit at MIT Press... We did some stuff with rubber stamping, cut and paste – it was the *Whole Earth Catalog* era. There was a lot of Method Acting in what I was doing.'⁴

Describing the graphic design of Herbert Muschamp's first book, *File Under Architecture*, Muriel Cooper said: 'This was my favourite book. Very innovative in the mid-70s. It was done on brown wrapping paper and set on an IBM composer, which was a typewriter (designed by Eliot Noyes) that has a head with a type ball on it. The ball let you change typefaces. It was very tedious of course – change the ball to get bold type.'⁵

It is this sensitivity to the daily tools and circumstances of graphic design practice which connects Anthony Froshaug to Muriel Cooper and to all of the designers discussed here. Cooper used a typewriter, rubber stamps, cut and paste and (eventually) computer code, while Froshaug learned letterpress, metal type, typography and cheap computers; this mode of practice continues today. And since contemporary graphic design necessarily happens on and with the computer, these designers are confronting the computer on its own terms and in its own language.

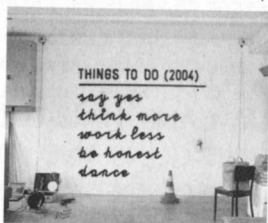
SPRAY-CANS, HAIR-LINES, MACHINE-GUNS AND OTHER NOT-SO-SOFT-WARES

Jürg Lehni is a young Swiss designer/programmer and a prime model for this emerging hybrid practice. Through small interventions and ambitious projects, he is prising open the closed doors of commercial graphic design software and making room for others. One such project is Scriptographer, a small program he created as a plug-in for Adobe Illustrator.

Jürg describes the intention concisely

on his website (scratchdisk.com): 'Scriptographer gives the tool back in the hand of the user, it confronts a closed product with the open source philosophy. And the best thing is: it doesn't cost anything.' Scriptographer is a plug-in that allows Illustrator to be programmatically controlled (scripted) through a simple interface and existing JavaScript syntax. This lightweight software allows the development of completely new drawing tools integrated into designers' existing daily design work. Jürg elaborates, 'by automating certain parts of the workflow, new ways of working can be discovered, and new aesthetics will result'. Further, free scripts are posted by designers on scriptographer.com for download, use, misuse and modification. Jürg is currently working on an all-new version 2.0 of his plug-in.

Scriptographer led Jürg to Hektor, a large-format printer which is scaleable, mobile and spectacularly particular. Together with engineer Uli Franke, Jürg designed and built Hektor while completing his studies at the École Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne. While it requires formidable technical skills to design and build a spray-painting vector-format printer and print-driver software, the result is satisfyingly ad hoc. Hektor is composed of a laptop computer running Illustrator with the Scriptographer plug-in, micro-controlled stepper motors, some cable, pulleys and a can of spray-paint.



Hektor with Cornel Windlin and Joel Nordström, Things To Do 2004, 2003

Hektor has been used to produce works for magazines and murals for studios and galleries – all from industry-standard Illustrator vector graphics. Prowling along the wall in loops and starts, the sprycan writes large and precise graphics in refreshingly lo-fi spray-paint. Furthermore, the low and high

technologies in this oversized plotter combine in a potent mix where both the process and the result turn out to be equally satisfying.

Yet Hektor met its match in Amsterdam-based designer Will Holder. For *Tourette's II*, a week-long programme of performances, lectures, films and music organised with designer Stuart Bailey in Amsterdam (2004), Will challenged Hektor, conspiring with William Morris and Adobe Illustrator to test the good printer's patience.



Hektor with Will Holder, Hektor Meets William Morris, for *Tourette's II*, Amsterdam, 2003

While on holiday in Corsica, Will was reading William Morris's utopian novel, *News from Nowhere*, and discovered that Compton, an intricate wallpaper pattern by John Henry Dearle for Morris & Co. in 1896, was specifically designed to be made by machine. Originally requiring sixteen colours of ink printed in meticulous succession and intense registration – something only a machine and master printer could achieve – the pattern was a perfect test of Hektor's limits. Will quickly contacted Jürg to make his proposal: 'Frantically sms'ing with Jürg from Corsica (he was bluetoothing his answers, so fast!)'.⁶ Hektor had never painted such a large surface and couldn't handle this level of detail and colour, but Will insisted. A compromise was reached and Will prepared an Illustrator drawing.

Three weeks later, Hektor arrived in Amsterdam to begin printing while negotiations continued between what Will wanted and what Hektor could produce. Throughout, Jürg played negotiator, the harried technician attempting to solve technical issues and produce the form. Eventually, the Compton pattern was simplified and broken into a repeating pattern to be painted each of four nights. After each night, Jürg was rewriting Hektor's software (slightly) and biking around Amsterdam

looking for better-smelling paint. The resulting man versus machine printing and painting performance recalls John Henry and feels absolutely contemporary. Over these four evenings, Hektor covered the wall in drips and runs, precise and messy simultaneously, neither winning nor losing the battle and producing a beautiful wallpaper which couldn't be made at any other time or in any other way.

Another artist/designer working in New York City used one printing accident to produce a stunning series of wallpaper installations. At the computer in her Red Hook studio, Kara Hamilton was trying to make a simple line drawing with Adobe Illustrator, a software she knows but perhaps has not mastered. On screen, she was looking for the finest line weight possible and switched to an older version, hoping it might be possible. Trying Illustrator 3.2, Kara selected the Hairline weight for all of her lines, which simply provides the finest line possible rather than a specific point width. On finishing the drawing and making a laserprint, she was surprised and pleased. With the outdated software, a current print driver and a fussy laserprinter, the resulting drawing was almost invisible on the page – ephemeral and shining. Eventually, Kara expanded these hairlines to the environmental scale of wallpaper, realising an effect that is both tentative and encompassing. The wallpaper was not a result of the technical mastery of complex softwares, nor of intense design, but rather an everyday mistake and the sensitivity to honour it.



Kara Hamilton, wallpaper for Salon 92,*
New York, 2004

Min Choi, a designer in Seoul, Korea, is equally sensitive to the repetitive – always the same, always slightly different – quality of days spent sitting in front of a computer

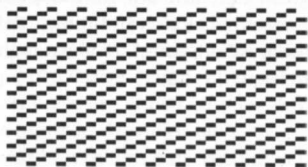
making graphic design. One day Min realised that every time a word/sentence is typed on the keyboard, the resulting sound of key-clicking is unique to that word, that moment, that instance. Min used this idea to design and program a custom software application which generates the performative typeface, Type-Machine-Gun. (<http://www.minch.org/tmgdemo.html>)

Min Choi, Type-Machine-Gun,
typographic specimen, 2001

Min describes Type-Machine-Gun as a 'sound-sensitive "word processor" software by which one can create dynamic word-images. Connected to the computer's microphone, it generates and distorts letters on screen according to how hard you stroke the keyboard.' The louder/harder and quicker that a user types the keys, the more distorted the forms of the letters become. The result is a concrete typography which is a record of its own making. Each time, a particular word will necessarily yield a unique typesetting. His typeface program exploits several characteristics of its software context: each letter is continuously different, words are generated on the fly with the performance and software smoothly modulating the form.

Detroit-based designer Danielle Aubert has also completed a series of software-driven, daily drawings using Microsoft Excel. This spreadsheet program, workhorse of accountants, project directors and middle managers, seems like a particularly unlikely place to begin a free-ranging graphic design exploration. However, over the first five months of 2005, while she was a graduate student at Yale University School of Art, Danielle uncovered the specific graphic possibilities in colour-coding, patterning and using the Excel spreadsheet as a canvas. By undertaking a free but consistent exploration and intentionally misusing a particular software, she revealed how a relentless and undirected approach could yield unexpected results. '58 Days Worth of Drawing Exercises

in Microsoft Excel[®] required no particular programming skills or technical flair but rather an open idea, a specific agenda and a critical attitude towards the software designers use on a daily basis.

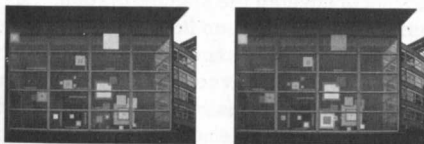


Danielle Aubert, 58 Days Worth of Drawing Exercises in Microsoft Excel, April 2005

Finally, a graphic practice based in The Hague seems to encompass many of the ideas described above while mapping out an entirely new terrain for graphic design, for software and for new audiences.

Lust is a five-person graphic design practice established by Thomas Castro, Jeroen Barendse and Dimitri Nieuwenhuizen. They work in a variety of media including printed materials, interactive installations and architectural graphics, and describe their practice as revolving around process-based design and coincidence.

Recently, Lust was commissioned by The Hague art cinema (Filmhuis) to transform their public facade into a map and information screen. Having neither the budget for an LCD or LED installation nor the desire to use the window as an opaque screen (blocking the view of the town square below), they came up with an ad-hoc solution that mixes low technology and high concept to maximum effect. By applying semi-opaque vinyl film squares in a grid pattern representing The Hague and using a standard high lumen projector, the facade could be animated simply. The resulting animations are easy and direct as well, since nothing needs to move: only the individual vinyl squares light up, tracing current activity in the city.



Lust (Thomas Castro, Jeroen Barendse, Dimitri Nieuwenhuizen), facade installation for Filmhuis, The Hague, 2005

The front page of Lust's website (lust.nl) suggests which direction they are headed. In place of a welcoming graphic or descriptive text, we see simply the current computer desktops of the five studio members, combined, sliced and mediated through an intense pixelation process. Installed as a complex but lo-fi studio monitoring system, a software program called EvoCam watches, records and distorts the desktops every five minutes as Lust members continue with their daily work. These screenshots are then processed using a custom Macromedia Shockwave software program that was developed to slice, block and create the mixed desktop images on-the-fly. Logging onto their website right now, five live desktops combine to make one composite image – what we see is the current work, the current software and an always-changing, software-specific picture of a new graphic design practice.



Lust (Thomas Castro, Jeroen Barendse, Dimitri Nieuwenhuizen), Desktops, The Hague, 2005

PLUG-IN ARCHITECTURES

Perhaps a new hybrid, impure and resistant graphic practice is emerging between what was writing, programming and performance. Still, we continue to use the same softwares every day – a range that might be so varied as to include the Adobe Photoshop-InDesign-Illustrator trinity, Quark XPress and Macromedia Flash. As Jürg tells it, the same applications are used daily 'by nearly all the graphic designers all over the world'. Worse still, function sets, software paradigms and user scenarios are mapped out for each software project to ensure the widest possible usability, resulting in an averaged tool which skips the highs, lows, errors and quirks which might make such a complex software more productive.

Previously, the tools we used as graphic designers were either functionally

specific and simple (a pencil) or complex (a camera) and generic, but not both specific and complex at the same time. This is the problem with our current software tools: an overdetermined functionality is combined with Byzantine complexity to produce industry-standard graphic design software for users who rarely feel emboldened to proceed beyond the standard tools and techniques. And, of course, this yields graphic design work which rarely exceeds the mannerisms of its software environment.

However, recall that all software is made from modular and miscellaneous pieces and, in these soft fissures between code libraries, applications and versions, opportunity remains. The major software companies realise this. This modular and flexible system implicit in software reveals itself as the plug-in architecture's standard in graphics programs, web browsers, code compilers, database applications and even games. Plug-ins are small computer programs that work within another software to extend or enable a specific function. They can be written to add new features (a logorhythmic swirl filter for Photoshop), to extend existing functionality (a print-driver for a spraycan-enabled inkjet printer) or even to change the interface (three-dimensional articulated window-frames in Quark XPress).

The first plug-ins appeared around 1988 in SuperPaint 1.0 from Silicon Beach software. Shortly afterwards, with version 0.87, Photoshop added the plug-in architecture.⁷ Michigan- and California-based photographers and programmers Thomas and John Knoll wanted to be able to make small and fast changes to their new image manipulation software without changing the considerably more complex application code. Soon, this robust and truly new tool included a wide range of third-party filter effects that contributed tremendously to its success. Now produced by Adobe of course, Photoshop controls the market and, like Xerox or Kleenex before, has even entered our contemporary lexicon.



By making room for hackers and hobbyists in commercial programs via a plug-in architecture or even by releasing the application source code wholesale (as with Mozilla Firefox or Mac OS X), large software companies have acknowledged that software might actually be made better by large groups of distributed tinkerers. Linux, an open source operating system, began with a lonely post by Finnish programmer and student Linus Torvalds: 'I'm doing a (free) operating system (just a hobby, won't be big and professional like gnu)'. Fourteen years later, the phenomenal success of this Free Software project offers concrete proof that substantial software can be effectively developed, used and revised in an ad-hoc manner by a dispersed group of interested individuals. And this is the opportunity for contemporary designers who currently rely on industry-standard commercial softwares. Individually, we can make a commitment to use software critically, engage the mechanics of production, ask questions, use old software, share, write new software and refuse to passively consume the latest innovations. As Muriel, Anthony, Will and Hektor have suggested, this might actually lead us back – closer to our work.

NOTES

1. Robin Kinross, *Anthony Froshaug — Typography and Texts* (Hyphen Press, 2000).
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*
4. Ellen Lupton, 'Muriel Cooper: Conversation with Ellen Lupton', <http://designwritingresearch.org/essays/cooper.html>, 1994.
5. Janet Abrams, 'Muriel Cooper's Visible Wisdom', <http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm?ContentID=655>, 1997.
6. Will Holder, from an email conversation, 2005.
7. Marc Pawlinger, from an email conversation, 2005.

This text was originally commissioned by Alice Twemlow and David Womack for Adobe Systems Incorporated, 2005

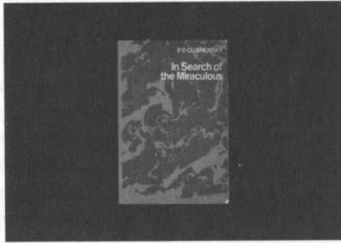
AN ATTEMPT TO EVOLVE VII

BY WILL HOLDER

Transcript of a talk originally given at
The Store Gallery, 15 March 2007, 7 pm

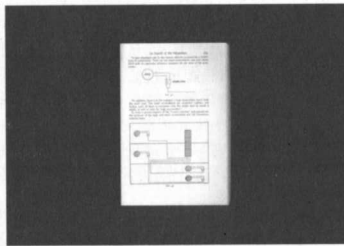
Good evening, my name is
Will Holder.

*



1

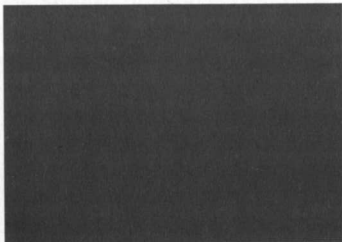
I never actually read *In Search of the Miraculous*. I once had a copy, but gave it away. It is an unwieldy book of cosmological principles and detailed diagrams of energy transactions within individual human organisms.



2

*

It was written by R D Ouspensky, a pupil of
the spiritual teacher G I Gurdjieff.



My mother recently lent me another
Ouspensky book, a series of lectures called
The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution.

*

In the introduction he states he was
motivated to give lectures because people
would always ask him what he was working
on and he found it too difficult to consolidate
the information; only a lengthy series of
lectures could begin to do the job of
explaining his work.

*

I like the generosity in this, probably because
I find it particularly impossible to give an
answer when people ask me 'what is your
work like?' after I've recklessly revealed to
them that I'm an artist.

*

I feel like my non-answer is often
misinterpreted as 'I'm too deep to tell you'.

*

But usually I'm just thinking that a
description of what I do is going to make it
sound really not worth doing.

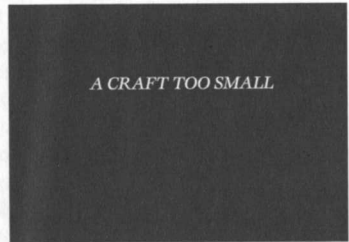
*

As for Ouspensky's lectures, I don't like
them, I think the substance must have been in
the delivery. On paper they are a passionless
litany about how man is asleep, followed by a
portioning of man into enumerated levels.

*

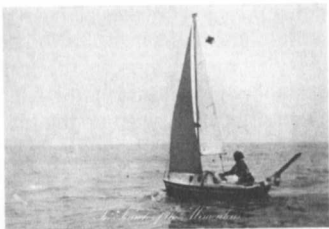
One thing's for sure, if you go in search of
the miraculous, or attempt to evolve, you are
committing yourself to The Work.

*



3

Frances Stark wrote a text called
'A Craft Too Small' relating to the



rigorous commitment than self-help.' While worrying about making something sound as if it's not worth doing, as I mentioned above, I must also hold inside me not only the belief that it is worth doing,

but also the knowledge that it's worth at least a thousand dollars to someone else who thinks so too.

This hidden agreement-to-believe is even more difficult to explain to people than the 'actual' art, but it might just be the thing that convinces me I'm doing self-work and not self-help.

My first college philosophy professor, the one who taught me about Plato's cave, summarises Gurdjieff's notion of identification: 'Man identifies — that is, squanders his conscious energy, with every passing thought...

This state of affairs takes the form of a continuous self-deception and a continuous procession of egoistic emotions, sentimentality, and fear

which are of such a pervasively painful nature that man is constantly driven to ameliorate this condition through the endless pursuit of social recognition, sensory pleasure, or the vague and unrealisable goal of "happiness"!

A comparable, yet perhaps more collective search for the miraculous 'agreement-to-believe' was expressed by a group of artists in 1919:

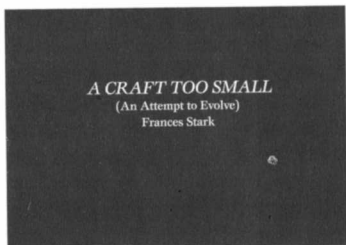


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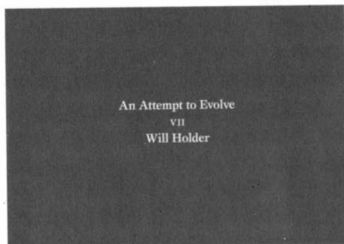
'Let us create a new guild of craftsmen, without the class distinctions which raise an

4

'Search for the Miraculous'. She added the most perfect subtitle: 'An Attempt to Evolve'.

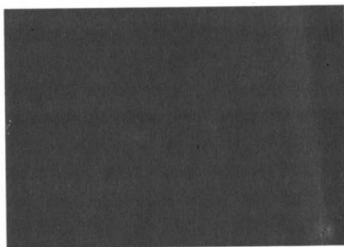


6



7

Inspired by her, I have titled this lecture 'An Attempt to Evolve, part seven'.



Frances Stark continues:

'Work, for Gurdjieff and his followers, meant self-work, a profoundly more

arrogant barrier between craftsman and artist'.

*

'Together let us conceive and create the new building of the future, which will embrace architecture, sculpture and painting in one unity, and which will one day rise to Heaven from the hands of a million workers, the crystal symbol of a new faith.'

*

At this point I would like to point out that the German word 'Bauhaus' derives from the word for the small building that was erected on the construction sites of Gothic cathedrals in the thirteenth century.

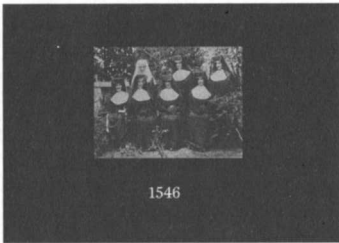
*

It was marginal building beside the crystal symbol rising to heaven, where ordinary guildsmen lived together and acknowledged God's presence in everything from the individual details to the greater plan.

*

The conditions of these plans, the agreement-to-believe, was already set down in the written word of the Bible, and transferred to these illiterate craftsmen by word of mouth and visual symbols.

*



10

There were seven nuns who lived together in a convent in the sixteenth century. Their main occupation was the copying of scriptures, and when they were done they wrote their names in the colophon: Mary, Gijsje, Aaf, Jacoba, Agatha, Maria and Maria.

*

In 'The Hands of the Seven Sisters' the Dutch typographer Gerrit Noordzij tells of how he was commissioned to look into the details of a certain manuscript produced by these sisters.

*

There is a story, a myth, stating that people who share the same space for a longer period of time can develop the same bodily rhythms.

It is said that nuns in convents all have their period at the same time.

*

A predecessor who had studied the hands of the seven sisters had given up the job in despair, telling Noordzij that he could not tell the sisters' hands apart, and that they had suppressed any notion of personality in their handwriting.

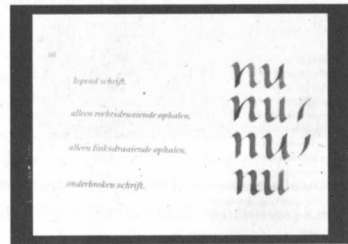
*

Noordzij refused to believe this myth, but could only compare their handwriting to his own, noting that little had changed in 500 years.



11

He employed his own theories of cursive and interrupted letter constructions.



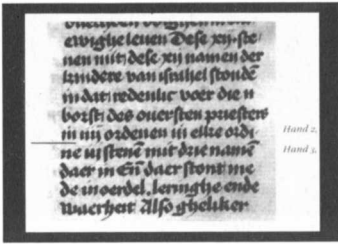
12

Showing that the cursive flow of writing varies according to each writer's capabilities.



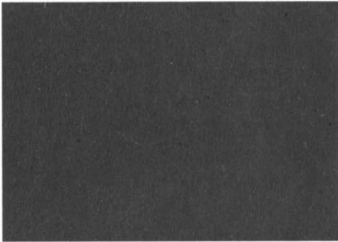
13

Soon he could easily tell the sisters apart by the way they made connections between different parts of letters.



14

He even noted that one sister took over not between two paragraphs, but between two syllables.



That which formerly held us together and gave meaning to our occupations was our belief in God. When we transferred this belief first to heroes and then to things, we began to walk our separate paths.

That island ... to which we might have retreated to escape from the impact of the world lies, as it ever did, within each one of our hearts. Towards that final tranquillity, which we so desperately need today, any integrating occupation rightly used can serve as a guide.

That was John Cage, for Chris Evans, who likes hearing me talk of John Cage.



15

When the literate men of the Bauhaus came together, with differing beliefs in their work, yet with the potential of a confined space drawing them together and upwards, it was clear that:

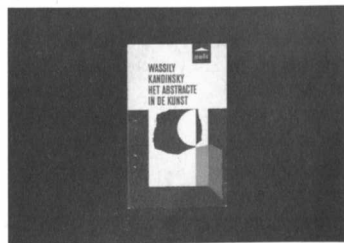
- a. A consensus had to be found to justify the connections between their individual work
- b. Ways had to be found to create agreements amongst the adepts

and

- c. In order to allow the potential for development in **the hands of a million workers**, further means had to be found to avoid creative class distinctions when the principles were taught and adopted in the outside world.

Wassily Kandinsky was one of these explorers, and understood the need to publish the underlying written justification of one's visual work. Kandinsky wrote more about painting than he actually painted.

An example is 'Über das Geistige in der Kunst' from 1912. translated and published soon after in Wyndham Lewis's BLAST as 'On the Spiritual in Art'.



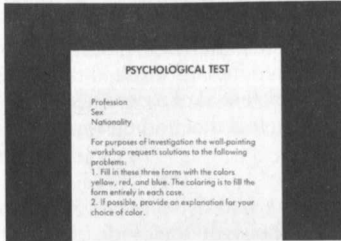
16

This was only translated into Dutch fifty years

later, by which time the 'spiritual' had become 'abstract'.

*

In 1923, Kandinsky attempted to develop an alternative means of justification, which involved giving his students a 'Psychological Test':



17

*

Profession Sex Nationality

For purposes of investigation, the wall-painting workshop requests solutions to the following problems:

*

1. Fill in these three forms with the colours yellow, red, and blue. The colouring is to fill the form entirely in each case.

2. If possible, provide an explanation for your choice of colour.

*

Question 2 implies that even a widely adopted visual language needs explanation in a secondary language before it can have any collective potential.

*

Kandinsky's use of the word 'psychological' aspires to an alternative, pre-conditioned meaning embedded in objects or symbols and our relationships to and through them,

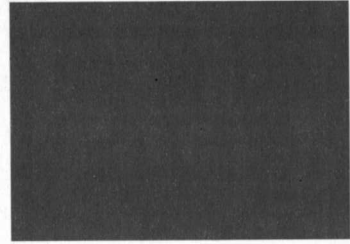
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18

but since 1923 we have developed an

understanding of symbols being empty containers, to be filled according to culturally constructed agreements.



In the first lines of 'The Regime of Visibility', Camiel van Winkel presents us with the book's only real challenge: He writes: 'There are too few images.'

*

'The dynamic of today's culture is determined by a visual shortage rather than a visual excess. The demand for images far exceeds their supply. Life amidst visual media is dominated by a permanent pressure to compensate for missing imagery, to visualise non-visual practices and processes. This is the regime of visibility.'

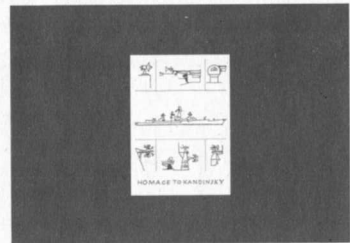
*

'Images may be present everywhere but as a social force they are less powerful than the imperative to visualise. The visual shortage creates a situation of instability, necessitating a continual effort, in accordance with the economic principle of permanent growth.'

*

This seems to me to be rather defeatist, only emphasising the inadequacy of the image. This is something I think I've always known, which is why I became a typographer.

*



19

This is a card made by the artist Ian Hamilton Finlay, who tackles the notion of

employing written language as representative of the constants of human experience.

*

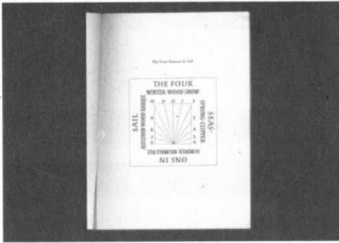
20



In the introduction to a catalogue of his work, we read: 'For the artists of the modern movement, for Van Doesburg and the early constructivists, the classical constants lay in the vocabulary of geometrical forms that had declared itself in cubism.'

*

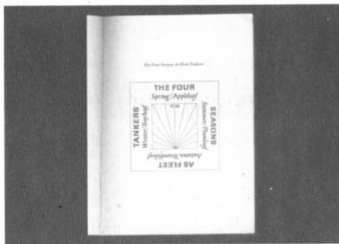
21



Van Doesburg's elementarism was based on the conviction that radically simple geometrical forms could be taken as the common elements of plastic and architectural expression.

*

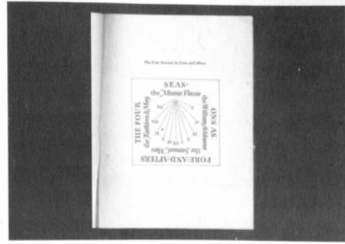
22



Their impersonal, entirely accessible nature entitled them to be utilised in complex structures without concealing the constructional process.

*

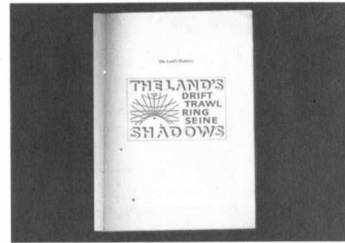
23



How can we attach any overriding significance of a technical kind to those figures in an age which is characterised by electric circuitry rather than mechanical systems?

*

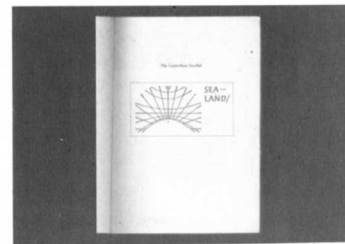
24



It is perhaps the persistent delusion of the classicist that he believes himself to be using terms whose objective validity is not liable to be challenged by future generations.

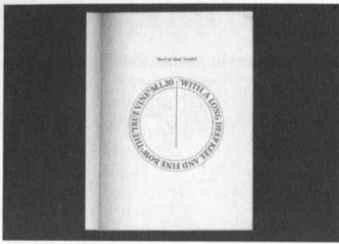
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25



It is impossible in the present day to accept the assumptions under which this geometrically based classicism was developed.

26

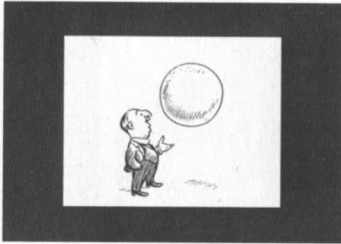


We can no longer believe, as was still possible half a century ago, that the figures of Euclidian geometry represent, even on the level of a model, the basic constituents of matter.'

*

H M Bateman, Adventure of a Rumour:

27

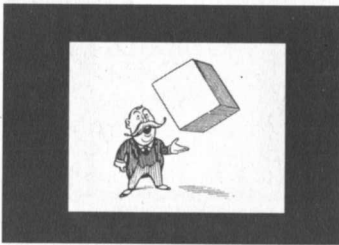


Mr Smith, in the course of conversation, produces a beautiful RUMOUR taking the form, as it leaves him, of a perfect sphere—

*

which is caught up by Brown,

28



who at once transforms it into a square—

*

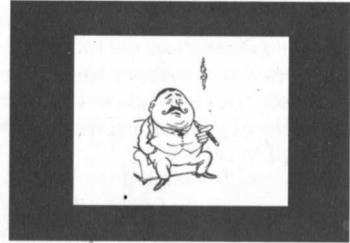
—passing on to Tomkins,

29



whom it leaves in the shape of an unknown geometrical problem, for—

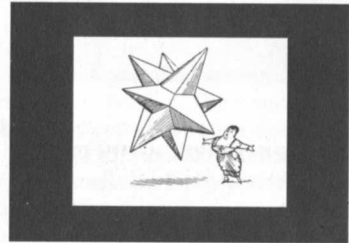
30



—Watson, who shrinks it to a little worm-like thing.

*

31



Mrs Robinson, however, expands it, but in the nature of a star, before handing on to—

32



Jackson, who at once shatters it into a million fragments while—

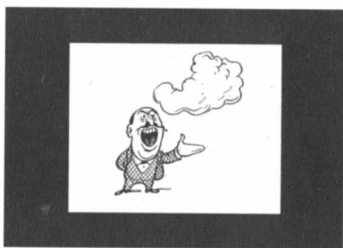
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—passing it to Baxter,



33

who restores it to the original sphere, though in three separate portions which are dealt with by Lewis,



34

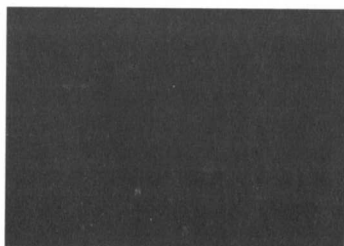
after which it has no definite form, being rather that of a cloud of vapour. In due course it comes back to Mr Smith,



35

who quite fails to recognise it as his own creation.

*



One assumption I made from the start of my relationship with typography is that the construction and use of language, whether it is visual, oral or written, is analogous to systems of production.

*

I once asked fifteen students to teach me fifteen new languages. One of them taught me that language is an agreement-to-believe between two or more people.

*

The beauty is that most people learn the rules of language unconsciously, and are able to produce language fluently, not conscious of the millions of editorial decisions they make as they speak.

*

I must stress that I see the structure of words and their fixed yet contextually evolving rules, as much as a representation of practice as a means with which TO practise, as well as a structure to JUSTIFY that same practice.

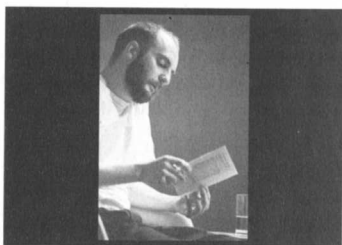
*

Within spoken language it is easier to make mistakes or drop syllables or whole words without disturbing the mechanics. The interpretative nature of listening usually fills in or corrects these mistakes.

*

My work cannot exist without a great deal of speaking and writing. I would say that motor behind my work IS speaking and writing.

*



36

A few years ago, I started reading in public.

I took to reading aloud, because it reopened the nature of the articulation of language for me.

*

After dealing with typography for so long, only through reading aloud did I come to understand the function and necessity of every part of the machine that is the printed word:

down to every letter, space, comma and full stop.

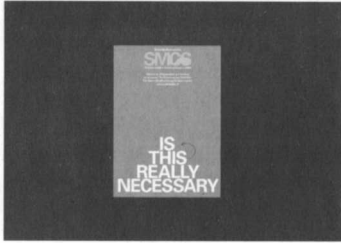
*

When speaking of my work to others, I usually tell people that 'I make books with and for artists'. But I have recently adopted the word 'publishing' as the best description of what I do. And yet, I must go on to explain that this does not necessarily take place in the form of printed matter and its distribution.

*

or that I, at least, try to find the best medium to translate an individual's motives and practice, so as to enable a collective reading. I can say that my main interest is in how language is produced within different contexts, or how language adapts itself to different situations.

*



37

Again, I find the concept and specific structures of language, being universal AND local, a perfectly good metaphor to explore relationships between ourselves and others, between ourselves and objects.

*

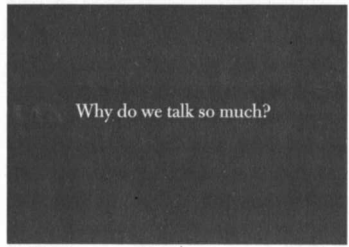
In the *Selfish Gene*, evolutionary biologist and (very) popular science writer Richard Dawkins writes that the one thing that separates us from other animals is 'culture'.

*

Dawkins' theory states that humans have developed a carrier or unit of culture called a 'meme', similar to a gene, in that it attempts to survive in much the same way as genes would, through a process of natural selection.

*

Susan Blackmore expands on this theory in her book *The Meme Machine*, where she dedicates a whole chapter to the question

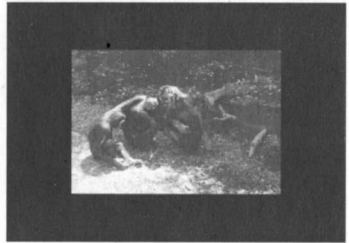


38

'Why do we talk so much?'

*

Firstly, within society, it is important that hierarchy is established. When humans, as apes, started living in small groups, the status of the group was VISIBLE simply by looking to see who was grooming who.



39

*

The larger the group, the more assured members were of survival, and the larger these groups of apes became, connected further than the eye could see, so big that it became difficult to VISUALLY read a hierarchy.

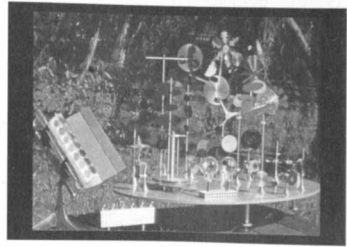
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Language was developed to maintain the hierarchy in a system where the chain of command could not be overseen. Language was seen as the original form of culture, and so we could easily deduce that use of language and therefore culture is still representative of social relationships.

*

We could also say that each member of a group, like letters in a word, has their own function only in relation to the whole, and here we start to see how objects, subjects, verbs, adjectives, etc. could form a simple analogy to the production of culture.



42

Thank you.



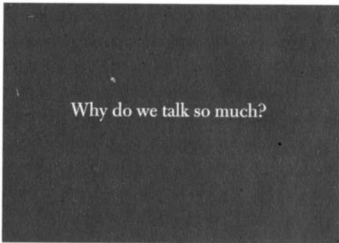
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I think it is safe to say that production processes are becoming more like speech than written language, where there may have been more time in the past to build up a more considered, efficient relationship with fewer words.

*

I'd like to thank you for your patience, and end by repeating with the question:

Why DO we talk so much?



41

Why DO I talk so much?

And play a short film by Charles and Ray Eames called the *SolarDoNothing Machine*. You have to watch it many times to fully appreciate this machine. I hope you come back here and look again, in the absence of my talk.

NEW BRUTALISTS / NEW ROMANTICS

BY MARK OWENS

This essay explores the connections between two uniquely British cultural formations of the late twentieth century, one architectural, the other from the domain of music and fashion, both of which (following a brief period of popular enthusiasm) have become enduring sources of collective national embarrassment. Beyond the coincidence of language marking them both as 'new', at first there would seem to be little in common between the stark concrete forms of 1950s and 60s New Brutalist architecture and the outrageous sartorial extravagances of the early 1980s synthpop bands known as New Romantics, save for a shared sense of 'What were we thinking?'. Separated by roughly twenty-five years, the one stands as a grim reminder of the failed utopianism of British socialism and the postwar welfare state, while the other operates as a kind of shorthand for the worst mass-cultural excesses of Britain under Thatcherism: bad hair, bad fashion and disposable dance music.

Whereas a proper discussion of New Brutalism belongs to the history of late modernist architecture, the New Romantics, both as a musical and a wider fashion and design movement, would appear to fit more comfortably into a history of postmodern cultural production and postpunk aesthetics. Indeed, taken separately, such critical revaluations are already well under way.¹ However, as the dialectical form of my title is meant to suggest, I think it is important to preserve this separation while, at the same time, understanding the two as fundamentally related. Rhetorically, at least, this would seem to require a third term, something that might serve as a common thread or vantage point. For the moment, I want to propose graphic design, understood in its broadest sense, as a lens or route through which to view the connections I will be pursuing in the pages that follow.

That is, I want to consider both the built forms of the New Brutalists and the music and fashion of the New Romantics as part of a particularly British set of scriptive practices. At its most basic this involves an attention to the activation and inscription of surfaces — both that of the building and the body —

as well as more material concerns normally associated with graphic design, including pattern, colour, texture and abstraction. Mark Wigley's book, *White Walls, Designer Dresses*, has already done invaluable work uncovering the complex constitutive relationship between the discourse of early twentieth-century fashion and the whitewashed surfaces of the modern architectural canon.² The following discussion builds on and extends the territory Wigley marks out, paying particular attention to the legacy of New Brutalism's surface effects in the context of postwar British pop.

I.

IN EVERY DREAM HOME A HEARTACHE

That's where Angel and I was born. I never lived below the fourteenth floor until I was old enough to run away. It was sort of grand 'til I was four, just locked alone with the telly all day. The first time I saw flowers I freaked. I was frightened of dandelions. Me old gran picked one once — I had hysterics. Everything in that tower block is regulated, planned by the social planners to the lowest common denominator. Sight: concrete. Sound: the telly. Touch: plastic. Taste: plastic. Seasons regulated by thermostat. Once a year, your mum and dad dusted down the plastic Christmas tree and exchanged pathetic presents. I didn't know I was dead 'til I was fifteen. I never experienced love or hate. My generation's the blank generation.

Jubilee (1977), dir. Derek Jarman

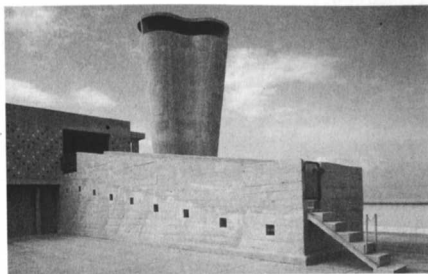
These lines, spoken by the character Sphinx in Derek Jarman's film *Jubilee*, might stand as a kind of *locus classicus* for the intersection of postpunk and Brutalism. For, speaking from high atop a building overlooking the London skyline, Sphinx addresses Kid, played by a young Adam Ant who, just a few years later, would find fame as a poster boy for the pirate punk stylings of the New Romantics. Although emerging from within the cultural moment of 1977, *Jubilee*, as is often noted, is remarkable for the way it manages to point up and condense many of the contradictions that would come

to characterise punk and its aftermath. Here, Jarman cannily describes the domestic lifeworld of young, working-class urban Britons of the time as a succinct set of sensory phenomena: 'Sight: concrete. Sound: the telly. Touch: plastic. Taste: plastic.' A self-enclosed disciplinary apparatus, the architectural form of the tower block and the media stream of the television are seen to have shaped the empty emotional landscape of punk's 'blank generation'.

Tellingly, Kid responds to Sphinx's heartfelt declaration with a smirk and a laugh, as if to underscore its status as a popular cliché. For, by the late 1970s, a sense of gradual cultural decline was widely acknowledged, famously described in Tom Nairn's *The Break-Up of Britain* (1976). And for many, the architectural form of the tower block — its grey concrete surfaces and windswept walkways — had long since come to symbolise this general state of societal decay and civic breakdown. Understandably, then, it is often difficult to remember that both the urban reforms that had given rise to council estates in the years following WWII and the technical innovations of poured concrete construction first adopted in the early 1950s were, initially at least, the source of a great deal of optimism and utopian promise. Replacing the Victorian-era slums that had once housed the urban poor, the 'streets in the sky' of the concrete tower block, it was imagined, would open up new spaces of social encounter and personal emancipation.³

A uniquely British innovation, New Brutalism was the dominant architectural idiom for a sweeping series of social programmes launched by the nation's postwar Labour government, including housing estates, shopping centres, university buildings and a whole range of cultural institutions. Most closely associated with the work of the architects Peter and Alison Smithson, New Brutalism was initially formulated in response to the glass and steel curtain wall as a way of humanising the surface of modern architecture through an honest exposure of services and raw materials, especially concrete. The central precedent for this approach was Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles, completed in 1952. Constructed of rough cast concrete or *béton brut*, Le Corbusier's *Unité* was particularly admired for the way it managed to mobilise the plasticity of the slushy aggregate of poured concrete in the creation of striking surface

textures. Whereas earlier modernist buildings had taken pains to create an appearance of seamless, the rough-hewn wooden formwork of the *Unité* was arranged into regular patterns imbuing its surface with a future-primitive quality that accorded perfectly with its forward-looking, socialist aims.



Unité d'Habitation, Marseilles, Le Corbusier, 1952
© Valerie Bennett/Architectural Association

Indeed, as the architectural critic Reyner Banham outlined in his 1966 book *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?*, the formal innovations of New Brutalism can be traced back to Soviet-bloc construction and the Smithsons' admiration for traditional Japanese domestic architecture. In turn, they can also be extended to include a larger set of tendencies in the visual arts in Britain in the early 1950s, including *art brut* and *musique concrète*.⁴ As members of the Independent Group centred around London's Architectural Association, the Smithsons were close friends of photographer Nigel Henderson, sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi and artist Richard Hamilton. Often considered the founding figures of Pop Art, the Independent Group was instrumental in bringing the visual culture of the American commercial vernacular into the realm of the fine arts. Centrally, this involved collecting clippings from a range of exotic sources, including American magazines and advertisements, textbooks and science fiction. These images fell into two general categories that can be seen to constitute a foundational pop/brutalist dialectic: the first associated with the futuristic sheen of prefabricated American consumer goods, especially household appliances and automobiles, the second with the raw, sometimes crude realism of scientific diagrams, microscopic cross-sections, newspaper photographs and primitive art.

This second, so-called 'as found' aesthetic was exemplified in the 'Parallel of Life and Art' exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1953. Designed by Paolozzi, Henderson and the Smithsons, the exhibition featured over one hundred black-and-white photographic enlargements displayed in a dynamic arrangement throughout the gallery. As Banham explains, the exhibition was installed in an effort to maximise the abstract, graphic quality of the collected images:



Parallel of Life and Art exhibition, ICA London, 11 September–18 October 1953.

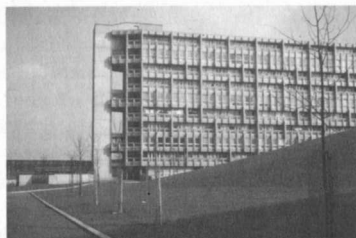
Photo: Nigel Henderson, courtesy of the Tate Archive; © The Estate of Nigel Henderson.

Although 'Parallel' was one of the crucial stages in the demolition of the intellectual prestige of abstract art in Britain, it is worth noting that it accepted one form of abstraction without question, that of photographic reproduction in two dimensions and put a high value on the qualities of grain and 'chiaroscuro' that resulted from printing-down gross over-enlargements on unglazed photographic paper.⁵

'Parallel of Life and Art' thus established a high-contrast brutalist aesthetic grounded in the spatial application of technical processes adopted from graphic design and commercial art. So doing, its photographic enlargements inaugurated a set of visual practices that would go on to find important echoes both in Warhol's silkscreen prints and Peter Saville's diagrammatic black-and-white cover art for Joy Division's *Unknown Pleasures*.

If 'Parallel of Life and Art' thereby allows us to trace an initial thread from the Brutalist 'as found' aesthetic, through Pop Art, to the stark formalisms of postpunk, *Jubilee* reminds us that it is the built form of the tower block

itself that shaped the Ballardian psychic terrain of life in the cities of late 70s Britain. As Banham explains, over the course of the 1960s the New Brutalist aesthetic had emerged as a widely adopted architectural vernacular.⁶ But within a decade the failures of social housing experiments like Ernő Goldfinger's Trellick Tower and the Smithsons' Robin Hood Gardens had signalled the end of the vogue for exposed concrete. Nevertheless, Brutalism still retained much of its futuristic resonance and formal punch even as many buildings fell into disrepair. Indeed, following from Walter Benjamin's reflections on late-nineteenth century commodity culture at the turn of the twentieth century, I would argue that it was only in the 1970s, at its moment of near-outmodedness, that the 'hardware' of New Brutalism emerged as the wish-image of a future that had failed to arrive — a future finally glimpsed in the 'software' of the synthesised sounds and DIY fashions of New Romantic bands like The Human League, Japan, Visage, Ultravox, Spandau Ballet and Duran Duran.



Robin Hood Gardens, London. Peter and Alison Smithson 1972. Photo: Marjorie Morrison/Architectural Association



Trellick Tower, London. Ernő Goldfinger 1972. Photo: Paul Dawson/Architectural Association

II. FADE TO GREY

Is this concrete all around, or is it in my head?
David Bowie, *All The Young Dudes* (1973)

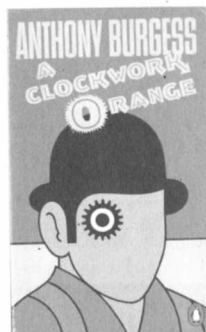
In the British popular unconscious the origins of New Romantic dandyism and its Brutalist underpinnings lie, I would argue, not only with David Bowie and glam (as the above quotation suggests), but with Stanley Kubrick's 1971 sci-fi masterpiece *A Clockwork Orange*. Famously, the reclusive Kubrick was said to have selected the locations for the film from architectural guidebooks and two Brutalist structures loom large (literally) in the onscreen narrative. The first is the Thamesmead housing estate in south London, where the film's anti-hero, Alex DeLarge, played by Malcom McDowell, strides along a garbage-strewn walkway on the way to his flat. The second is the Lecture Centre at Brunel University in Uxbridge, which serves as the Ludovico Medical Facility where Alex undergoes aversion therapy by being forced to watch rapid sequences of violent film footage under the influence of a nausea-inducing drug. In both of these scenes the striking silhouettes of New Brutalism operate as a synecdoche for a futuristic authoritarian society bent on social control through media manipulation.



Brunel University, London, Sheppard Robson, 1962/9
Photo: John Price/Architectural Association

Against this backdrop Alex and his droogs dress in matching outfits that combine elements of working-class, boots-and-braces skinhead fashion with flourishes like bowler hats, eyeball cufflinks and a single set of false eyelashes applied to the right eye. This last detail, it has been suggested, was perhaps a homage to David Pelham's iconic cover illustration for the Penguin paperback edition of Burgess's novel,

which depicts a cog-wheel in the place of the eye of an abstract human figure.⁷ Translated into a set of false eyelashes, this gesture transforms the human face into an abstract graphic composition, anticipating the dramatic application of cosmetics by the New Romantics. Equally anticipatory, in another well-known scene Alex visits a record shop dressed in an Edwardian greatcoat and frilled shirt. There, he picks up two teenyboppers who ask him about the new album by The Heaven 17. In 1980, Martyn Ware and Ian Craig Marsh would take the name for their new band after the break-up of the first incarnation of The Human League.



David Pelham, cover for *A Clockwork Orange*.
Penguin Books, 1972

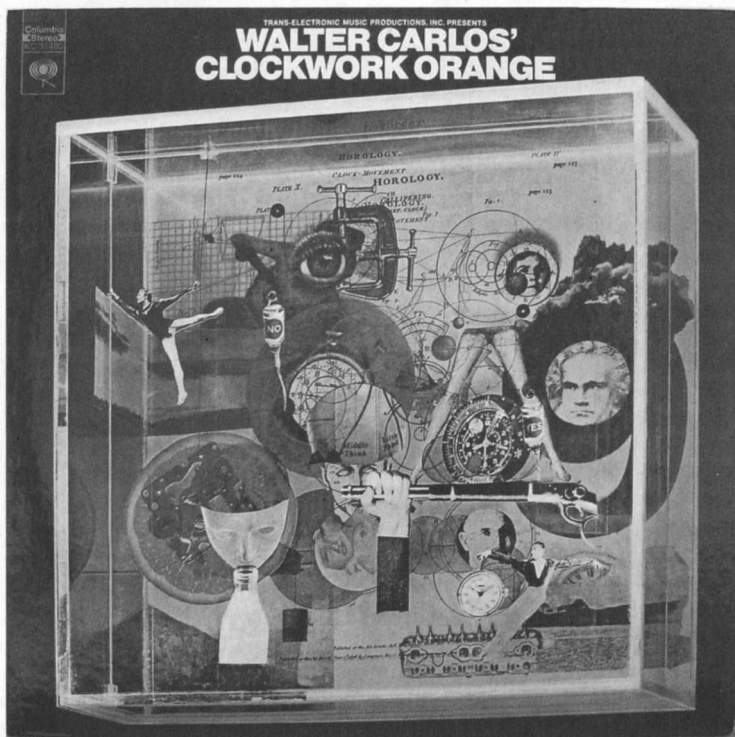


The Man Who Fell to Earth, dir. Nicolas Roeg, 1976
© EMI/Kobal Collection

Interestingly, the Penguin paperback also proved central to the creation of Walter Carlos's groundbreaking electronic music for the film.



A Clockwork Orange, dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1971 © Warner Bros/ Kobal Collection

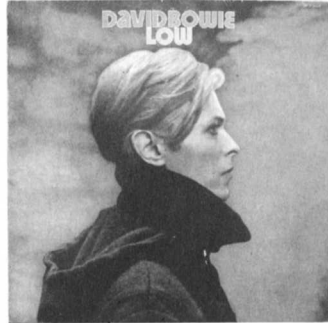


Walter Carlos' *Clockwork Orange*, 1972

As the liner notes to the 1972 complete score explain, Carlos had already begun work on the Moog composition 'Timesteeps' when he was given a paperback copy of the novel and realised that the 'music seemed to capture the exact feeling of the opening scene of Burgess' book.⁸ A newspaper article mentioning Kubrick's adaptation prompted Carlos to seek out a meeting with the director, resulting in the compositions being used in the film. Although Kubrick withdrew *A Clockwork Orange* from release in Britain shortly after its premiere amidst considerable controversy, Carlos's soundtrack (with its fantastic cover art by Karenlee Grant) would become an enduring touchstone for musicians who turned to the new technology of synthesisers in the wake of punk. In turn, Kubrick's film exerted a strong influence on David Bowie, who would serve as a kind of godfather for the New Romantics. Bowie has even described the aesthetic of early Ziggy Stardust concerts as a 'de-violencing' of the look of *A Clockwork Orange* combined with elements of Kabuki and musical theatre, going so far as to use selections from Carlos's soundtrack as his opening music. Later, Bowie's performance as the television-addicted alien Mr Newton in Nicolas Roeg's 1976 sci-fi film *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (shot during his Thin White Duke phase) would take a number of visual and thematic cues from Kubrick's *Clockwork*.

As Dave Rimmer explains in his exhaustively researched book, *New Romantics: The Look*, while Bowie's influence cannot be overstated, the New Romantics were equally indebted to Roxy Music.⁹ In the combined figures of Bryan Ferry's fashionable, crooning aesthete and Brian Eno's electro-futuristic androgene the scene found the building blocks of its aesthetic nearly fully formed. Ferry had studied at the University of Newcastle under Richard Hamilton and Roxy's sophisticated blend of high-culture intellectualism and 50s kitsch can be traced back directly to the Pop innovations of the Independent Group. Ferry was also an important early fashion maven, working with the menswear designer Antony Price to create the image of a jetsetting European playboy that scarcely masked an undercurrent of working-class aspiration. Meanwhile, Eno's pioneering experiments with synthesisers introduced a new approach

to electronic instrumentation centred around the creation of textures and soundscapes rather than traditional pop hooks. In particular, his collaborations with Bowie on his Berlin Trilogy — *Low* (1977), 'Heroes' (1977) and *Lodger* (1979) — conjured images of a grey, Teutonic urban landscape that would serve as a creative wellspring for the scene that grew up around the Bowie Nights first held at Billy's nightclub in SoHo in 1978 and, later, at The Blitz in Covent Garden beginning in 1979.

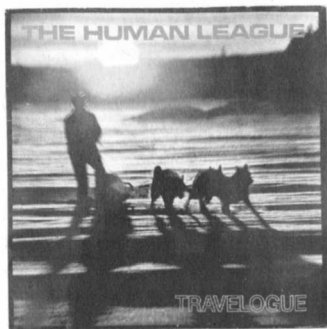


David Bowie, *Low*, 1977

As Rimmer notes, the imaginative pull of 'decadent' Berlin was irresistible at The Blitz, a grungy after-hours wine bar adorned with large-scale black and white photographs of WWII London and vintage propaganda posters. And while the club's decor may have shared something of the Brutalist shock of the 'Parallel of Life and Art' exhibition mixed with Weimarer cabaret, its soundtrack, provided by DJ Rusty Egan, combined the music of Bowie and Roxy with the German electropop of Kraftwerk and Giorgio Moroder's Munich Machine. On the door, host Steve Strange selected the chosen few from an eager crowd of fashionistas drawn from the squats in nearby Warren Street and Saint Martins School of Art, such that the club effectively became a kind of creative pressure-cooker. Within this context, tracks by a small group of homegrown UK bands immediately became dancefloor favourites, especially The Human League's 1978 single 'Being Boiled'.

Although the club scene was centred in London, most of the Blitz Kids came from the suburbs and the provinces. The Human League themselves had emerged from Sheffield, where Britain's largest Brutalist housing block, Park Hill, dominates the skyline. Founded by

computer operators and Kraftwerk fans Martyn Ware and Ian Craig Marsh, and fronted by asymmetrically coiffed singer Philip Oakey, The Human League made a point of creating songs in the studio exclusively using electronic instrumentation, save for the human voice. Their sparse electronic rhythms, paired with Oakey's deadpan delivery, fit in perfectly with the techno-decadent ambience of The Blitz. As Martyn Ware has remarked, the primitive, DIY studio techniques that the band employed on their early self-produced recordings failed to capture the 'brutal' quality they were aiming for. Nevertheless, The Human League's live performances — with the technology of the reel-to-reel prominently placed centrestage and augmented by multi-screen projections provided by 'Director of Visuals' Adrian Wright — would provide a template for the first wave of New Romantic bands.



The Human League, *Travelogue*, 1980



Park Hill, Photo: Daniel Clift/Architectural Association

Apart from The Human League, the inklings of an emergent aesthetic were also legible in the work of a handful of other UK bands on The Blitz playlist, in particular Ultravox's 1977 track

'Hiroshima Mon Amour', with its spare synth line and resonant cinematic image of 'Riding inter-city trains/Dressed in European grey'. Japan were also well ahead of the curve. Like Ultravox, they had started out as a glam act, but by the late 70s they had changed their look and begun to embrace the possibilities of keyboards. In 1978 Japan recorded the single 'Life in Tokyo' with Giorgio Moroder producing. In addition to capturing an important strand of Asiaphilia, the single opened the door to a new musical direction for the band with the addition of Moroder's trademark München Discoteca, resulting in the breakthrough *Quiet Life* LP in 1979. For many, the combination of David Sylvian's Ferry-esque baritone, Mick Karn's glassy fretless bass, Rob Dean's splintered guitarwork and Richard Barbieri's atmospheric synths was a revelation, and Japan's *Quiet Life* sound (as well as Sylvian's distinctive look) would later be adopted almost wholesale by Birmingham's Duran Duran, to worldwide acclaim.



Japan, *Quiet Life*, 1979

Still, it wasn't until late 1980 that any of the British bands associated with The Blitz scene found any real widespread commercial acceptance. Surprisingly, despite the hype around Spandau Ballet, it was Visage, a studio project formed by Rusty Egan, Steve Strange and Midge Ure, that was the first to break into the mainstream with their hit single 'Fade to Grey'. Written with the help of Ultravox's Billie Currie and Gary Numan's keyboardist Christopher Payne, the song managed to bring together (or rather, 'synthesise') nearly all of the various musical and thematic strands that had been circulating in the creative atmosphere of The

Blitz. So doing, 'Fade to Grey' tapped into not just an emergent musical phenomenon, but an entire pop-cultural *zeitgeist*. For, as critic Owen Hatherley has observed, '... seemingly everyone with something interesting to say in [British] pop from around 1977-1983 inhabited an East Berlin of the mind, barricading themselves into a synthesised plattenbau'.¹⁰ And while Fade to Grey's central image of 'one man on a lonely platform' perfectly captured the Brutalist, Eastern Bloc psychogeography of synthpop, it was in the excessive sartorial drapery of New Romantic scarf-itecture that the surface effects of New Brutalism found their graphic and tactile correlatives.¹¹

III. THE OTHER SIDE OF LIFE

Outside of the music charts the New Romantics made their most significant contributions to British pop culture in the realm of fashion. And although the broader Blitz scene accommodated a range of possibilities — from ecclesiastical robes and toy soldier jackets to full-on drag — the popular media image of the New Romantic 'look' can be distilled to a few key ingredients. This included Robin Hood boots, frilled shirts, baggy cossack trousers with wide belts, headbands, sashes and voluminous scarves, all augmented with wedge haircuts and the judicious application of make-up. As exemplified in the designs of PX and the early look of bands like Spandau, the overall effect was of a kind of primitivist neo-glam shot through with technophilic and sci-fi overtones. Not surprisingly, before the name stuck, the New Romantics were briefly known as 'Futurists'. Described this way, one can begin to recognise the resonances with New Brutalism, which married a celebration of the technology of modernist architecture (in the form of exposed services, ducts and piping) with roughly textured exteriors and monumental, ancient-seeming concrete forms. As 'future ruins' New Brutalist buildings thus provided the perfect analogue to New Romantic tribalism.

A cartoon version of New Romanticism also made its way into the larger public consciousness thanks to Vivienne Westwood and her 1981 Pirates Collection, which was

exported to America that year by way of Adam Ant's MTV-friendly, war-painted dandy highwayman in music videos and on the cover of his hit album *Prince Charming*. Architecturally, at least, the connection with pirates and piracy makes complete sense. For, remembering *Jubilee's* prophetic scene of a young Adam Ant (his right eye mascara'd, presumably in a nod to Alex DeLarge) standing atop a building overlooking a landscape of London towerblocks, we might recall that Le Corbusier himself often used the metaphor of ships on the high seas to



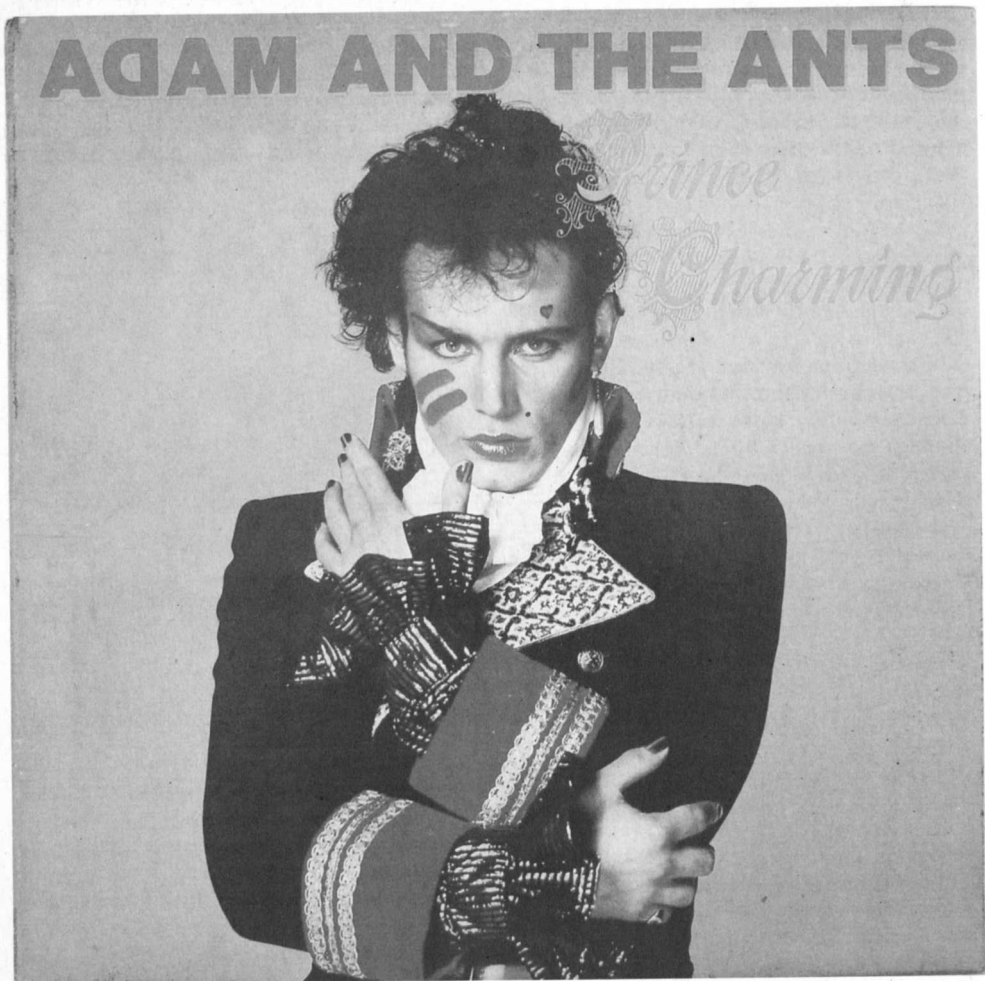
Spandau Ballet, circa 1981 © Corbis



Steve Strange in PX, circa 1981

describe the way the buildings of his *Plan Voisin* seemed to float above the urban fabric. This shadow-figure of a swashbuckling New Romantic striding across a Brutalist skywalk

ADAM AND THE ANTS



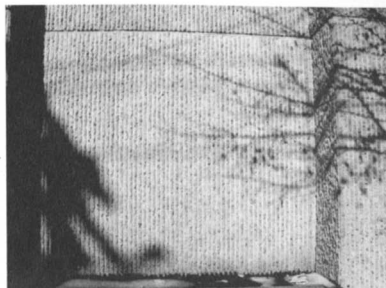
Adam and the Ants, *Prince Charming*, 1981

thus points us in two directions simultaneously: back, to the near-future of Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange*, and forward, to the future-present of Visage's 'Fade To Grey'.

In effect, Adam Ant became the first New Romantic sex-symbol, although his music had scarcely anything in common with the synthpop of bands like Visage, Spandau Ballet and Duran Duran. Still, his popularity opened the door for the mainstreaming of the New Romantics' gender-bending fashion innovations and the popular realisation that men in make-up could be sexy. As though anticipating Judith Butler by a decade, New Romantic fashion thereby exposed gender as a construction, something performed on the dancefloor through an excess of sartorial surface. Another name for this excess, as Susan Sontag reminds us, is camp. Writing in her 1964 essay 'Notes on Camp', Sontag described the camp sensibility as 'dandyism in the age of mass culture', whose essence is characterised by 'a love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration' and an emphasis on 'texture, sensuous surface, and style'.¹² As a camp response to the severity of punk, New Romantic fashion opted for yardage over bondage, favouring the look of fields of colour and bold patterns offset by billowing sleeves and layers of fabric.

If we accept the basic punk : modernist : postpunk : Brutalist analogy, something similar can be seen in the play of surfaces in New Brutalist architecture. For, as Tim Rohan has shown in his work on Paul Rudolph's Art & Architecture Building at Yale (one of New Brutalism's closest American counterparts), it is possible to read the textured concrete of Brutalism as itself a form of excessive ornament or decoration.¹³ Specifically, Rohan describes the corrugated concrete surface of Yale's A&A as a kind of all-over low-relief resulting from Rudolph's distinctive, meticulous rendering style. Building on Reyner Banham's remarks in an early discussion of the building, Rohan goes on to show that the striated appearance of the A&A's concrete surface 'was not just derived from draftsmanship, but from the methods of graphic reproduction used to reproduce architectural images in printed books', as well as illustrations in magazines and advertisements.¹⁴ Aiming to capture something of the impact of illustrations he had seen of buildings by Wright and Le Corbusier reproduced in books and

journals, Rudolph developed a highly graphic, expressionistic drawing style tailored for mechanical reproduction that he then strived to reproduce in the controlled play of light and shadow on the surfaces of the actual buildings themselves.¹⁵



Yale Art and Architecture Building, New Haven.
Paul Rudolph 1963. Photo: Mark Owens

As with the Smithsons, Rudolph's brand of Brutalism was a critique launched from within the ranks of modernist architecture itself as a reaction against the reflective surfaces of the corporatised International Style. And as New Brutalism's most thoughtful observer it's not surprising that Banham should be the first to make the connection between Rudolph's surface textures and the graphic techniques of architectural reproduction and commercial art. For, as a member of the Independent Group, it was Banham himself who had made a similar observation with regard to the images in the 'Parallel of Life and Art' exhibition, whose photographic enlargements, as we have already seen, inaugurated a Brutalist aesthetic grounded in the techniques of graphic design. Although Rohan is keen to limit his remarks to Rudolph's work alone (he dismisses any similarity to Le Corbusier or the Smithsons in a brief paragraph), the connection by way of Banham might nevertheless allow us to extend his observations to implicate the graphic quality of the surfaces of New Brutalism more broadly.

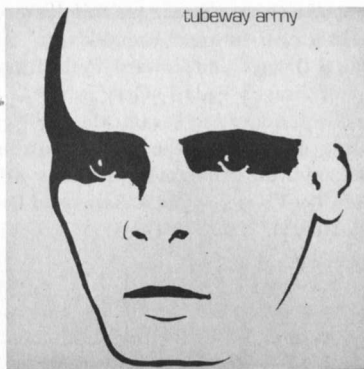
Still, to give him his due, it is Rohan, not Banham, who broaches the subject of sexuality and architectural surface when he suggests that Rudolph's placement of a selection of Beaux-Arts casts in a decorative programme throughout the interior of the A&A might be read as an instance of 'homosexual camp'.¹⁶ Nevertheless, I am quick to reject Rohan's

larger argument, reliant as it is on the language of sublimation, concealment, repression and masquerade to advance his reading of Rudolph's 'hypermasculine' surface as a 'closeted', compensatory form of decoration.¹⁷ Without wanting to psychologise Rudolph, I would, instead, want to borrow a term from queer theory and make a claim for the way in which the ornamental function of Rudolph's concrete surfaces discloses fashion and decoration as the 'open secret' of modernist architecture.¹⁸ And while much remains to be done on the imbrication of sexuality, fashion and surface in Rudolph's work (the 'haute minimalism' of his New York townhouse for Halston would be one place to start), Mark Wigley's *White Walls, Designer Dresses* (as I have noted) has already gone a long way towards unpacking such connections with respect to modernist architecture in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁹

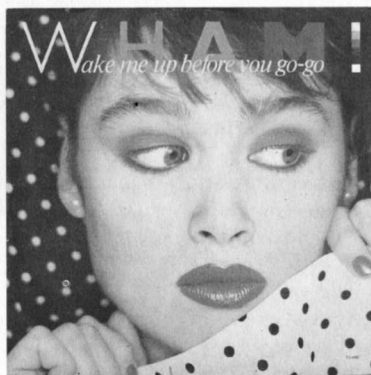
The preceding discussion is meant as a supplement to and extension of this history. As parallel and related forms, the dramatic play of light and shadow across the surfaces of New Brutalism and the excessive patterns and textures of New Romantic fashion can be seen to share a common genealogy in the techniques of graphic and textile design. Activating the surface of the body, New Romantic fashions mobilised a popular destabilisation of the heteronormative assumptions of gender and sexuality not seen since glam. (The emergence of Boy George as a kind of British national icon in the mid-80s is a case in point.) In turn, as a form of Brutalist camp the graphic surface-effects of New Brutalism exposed not just the functional dimensions of particular buildings, but the apparatus of late modern architecture's complex, mutually constitutive relationship with the discourse of fashion and ornament.

IV. SYSTEMS OF ROMANCE

Meanwhile, the high-contrast graphic effects writ large across the facades of New Brutalist architecture also found themselves writ small on the surface of the human face in the form of the New Romantics' penchant for the highly stylised application of cosmetics. This was perhaps most



Gary Numan, *Tubeway Army*, 1979



WHAM!, *Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go*
12" single, 1984

memorably showcased in Godley and Creme's video for Visage's 'Fade to Grey', in which Steve Strange is shown modelling the work of legendary make-up artist Richard Sharah. In the video Strange's face appears in a variety of mostly black-and-white compositions emphasising his lips, eyes and the arch of his brows, and near the end his eyes and mouth are briefly seen to float free of one another, as if they are being rearranged. In effect, the video operates as a meditation on the potential of the face as an abstract, graphic canvas, and variations on Strange's look could be found throughout the New Romantic scene, particularly in its representation in the fashion press.

The temptation is to trace all this back to the close-ups in Mick Rock's classic 1973 video for 'Life on Mars?' in which Bowie's electric blue

eyeshadow, orange mullet and pink lips appear suspended in a seamless white field formed by the way his face bleeds into the background. But I would like to suggest another possible point of departure more closely linked to the techniques of graphic design we have been following thus far: the cover of Gary Numan's debut 1979 Tubeway Army album. Although originally released in 1978 with a different sleeve, following the success of the 'Are "Friends" Electric?' single the record was re-released the following year featuring a high-contrast, black-and-white illustration of Numan's face by Garry Robson on the cover. Retrospectively, this would become the iconic image of Numan, widely reproduced on t-shirts and badges. As British pop's first synth superstar it is arguable that Numan's influence on the New Romantics was less musical than it was visual, so it's no surprise that the Tubeway Army cover should become a model for the look of New Romantic make-up. As with the surfaces of New Brutalism, the facade begins as a graphic effect.

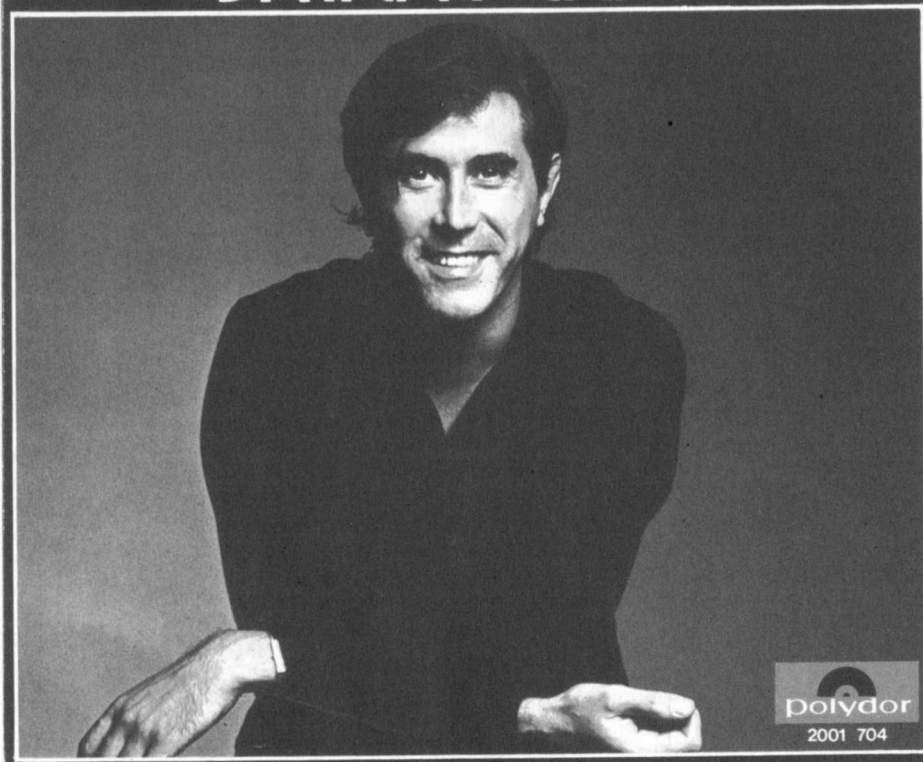
Bearing this in mind, graphic design can begin to offer us an economical way of charting the formal transition from the New Romantic to a New Pop aesthetic that occurred around 1982. Compare, for example, the Tubeway Army LP cover with Peter Saville's 1984 sleeve for WHAM!'s 'Wake Me Up Before You Go Go' 12" single, admittedly something of a footnote in Saville's oeuvre.¹⁹ Both designs feature the human face as the ground for an essentially abstract graphic composition. But whereas the Tubeway Army LP is limited to a high-contrast, strictly black-and-white rendering with the band name written in a futuristic lowercase Eurostile, the WHAM! 12" is a *tour de force* of graphic design, integrating colour, pattern and typography in a dynamic composition. And while the Tubeway Army cover is clearly hand-rendered, wearing its stripped-down graphic technique on its sleeve (as it were), Saville's cover everywhere announces itself as a virtuoso manipulation of the combined technologies of graphic design, photography and printing. In a signature gesture, Saville even incorporates a remnant of the technology of the printing process in the form of the vertical greyscale colour bar that forms the exclamation point at the end of the band's name.

It is also crucial to note that the Tubeway LP shows the androgynous, alien face of

Numan himself, while the WHAM! 12" features an unmistakably female cover model. The comparison thus allows us to see a shift from a kind of high-contrast futurism to a full-colour command of technology that was echoed in the transition from the 'queer' sounds of New Romantic synthpop to the decidedly more hetero, R&B-influenced New Pop that arose in the mid-1980s. Flush with major label dollars, it is not surprising that New Romantic bands changed their look along with their music, trading drapery and synths for custom-tailored suits and blue-eyed soul. Indeed, nearly all of the most successful New Romantic groups — Spandau Ballet, Duran Duran, The Human League — were characterised by two-part careers marked by a distinct shift in sound. This transition corresponded directly with the rise of the producer as a central figure in pop — Martin Rushent in the case of the Human League, Duran Duran with Nile Rodgers and Tony Swain and Steve Jolley for Spandau. As a result, the later, and often most successful, New Pop hits by former New Romantic bands were elaborate studio creations whose lush arrangements, Like Saville's cover for WHAM!, revelled in a mastery of technique.

The early 1980s brought a similar shift in the legacy of New Brutalism as its original tenets were revived by a coterie of British architects — a number of whom had studied under the Smithsons at the Architectural Association and, later, with Rudolph at Yale — to inform a new style of architecture collectively known as High Tech.²⁰ As Colin Davies has written, the work of these architects (including Richard Rogers, Norman Foster, Nicholas Grimshaw and Michael Hopkins) can be understood as a return to the modernist belief that architecture should reflect 'the spirit of the age.' And like the New Brutalists, High Tech architects insisted on the frank expression of services and materials, taking advantage of the latest advances in building technology. However, for most High Tech practitioners this became less of a functional mandate than a set of purely formal, even graphic, choices, as they abandoned exposed concrete, opting instead for the bold look of prefabricated materials like metal and glass, large exterior steel spaceframes and a proliferation of exposed services and piping, often painted in bright primary colours. The net effect is of an architecture tailor-made for the

THIS IS TOMORROW BRYAN FERRY



Bryan Ferry, *This is Tomorrow*

flexible needs of industry and manufacture and entirely complicit with the demands of advanced capitalism.



INMOS Semiconductor Factory, Newport,
Richard Rogers 1980/82.

Photo: Reyner Banham/Architectural Association

Like the hyper-produced sounds of New Pop it was also an architecture that fitted in perfectly with the ideologies of Thatcherism and Reganomics, and it remained a dominant style well into the 1980s. However, with the move to increasingly 'soft' technologies and the rise of networked communications and the personal computer in the second half of decade, the 'hard' materials of High Tech began to seem less in step with 'the spirit of the age.' Indeed, Davies dates the end of High Tech precisely to the year 1986 and the tragedy of the Challenger space shuttle disaster, which effectively halted the movement's deep investment in the imagery and optimism of the space race. As it happens, 1986 also marked an end point for a number of the most successful bands who traced their roots to the New Romantic scene of the early 80s. Culture Club released their final album that year, Duran Duran lost two core members, The Human League had their last number-one single, Ultravox dissolved and Spandau Ballet embarked on a three-year hiatus, never to repeat their former chart success. Even in decline the fortunes of the New Romantics, it would seem, were inevitably yoked to those of New Brutalism.

V. THIS IS TOMORROW

In March 1977, following the temporary break-up of Roxy Music and with the Sex Pistols newly signed to A&M, Bryan Ferry released his first solo album of all-original material, *In Your Mind*. Often considered a 'lost' Roxy album (it features guitarist Phil Manzanera and drummer Paul Thompson), the record yielded two modest hits, including the single, 'This is Tomorrow'. The title is almost certainly a reference to Ferry's mentor Richard Hamilton and the *The Independent Group*, for it was also the name of a watershed 1956 show at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, generally considered the first exhibition of Pop Art. Composed of twelve teams of artists, architects and graphic designers working in collaboration, 'This is Tomorrow' imagined the possibilities for representing the near future in the form of a series of innovative installations that aimed to emphasise the intersection of the fine and applied arts. Arguably the two most important contributions to the show were the Pop phantasmagoria created by Hamilton, John McHale and John Voelcker, and the Brutalist 'Patio and Pavilion,' designed by Henderson, Paolozzi and the Smithsons, the team that had organised 'Parallel of Life and Art' just three years earlier.²¹

With its chorus, 'This is tomorrow callin'/ Wishin' you were here', Ferry's 1977 single re-enunciated the *Independent Group*'s desire to imagine possibilities that lay just on the horizon, flying in the face of Punk's defeatist declaration of 'No Future'. As if taking their cue from Ferry, the ur-Romantic, it is this wish-image that is taken up, however briefly, by the New Romantics as they emerge from the New Brutalist psychogeography of late-70s urban Britain. As I have hoped to show, this common lineage is made legible when understood through the lens of graphic design. For, like the interdisciplinary 'This is Tomorrow' exhibition, the New Romantic aesthetic is best understood in terms of the way it implicates multiple domains: not just music, but the interrelated fields of architecture, fashion and graphic design. Grounded in a shared set of scriptive practices, the New Brutalists and the New Romantics are united by a particular kind of magic realism — at once fantastic and bloody-minded — that is uniquely British.

It should not be surprising, then, that we have begun to see a parallel resurgence of interest in both the New Brutalists and the New Romantics in recent years. A number of New Brutalist buildings are experiencing a renaissance, including the recent wholesale renovation of the Brunswick Centre in Bloomsbury and the emergence of Trellick Tower as a highly desirable address. Meanwhile, David Sylvian and Bryan Ferry have emerged as style icons, and fashion designers like Andrew Harmon are revisiting the pattern and drapery of New Romantic *scarf-itecture*.²² High-contrast graphics and black-and-white photography are also back in vogue. As I write this the original line-up of Duran Duran (minus one) are poised to release a new album, and synthpop is back on the radar as part of a widescale reevaluation of postpunk and its legacy. As part of this reevaluation the recent exhibition 'Panic Attack!: Art in the Punk Years' took place, appropriately, at the Barbican Art Gallery. Rumour has it Martyn Ware has even proposed a plan to perform the first two Human League albums live, on a stage amongst the concrete buildings and walkways of London's Southbank Centre — now that really would be 'brutal'.

1. For recent discussions of the New Romantics see Simon Reynolds's *Rip It Up and Start Again: Postpunk 1978-1984*, Penguin Books, 2005, especially pp. 296-351, and Dave Rimmer's *New Romantics: The Look*, Omnibus Press, 2003. The New Romantics were also the subject of a 2001 BBC documentary titled 'A Fine Romance: The Story of the New Romantics,' as well as a 1999 Channel Four episode of the Top Ten video programme with interview footage and hosted by Boy George called 'Top Ten 80s Romantics'. A more wide-ranging reconsideration of 1970s architecture, including New Brutalist structures like the Smithsons' Robin Hood Gardens has been taken up in a special issue of the architectural journal *OASE* titled '1970s Revisited', *OASE* no. 57, 2001. See also *As Found: The Discovery of the Ordinary*, eds. Claude Lichtenstein and Thomas Schreyenberger, Lars Muller Publishers, 2001.

2. Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, MIT Press, 1995.

3. For a discussion of this often neglected social context and the importance of the notion of encounter see the introduction to the *OASE* issue '1970s Revisited'.

4. My discussion of New Brutalism here relies heavily on Banham's important study, which remains the definitive book-length consideration of the subject, now sadly out of print: Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic*, Reinhold, 1966. I have my brother, Matt, to thank for my copy.

5. Banham, p. 61.

6. Banham, p. 89.

7. I owe this point to the graphic designers Experimental Jetset in their article 'Lazy Sunday Afterthoughts', *Dot Dot Dot* 7, Winter 2003, p. 79. As it happens the suggestion is false, but the anticipatory value of Pelham's paperback cover seems to me to be indisputable.

8. Wendy Carlos, Walter Carlos' *Clockwork Orange*, Columbia Records, 1972.

9. Dave Rimmer, *New Romantics: The Look*, Omnibus Press, 2003, p. 24

10. Owen Hatherley, 'Define Decadence, Darling.' http://nastybrutalistandshort.blogspot.com/2007_01_01_archive.html. In the course of writing this essay I discovered Hatherley's blog, 'Nasty Brutalist and Short,' and his observations on the connections between synthpop and architecture have proven to be an invaluable spur to my thinking. See also Lynsey Hanley's important recent book *Estates: An Intimate History*, Granta Books, 2007. While Hanley is, rightly, quite critical of estates architecture and Brutalism more generally, not surprisingly she is also a Bowie fan. See pp. 156-7.

11. My thanks to Jason Gnewikow for coining the term 'scarf-itecture'.

12. Susan Sontag, 'Notes on Camp' reprinted in *Against Interpretation*, Dell Publishing Co., 1965.

13. Timothy M Rohan, 'Rendering the Surface: Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building at Yale', *Grey Room* 01, Fall 2000, pp. 84-107.

14. Rohan, p. 87. Rohan is paraphrasing Reyner Banham's 'Convenient Benches and Handy Hooks: Functional Considerations in the Criticism of the Art and Architecture', in Marcus Whiffen, ed. *The History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture, Papers from the 1964 AIA-ACSA Teacher Seminar*, MIT Press, 1965, p. 102.

15. Rohan, pp. 89-90.

16. Rohan, p. 93.

17. Rohan, p. 100.

18. For the term 'open secret' see D A Miller's queer theory classic 'Secret Subjects, Open Secrets' in *The Novel and the Police*, University of California Press, 1989. See also Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's essential *Epistemology of the Closet*, University of California Press, 1990.

19. Saville offers a revealing anecdote about meeting George Michael and hearing Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go in the studio in Emily King, ed. *Designed by Peter Saville*, Princeton Architectural Press, 2003, p. 30.

20. See Colin Davies, *High Tech Architecture*, Rizzoli, 1988, pp. 6-21.

21. The lo-fi, spiral-bound exhibition catalogue for 'This is Tomorrow' also has its own, yet-to-be-written place in graphic design history.

22. See the profile of David Sylvian, 'A Man for this Season', *The New York Times Style Magazine: Men's Fashion Fall 2006*, pp. 122-4, and the recent fashion spread with Bryan Ferry in *GQ*, July 2007.

SECRET PRACTICES: MARKUS MIESSEN IN CONVERSATION WITH METAHAVEN, VINCA KRUK AND DANIEL VAN DER VELDEN

Markus Miessen

We met (virtually) a couple of months ago, when our roles were reversed: you were interviewing me for a publication that was commissioned by the Romanian Pavilion at the Venice Biennial. However, it is only now that I realise the many common themes there are in our work. It seems that we have even, unknowingly, worked on a couple of the same projects: the pyramid in Pyongyang, Casa Poporului in Bucharest and the Principality of Sealand. Today, it is often the case that the project-work of architects, designers and graphic-designers is almost inseparable. The connection between architecture, iconography and the political seems key to your work. Could you please elaborate on that?

Metahaven

One could almost say that meaning 'freezes' in icons and symbols, which can be buildings. Yet it seems that these icons don't quite follow the script they've been given; the meaning may have been frozen, but the power of what can be seen in the symbols somehow prevails over the power of what they were intended to express. Iconography and symbols are inherently political because they represent collectives, ideas and histories in highly dense and reduced forms, which is the origin for both their effect and their misinterpretation. Now, graphic designers and architects are the ones who make these signs and symbols, and they do so under mostly concealed ideological banners. In past decades the languages through which political struggles were addressed relied heavily on people seeing binary oppositions between market and social, between hegemony and its alternatives, between injustice and justice, between conformist and deviant, between war and peace. Today, designers talk about 'and-and' and strategies that combine 'the best of both worlds', in line with the dominant ideological view that in a globalised world,

conflict and contestation should be replaced by rational consensus. They work in the space of The Runway (Heidi Klum), focusing on the aesthetic transformation of subjectivity and lifestyle into unseen new configurations. That is too limiting for us intellectually. We are interested in an uncivilised, archaic form of graphic design, that puts the political back on the table. We are inspired by a number of leftist thinkers including Chantal Mouffe, who has written about the subject of depoliticisation, about the difference between politics and 'the political'. She also lectured at our Bucharest conference at Casa Poporului, Regimes of Representation.

MM

There is a rumour out there that all graphic designers want to be architects and vice versa. Why is architecture so important for you?

MH

We're attracted by architecture's capacity to create stories around things that were never built or never intended to be built, and by doing so generate proposals for alternative views. Superstudio's work is important for us. This also provides a way of dealing with theory and practice as connected rather than separate entities. The unbuilt proposal and its discourse somehow exist as theory. Interestingly, one architectural collective that ultimately failed at working on that intersection was Utopie, of which Baudrillard was a member. They became so critical that their own proposals failed to survive their criticisms; theory ate practice alive. They condemned the then-popular genre of megastructures (a theme also of their own work) as a 'chimera of utopia'.

We are interested to generate, with our work, an 'unbuilt' condition in graphic design. Unbuilt projects, or unsolicited proposals, have the capacity to speak for a future. We are also very interested in the new social and political investigations carried out

by architects, perhaps as a response to some sort of crisis in their profession.

In June 2007 we were joined by Gon Zifroni, a spatial designer who does architecture and is very keen on its relationships with the political. With him we have proposed architectural spaces as political metaphors (i.e. A Europe Game and Neocon Black Metal), but it is not inconceivable that in future this may result in built structures or public spaces as well.

And then there is the connection between architecture and power, not only the power conveyed through the symbolic realm of a building, but also the power expressed by the simple fact that you can build it. Structures that aspire to physical world records, such as the tallest high-rise, sow the seeds of their own destruction. Our case study for *Forms of Inquiry* at the AA is about the only building that fell on September 11 without being hit: World Trade Center 7, a nondescript postmodern office block, forty-seven storeys high, which stood close to the Twin Towers. On September 11, its collapse was reported (by BBC World) more than twenty minutes before it happened. Aside from the unexplained collapse itself, this has made World Trade Center 7 a favourite starting point for conspiracy theories – a detail, an exception that just doesn't make sense in the whole concept of '9/11'. One could say that precisely because of its symbolic deficit, the collapse of World Trade Center 7 at first went largely unnoticed.

MM

One could argue that the recent shift from often service-based work to self-propelled inquiries, which began at the tail-end of the 90s, was given impetus by the events in New York in 2001. It seems that we are more politicised than ever, being constantly at war – a war that doesn't affect most of us physically as the battlefields have, territorially speaking, been outsourced. Yet most use precisely this realisation as a cop-out to say they are paralysed, unable to act. Moving away from the notion of our role as being that of a service provider or middleman, how can design facilitate or enable modes of critical investigation?

MH

The working conditions of the designer in the late 1990s, and the attacks on the US in September 2001 have had quite different implications with respect to graphic design. In the 1980s and early 1990s design practice was drastically changed by both cultural and technological developments. The introduction of the PC moved typesetting into the designer's studio, away from the printing office. In the mid-1990s this resulted in a shift from an industrial-systematic model towards an approach based on direct access to the content itself, production becoming increasingly delocalised and networked (internet, email, mobile telephones). In response to these shifts a number of designers have changed their way of working, becoming involved in other phases of the production process such as editing, writing and publishing, their role evolving into that of flexible agents throughout the process. Next to design as we knew it, a space emerged in which designers could do anything. Up to September 11, this space had a smoothness about it...

The events of September 11 were political iconoclasm that changed the world. They constituted an attack, visible to everyone, on the key symbols of capitalism and American military power. It was said that this was an attack on 'our way of life'. People started to think hard about their security and their fears. On the surface this was translated in fashion into a prevailing, inward-looking darkness. The 'west' was at war with an invisible enemy whose characteristics were largely delineated by propaganda, lies and other features of the imagination, often with a religious bias. What became apparent to us was that this enemy, Al-Qaeda, was designed by western governments to fit their own needs. Design became a tool in politics just as in other disciplines. Philosophical theory (Deleuze & Guattari) was appropriated by the military (swarming; your colleague Eyal Weizman has written extensively on this). It is important that designers do not simply let themselves be used in service of other people's ideological aims, but develop a certain consciousness about the relationship between design and the political. In assignments, they have increasingly to bring

in research and proactively generated content. One cannot assume anymore that designers are by default the mediators between clients and their audience, moving on a linear track towards a better society.

MM

According to Rancière, the democratic man is a being who speaks. The modern political tradition has fashioned a strange kind of fraternity. How can one participate as an uninvited outsider?

MH

Our own 'outsider' position is based on the idea that first of all designers are citizens, according to a democratic principle. Any investigation into any politically related topic is therefore legitimate, because it is a public issue. We are currently researching the way in which internet search engines serve political interests, for which we're using a specific case study, Quaero, a Franco-German technological initiative that Jacques Chirac claimed was to be the 'European' alternative to American companies like Google and Yahoo. It seems that Quaero has not fulfilled this promise; instead it is merely a huge pot of state money donated to private companies for research and development on specific issues related to language and 'multimedia content' (*des contenus multimédias*). We feel Chirac's earlier, more antagonistic definition of Quaero is important because it implies a public answer to an issue hitherto regarded as the exclusive playing field of private companies. Not being personally or professionally involved in Quaero's actual organisation, we can pose questions that we feel were not answered as Quaero shifted from public to private, so to speak. For example, digitising European cultural heritage at the initiative of a nation state raises a lot of questions when it turns out to be a response to a commercial endeavour, Google Print. Being an outsider, one brings in views that are not part of the existing interests or pre-established consensus, although (in line with *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri) one can question how it is possible to define an outside position now. Belgian philosopher Dieter Lesage has written an interesting book on this (*Vertoog over Verzet* aka 'Discourse

on Resistance'), building up to a whirlwind paragraph where he takes the reader through 'a portrait of the artist as a worker', a description of the artist within the neoliberal state, keeping himself busy while mistakenly thinking he is making 'critical art'. It's very funny, but it does make the point: can one ever operate independently? In the ongoing bizarre 'war on terror', terrorism charges have become the wildcard used by western governments to arrest basically anyone who brings unwelcome news about the world we're living in or who is predicted to do so. In a way these charges have become the 'objective proof' of having reached an outside position. See the recent arrest, on terrorist charges, of the German activist and academic Andrej Holm, who looked into privatisation schemes for the Berlin housing market. We as designers want to step out of the ideological deadlock offered by current politics and explore the possibilities of design re-engaged with the imagination and the political.

MM

One of the projects you are contributing to the show is about the Principality of Sealand, which has inhabitable area of only 550 square metres and is located on a former Naval Sea Fort off the southeast coast of England. Sealand was able to claim the fort due to a legal loophole: it is situated in international waters and was up for grabs due to a 'dereliction of sovereignty'. Sealand proclaimed a constitution in 1975, and developed a flag, a national anthem, postage stamps, currency and passports over the following years. It is now a sovereign, independent state. How does one design a state?

MH

We worked on a project for the Principality of Sealand from roughly the end of 2003 until mid-2005, where indeed the initial plan was to design a national identity for this fascinating place.

'Roughs Tower', Sealand's original name, was one of an array of sea fortresses constructed as defences against the German Luftwaffe in WWII; in the 1960s they occupied a kind of territorial grey zone, as the UK had

abandoned them without a clear plan for their future. The 'squatting' of Roughs Tower in 1967 by Roy Bates marks the birth of the 'micronation' – a type of unrecognised nation whose territoriality is more psychological than physical.

Our assumption was that by being suggestive and unclear about its own history, Sealand was building something like a contemporary myth. Though officially denied any significant position in politics, myth serves, above all, as a connecting agent between perceived and imagined reality. We looked at internet search engines like Google as the machines that produced such myth for Sealand. The island became a nation-state inexorably linked to the information age: its iconography depended on the networked distribution of a shady history that no one could realistically verify. In that respect the role of identity-carriers was crucial, as the amount of people who'd heard about Sealand coins, stamps and passwords far exceeded those who'd seen, touched or owned such objects. We saw this as a reason to challenge these objects and their typological constraints. Increasingly, however, we started to situate Sealand in a discourse of globalisation related to the book *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, where the absence of a physical 'outside' beyond global capitalism is a given – and hence resistance has to be imagined from within. There is indeed a potential for Sealand to be a kind of outside inside. There was a serious attempt, funded by Silicon Valley venture capital, to establish a hacker-initiated 'data haven' on Sealand territory, a free zone for internet co-location beyond the reach of international and national legislation on content, copyright and data traffic. Sealand is still fascinating, but its potential to be an outside of anything has been made entirely dependent on legal matters, which will perhaps remain forever unresolved. What you say about Sealand being a sovereign, independent state is not entirely true: it fails to meet the criterion of international recognition, which cannot be self-proclaimed, but has to be based on mutuality. The Sealand government's latest endeavour has been to put its own premises up for sale after a fire devastated the structure in 2006. In the actual politics of

Sealand, there have never been strong signs of a counterideology; it is a James Bond object that aligns all its policies with those of the United Kingdom. To design for it has meant basically two enterprises – thinking about the way contemporary myth is played out in something one could call 'heraldry' and envisioning the alternative, the outside-within-an-inside, ultimately: the disappearance of Sealand from the world map.

MM

The role of graphic designers is a highly fascinating one in this context. For example, Switzerland is – as far as I know – one of the few, if not the only, country where the graphic designers are credited on the currency. To what extent do you think that the design of identity and ephemerals can effect political change?

MH

The identities of a nation are expressed through many things including flags, currency, national anthems, national colours, sports teams and other icons. What we see in recent years is that the image of a nation is increasingly thought of in terms of a brand. A recent issue of *Monocle* magazine claims that every country should have its creative director. Historically, the rise of the national brand image (see Mark Leonard's *Cool Britannia*) overlaps a kind of disappearance or suspension of the political, one that is doomed to have certain counter-effects. Indeed, brands can be managed but peoples and countries, ultimately, cannot. So national brand strategies that argue for a greater amount of consistency between 'brand proposition', information-carriers and the so-called 'ephemerals' of national identity are designed to bypass the political basis for the governance of the nation-state in order to directly communicate within and for a 'global marketplace'. So you could say that, on the contrary, they're designed to satisfy the visual needs of a globalised creative and business elite that operates independently from national politics. On the other hand, the burning or desecration of bearers of national identity, such as flags or money, releases a great amount of negative symbolic energy – one in which antagonism joins forces with

sacrifice, as was studied by Michael Taussig in his book *Defacement*. Then, defacements and desecrations are always themselves symbols of some kind of political turnover. So the relation between identity carriers and political change is highly complicated and right now what we think is most needed, from a design perspective, is a politically inspired critique on the whole concept and practice of 'nation branding'. In the same issue of *Monocle*, the Australian architect John Wardle says that the country most in need of a brand makeover is Iraq. How arrogant can you get? What we're arguing for is the transgression of brands and concepts – their removal from the inherent tendency to represent consensus and suspended political practices, which would set them free to formulate alternative models which recognise conflict and disprove the idea that 'politics equals marketplace'. We're currently working on that with our essay 'Why the state is not a brand'.

By the way, Dutch designers Ootje Oxenaar and Jaap Drupsteen were also credited – albeit in very small type – on their respective issues of the former Dutch Guilder currency.

MM

In your text you mention the symbolic potential of buildings to illustrate the conflicting realities between what you call 'smooth globalisation and the actualisation of democracy in the here and now'. Could you tell us more about this please?

MH

This sentence refers to the Casa Poporului ('House of the People') in Bucharest. This building is now used as the seat of government and for trade fairs and international congresses, while part of it is a national museum of contemporary art. None of these functions implies real changes in the basic way the building behaves. They all still assume a great deal of control over how the building is used and seen. In fact, in what appears to be a Pavlovian attempt to imitate the Gehry Bilbao Effect, the Casa Poporului has become the prime symbol in 'branding' Bucharest: 'smooth globalisation'. Without wanting to be prescriptive to the Romanian government, in fact what should

still be done is make this building totally, radically public – to make it the inhabitable, empty shell of power, like a newly discovered cave of Lascaux. Let new hieroglyphs and narratives be written over the old decorations. Our proposals for the House of the People, which are currently under development, deal with making it a public building for the very sake of it being public, with no imposed functions.

MM

How would you describe your means of production?

MH

Post-late 90s! What is great about laptops and wireless internet is that the traditional office may disappear; there is no need to sit in an 'assembly line' arrangement, unless of course you are a big office that needs to do a lot of production work. At this moment we are more a think tank than an office. When we take on commissions, these possess a research component as a key ingredient. Our means of production include fieldwork, research and reading, conversing, interviewing, investigating, visual work both on the computer and by hand, publishing and writing, in what is obviously a post-Fordist work setting. To us it is very interesting that all these activities can somehow exist together as a design research practice.

MM

In terms of totalitarian architectural thinking and the way it manifests itself spatially, what do you think is more worrying: it being physically present or it being invisible? One could argue that once it is visible, one at least knows what one is dealing with. What is your take on this?

MH

The point is that a 'totalitarian building' is not the physical manifestation of an invisible or secret practice; it does not directly represent or symbolise a hidden system of control but is part of a series of ideological images meant to instil faith. The tragic beauty of totalitarian architecture is that it fails at that; it fails to divert attention from the nightmares below the surface and instead becomes their articulation

in built form. Many buildings currently under construction in the United Arab Emirates, with their emphasis on absolute size and a central designer role for sovereign rulers, seem to have inherited that same characteristic of totalitarian architecture. We're seeing the rebirth of a totalitarian capitalism – this time with a realistic exploitation programme, leisure, culture and services, as well as active participation by global elites. Despite the symbolic excess of these buildings, almost no one (except obviously people like Mike Davis) is prepared to see through them and examine 'who one is dealing with'. However, secret practices also lead to spatial forms. Note the research on 'black programmes' by Trevor Paglen. These realities have much less of a direct relationship with iconography but can still produce symbols, if only for the lack of reliable information that exists about them. Isn't there an interesting and terrifying kind of anti-iconography in the official denial that something exists. For example, the nondescript visual identities of the airplanes carrying out the CIA's rendition flights in Europe – a 'virgin white' (literally) symbolism of terror.

MM

What role does reading and indeed writing play in your practice?

MH

They're very important. In order to create a context for the topics we are interested in, we write about them, which means reading about them. These writings exist in a kind of symbiotic relationship with our visual work. We've always been interested in the relationship between theory and design. That is what is fascinating about architecture: there is a separate discourse in writing and theorising which has added to the way the discipline works and raises new issues. By comparison, in graphic design now, we are still talking about Helvetica.

BIOGRAPHIES

A

Åbåke consists of four graphic designers — Patrick Lacey, Benjamin Reichen, Kajsa Ståhl and Maki Suzuki — who were educated at Brighton University, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, HDK in Gothenburg and the Royal College of Art in London. Since graduating in 2000 the group has been based in London working for clients who include Maison Martin Margiela, Peter Jensen and Martino Gamper. They teach at the Royal College of Art and Central Saint Martins, and organise workshops and events in Europe and beyond. They have worked on the design (and content) of *Sexymachinery* (sexymachinery.com), an architectural production with Shumon Basar, Dominik Kremerskothen and Dagmar Rädmacher, and the label Kitsuné (kitsune.fr) with Gildas Loaec and Masaya Kuroki.

B

David James Bennewit studied at the Werkplaats Typografie, Arnhem, The Netherlands. As well as working in a commercial graphic design studio in New Zealand, he has worked as a freelance designer on various projects — mostly in cultural sectors — in New Zealand, the UK and The Netherlands. Recent commissions have come from the Lisson Gallery, London; Piet Zwart Academie, Rotterdam; and Dutch artists Bik van der Pol, for a book project for the Istanbul Biennial in September 2007.

Julia Born is a Swiss designer living in Amsterdam. Following her studies at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie she has worked on several projects and publications for clients such as the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen Rotterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the Swiss Federal Office of Culture. Apart from commissioned work she has collaborated with other designers and artists, such as fashion designer JOFF (A Red Skirt, 2003, One To One, 2007) and performer Alexandra Bachzetsis (Secret Instructions, 2005). She has taught graphic design at the Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne, the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Werkplaats Typografie Arnhem.

Emmet Byrne currently works as a graphic designer at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. He has done work for the Public Art Fund in New York, the Rochester Art Center, Chronicle Books, the Soap Factory, the School of Visual Arts, and Nothing Moments Publishing. Since 2005 he has taught as adjunct faculty at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. He is also editing and designing a book about the Art Shanty Projects, with Scott Ponik.

C

Tomáš Celizna is a Czech graphic/interaction designer currently pursuing an MFA in graphic design at Yale University School of Art in New Haven, Connecticut.

D

Wayne Daly is an Irish designer living in London and is graphic designer at the Architectural Association Print Studio. He received an MA in Typo/Graphic Studies from the London College of Printing. He has worked on a range of print and screen-based projects for photographer Nick Knight's fashion broadcasting website SHOWstudio, as well as art-directing and self-publishing various independent publications. Daly has exhibited work in London, New York, Berlin, Athens, Barcelona and Dublin, and has taught at LCC, Waterford Institute of Technology and the American University of Beirut.

Alex DeArmond is an independent graphic designer living and working in Boulder, Colorado. He previously worked as a senior designer at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and holds a degree in comparative religion from Carleton College.
alexdearmond.com

deValence is a Paris-based graphic design studio formed by Alexandre Dimos & Gaël Étienne in 2001. They have designed many exhibition catalogues, such as *Dada* for the Centre Pompidou (2005) for which they also developed a font called Dada Grotesk. They have also worked on projects such as *Mains d'œuvres* — an arts centre near Paris; *Vassivière* — an arts centre on an island in the

middle of France; and Santarcangelo — a theatre in Italy. Their magazine designs include *Magic* (2001–2005), *Le Journal des Laboratoires* (since 2002) and *Breloques* (since 2007). In 2006, they created *Marie Louise*, a graphic design magazine for which they are both publishers and designers.
devalence.net

Dexter Sinister is the compound name of David Reinfurt and Stuart Bailey. David graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1993, Yale University in 1999, and went on to form O-R-G, a design studio in New York City. Stuart graduated from the University of Reading in 1994, the Werkplaats Typografie in 2000, and co-founded the arts journal *Dot Dot Dot* the same year. David currently teaches at Columbia University and Rhode Island School of Design. Stuart is currently involved in diverse projects at Parsons School of Design (NYC) and Pasadena Art Center (LA). Dexter Sinister recently established a workshop in the Lower East Side in New York City which is intended to model a 'Just-In-Time' economy of print production.
dextersinister.org

E

Paul Elliman is a London-based designer whose work and writing explores the mutual interests of technology and language. His work has been included in collections in London's Tate Modern and Victoria and Albert Museum, APAP in Seoul, and New York's New Museum of Contemporary Art.
otherschools.com

Experimental Jetset is an Amsterdam graphic design unit founded in 1997 by Marieke Stolk, Erwin Brinkers and Danny van den Dungen. Focusing on printed matter and installation work, they have undertaken projects for the Stedelijk Museum, Centre Pompidou, Dutch Post Group, De Theatercompagnie, Le Cent Quatre (104) and t-shirt label 2K/Gingham. In 2007, a selection of their work was acquired by MoMA for their permanent collection. They have been teaching since 2000 at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam.
jetset.nl

G

James Goggin set up his graphic design studio Practise in 1999 after completing an MA in Graphic Design at London's Royal College of Art. While focusing mainly on typography and print-based projects such as art books, posters, typefaces, identities and stationery, he also works across various media, creating anything from exhibition design and signage to short films, title sequences and websites. Clients include Barbican Art Gallery, Tate Modern, Camden Arts Centre, Book Works, Docklands Light Railway, the British Council and *The Wire* magazine. Fonts by Practise are sold through Swiss type foundry lineto. practise.co.uk

H

Will Holder is a graphic designer based in London. He is currently advising researcher at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, where he is advisor to the 'Tomorrow Book Studio'.

Hudson-Powell

Brothers Jody Hudson-Powell and Luke Powell studied Graphic Design at Central Saint Martins, with Jody going on to do the Virtual Environments MSc at the Bartlett School of Architecture. They formed Hudson-Powell in March 2005, wanting more space for 'out of work' projects after having worked as designer/art directors at larger companies since leaving college. Their design principles focus on the dual development of concept and medium. This approach has seen projects as varied as branding, live action, motion graphics, modelmaking, program development and interactive installations. Recent clients have included Nickelodeon, Domino Records, North Design, Canteen, Beams T (Tokyo), Wolf Ollins and Diesel.

hudson-powell.com

K

Zak Kyes is a Swiss-American graphic designer working in London. He runs his own studio, Zak Group, and is Art Director of the Architectural Association. Kyes received a BFA in graphic design from CalArts after an unfinished degree in Art History from Skidmore College. His work has been shown at the 22nd

International Biennale of Graphic Design (CZ) and the Art Directors' Club (NYC), as well as in a solo exhibition, 'All That Is Solid Melts Into Air', at the Kemistry Gallery (UK). Kyes teaches at London College of Communication and the Architectural Association School of Architecture. zakgroup.co.uk
aaprintstudio.net

L

Jürg Lehnj studied electrical engineering at ETH Zürich and interaction design at ECAL, Lausanne. His self-initiated work originates from reflections about tools, the computer and the way we work with and adapt to technology. He often collaborates with graphic designers, artists, typographers and engineers. He is a co-owner of the Swiss type foundry lineto.com and also works on private research commissions, for example at the Sony SET Lab in Tokyo.

hektor.ch
scriptographer.com

M

Karel Martens completed his studies at the Arnhem School of Art in 1961. Since then he has worked as a freelance graphic designer, specialising in typography. Among his clients have been the publishers Van Loghum Slaterus (Arnhem) in the 1960s, and the SUN (Nijmegen) 1975-81. In 1999 he designed the facade of the printing company Veenman in Ede, in collaboration with the writer K Schippers. In 2005 he designed glass facades for the Philharmonie in Haarlem. Martens has taught graphic design at the Arnhem School of Art, the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht and the School of Art, Yale University. In 1998 he and Wigger Bierma founded the Werkplaats Typografie postgraduate course at the ArtEZ, Institute for the Arts, Arnhem.

Metahaven

Based in Amsterdam and Brussels, Metahaven: Design Research is a collective agency formed by Daniel van der Velden, Vinca Kruk and Gon Zifroni. Their research results in models, proposals, essays, lectures and conferences which tackle the subjects of iconography, architecture, public space and the political.

metahaven.net

Mevis en Van Duersen

Linda van Duersen (1961) and Armand Mevis (1963) live and work in Amsterdam, where they began their collaboration after graduating from the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in 1986. Mevis & Van Duersen work mainly for cultural clients, producing the new identity of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, numerous books on architecture and design, publications and the identity for fashion duo Viktor & Rolf; they won the competition for the graphic identity for the city of Rotterdam. Van Duersen serves as head of the Graphic Design Department at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, while Mevis is a design critic at the Werkplaats Typografie, Arnhem; both are critics at Yale University's School of Art. Their long and prolific collaboration has been documented in the book *Recollected Work: Mevis & Van Duersen*, published by Artimo in 2005.

John Morgan

From the Typography & Graphic Communication department at Reading University, Morgan joined Derek Birdsall at Omnific, London. In 2000 he established John Morgan studio where he works with a small team on Platform 1, Paddington Station. Alongside studio work, he has tutored at Central St Martins and the University of Reading and co-founded Workplace Co-operative 115, a new building for designers and makers. Morgan's projects include prayer books for the Church of England, granite poetry for the BBC, exhibition design for the Design Museum and a new visual identity for the city of Ljubljana. He has written for various journals including *Typography Papers* and *Dot Dot Dot*.

morganstudio.co.uk

O

Mark Owens is a designer, writer and filmmaker working between Los Angeles and New York. Mark received an MA in English from Duke University before earning his MFA in graphic design from Yale University in 2000. In 2004 he curated 'The Free Library', a graphic design exhibition that travelled to New York, Philadelphia and London. In 2005 he established his studio, Life of the Mind, through which he has completed projects for a range of clients including V&A, Tate Modern, and The Hammer

Museum. His essays have appeared in the pages of *The Blow-Up Magazine*, *Visible Language*, *Grafik* and *Dot Dot Dot*. He has taught at Yale and Art Center College of Design and is currently an adjunct faculty member at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts).

lifeofthemind.net

P

Radim Pesko is a graphic designer based in Amsterdam. After studying at the Academy of Arts in Prague and in London he completed the postgraduate programme at Werkplaats Typografie in Arnhem in 2004. He works on type design and occasional curatorial projects. His recent work includes identity for Secession Vienna and catalogues for the Moravian Gallery in Brno. He is a contributor to *Dot Dot Dot* magazine and teaches at the Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam.

Project Projects is a design studio focusing on print, interactive and environmental work for clients in the cultural sector. Founded in January 2004 by Prem Krishnamurthy and Adam Michaels, the studio's clients include Artists Space, Creative Time, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, *New York Times Magazine*, Princeton Architectural Press, Van Alen Institute, White Columns and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Project Projects also collaborates with architects, artists and writers on independent projects.

projectprojects.com

R

Manuel Raeder lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the London College of Printing and has completed a postgraduate course at the Jan van Eyck Akademie in Maastricht. His work takes a wide range of formats, from exhibitions, ephemera, books and type design to furniture. He has held workshops at the École Nationale Supérieure des arts Décoratifs, Paris, the University of Toulouse le Mirail and the Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg.

manuelraeder.co.uk

S

Jon Sueda is one half of STRIPE, a Los Angeles-based studio with Gail Swanlund. He has done work for the

REDCAT gallery, Studio Museum in Harlem and The Wattis Institute. Since 2003 he has taught at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Most recently Sueda has co-organised the creation of twenty-four books with artist Steven Hull.

stripela.com

W

Michael Worthington is a partner in counterspace (Los Angeles). He has taught for the last twelve years at the California Institute of the Arts.

COLOPHON

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of Critical Graphic Design

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Edited by Zak Kyes and Mark Owens

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Forms of Inquiry will expand
as it travels; collected works
will be documented in an online
archive as an extension to
the exhibition. As a contribution
to FOI, this website is designed
by Tomáš Celizna.

www.formsofinquiry.com

* Spine: Donald Judd
(from Donald Judd: Colorist, Hatje
Cantz Publishers, 2000)

Cover (green colour field):

Colour in architecture began and
ended with De Stijl. Earlier and later it is
decoration or it is the usually quiet colours
of materials. [...] In the present noisy
and cluttered society, urban and rural,
the obvious recommendation is to avoid
colour. As seen in the bright signs
everywhere, colour becomes further junk.
But without colour, which is almost always
on signs, most cities are junk anyway,
the newest the worst.

Within De Stijl, van Doesburg was
by far the most interested in colour in
architecture. He wanted a new activity,
that of 'colourist', to apply to architecture.
[...] Basically van Doesburg was applying
planes of colour, at an angle, which he
thought harmonious and dynamic, to the
orthogonal structure of the architecture,
which he thought ordinary. Aside from
the ever-discouraging public, this division
could not continue. Colour has to be part
of the usually right-angular architecture.

(From 'Some Aspects of Color
in General and Red and Black
in Particular', Donald Judd,
ArtForum, 1994)

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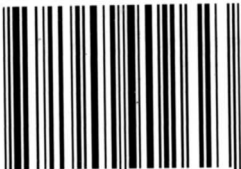


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