TESIS DOCTORAL
EVELYN ALONSO ROHNER

infrathin actions

IN ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM AND PERFORMANCE ART

D. EDUARDO M. RODRÍGUEZ BARRERA, SECRETARIO DEL INSTITUTO UNIVERSITARIO DE SISTEMAS INTELIGENTES Y APLICACIONES NUMÉRICAS EN INGENIERÍA (SIANI) DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA,

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Que el Consejo de Doctores del SIANI en su sesión de fecha 17/04/2017 tomó el acuerdo de dar el consentimiento para su tramitación, a la tesis doctoral titulada "Infrathin Actions in Architecture, Urbanism and Performance Art" presentada por la doctoranda Dª Evelyn Alonso Rohner y dirigida por el Doctor José Antonio Sosa Díaz-Saavedra, propuesta para acceder a la mención de doctorado internacional, a la vista de la idoneidad y calidad de su contenido, interés y relevancia del tema a nivel internacional y la realización de una estancia de más de un trimestre en un centro de investigación fuera de España.

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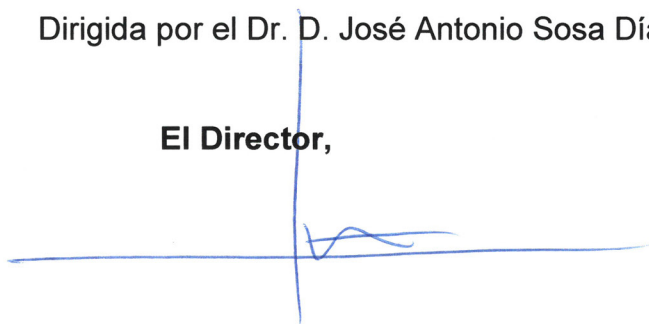Programa de Doctorado: Instituto Universitario de Sistemas Inteligentes y Aplicaciones Numéricas en Ingeniería.

Título de la Tesis

Infrathin Actions in Architecture, Urbanism and Performance Art

Tesis Doctoral presentada por Dª Evelyn Alonso Rohner

Dirigida por el Dr. D. José Antonio Sosa Díaz-Saavedra

El Director,   **La Doctoranda,**

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, a 18 de abril de 2017

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infrathin actions

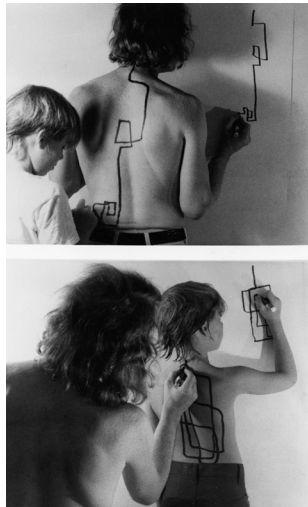IN ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM AND PERFORMANCE ART

abstract

There are actions of weak nature which start transformations and profound changes in the architectural project or in the city. These actions can occur or surge spontaneously, sometimes leaving only a transient trace, or they can even be invisible, without physical presence and at the same time establish links, connections or drifts that humanize, transform and enrich the city and make it more inhabitable. This research focuses on those.

The city is not only the physical and palpable product of planning or of great infrastructures, in spite of the undeniable importance of both. This research tries to discover other possible, more contemporary forms of the 'urban' through the attentive look of artists, thinkers or architects (as noteworthy seismographers of changes). The focus is to investigate ideas of open qualities or new ways of using space, those, which can coexist with uncertainty, instability or indeterminacy. And therefore, distance themselves from the imposition of hard and hierarchical structures. This reveals a way of being, or of facing these issues which affect us all nowadays, and therefore also in the unavoidable approach to the contemporary architectural project and to urban planning.

This research is approached from the context of the 60s and 70s. It is done by studying weak actions in art and architecture such as the event, the ephemeral, the journey, the negation of the discipline, and even those things which have less presence, such as fragility, discontinuity, disappearance or indeterminacy. Actions, which through touching the subtleness, manage to make visible the *je ne sais quoi*.

to my kids

Anouk
Paul
Lou

Image: Dennis Oppenheim, *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* (1971)

acknowledgements

table of contents

01] *introduction*

11v] *quand la fumée de tabac sent aussi de/ la bouche qui l'exhale, leurs deux odeurs/ s'épousent par inframince (inframince/olfactif)*

when the tobacco smoke smells also / of the mouth which exhales it, the two odors / marry by the infra thin [olfactory infra-thin]

"The aim for him [the artist] is to extract from fashion the poetry that resides in its historical envelope, to distil the eternal from the transitory. [....] Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable."[1]
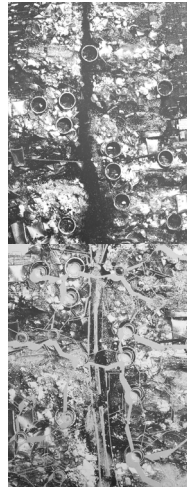
fig. 01.
fig. 02. Arata Isozaki, *incubation Process/Joint Core System* (1962)

The strength of some plants is always surprizing. The edelweiss for example manages to protrude out of tiny fractures in rocks. The resilience of plants often derives from the most astounding strategies: parasitism and symbiosis, organization, lightness of structure… and in some cases even nomadism. The edelweiss does not have the hardiness of the surrounding rocks but it has the momentary energy to defy its hostile environment. The edelweiss is visited as an independent event because of its fragility, ephemerality, remoteness, and protection; not because of its beauty, (there are many more beautiful flowers in the traditional sense), nor its recognized heeling qualities. Nothing gives more pleasure than the discovery of an edelweiss in the middle of the rocky landscape precisely because it has become an event in itself.

Cities in some respects rely on various mechanisms to become resilient. They cope with extreme situations, devastation, callous urbanism and all sorts of external pressures. There is something however that holds them together, like a string structure, acting like an invisible thread that elastically holds the cities together.

Cities, as Arata Isozaki explains in 1962, are abstract ideas. The substance of a city cannot be shattered by the *"destruction of cities, but by the eclipse of civilization"[2]*.

Even in the city's apparent complexity and fragmentation one can appreciate structures, forces or energies which suggest its fading identity. It is the inevitable entropic process of a city, retained by the weak yet powerful structures. Furthermore, what biology or in general science has taught us, is how complex things are in truth quite simple. With careful observance one begins to recognize hidden patterns even in apparent disorder.

A city is not just the palpable product of urban planning, nor of the large infrastructures they occupy. Not disregarding the importance of both. A lot of the qualities that make cities habitable are more often found in events and 'weak' structures. Some of these are spontaneous by-products of the inhabitants themselves and leave only

1   Charles-Pierre Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, 1964, 1 ed. (Penguin Books Limited, 2010), pp. 403. The Painter of Modern Life was originally written in 1863.
2   Arata Isozaki, *Unbuilt. Hankenchikushi*, Hankenchikushi (Tokyo: TOTO Shuppan, 2001), p. 23.

an ephemeral trace; others harden, solidify and become structures that humanize, enrich or make the city more habitable. Finally, they are such that, even though invisible, formless and without mass, can radically transform urban life.

However, in this chain of actions which intervene in urban life and transform the city it is the 'weakest', those of the almost 'impresent'[3], invisible and incorporeal events or actions, which manage to radically transform urban life (the Internet or social networks would be just one of these). These actions, so far removed from the conservative and traditional planning, are those named here with a word borrowed from Marcel Duchamp and thus from the artistic world. This would be that invisible thread and the subject of this thesis.

The Infrathin is a conceptual notion which implies recognition of two distinct ideas (concepts, object, thoughts, events), even when these are separated by discontinuity or deferral in their logic. The recognition, even when irrational or without logic, is produced by an understanding (memory, intuition, etc.) of the minute gap which separates these ideas. Duchamp, thus, transforms unintelligible and intangible ideas into visual or sensorial references that rely solely on memory, becoming abstract notions and beautifully defining the *je ne sais quoi*.

The approach to this concept of the *Infrathin* structures will be from the extra-disciplinary, of performance art as a way of provoking contingent readings and analysis quite distant from the conventional.

Performances are born from the sensitive perception of daily life, and therefore are a good window to look out and discover more contemporary forms of urbanism. Under the attentive look, the perception of the artist, as a seismographer of his time, and the subsequent actions on the urban, we can discover paths for actions. They seek a more profound transformation of the urban, through systems of low consumption or 'weak' systems.

Duchamp's infrathin is, thus, to be understood as the opposite to strong actions on the urban territory. Through the sensitive gaze of art or sociology one can discover,
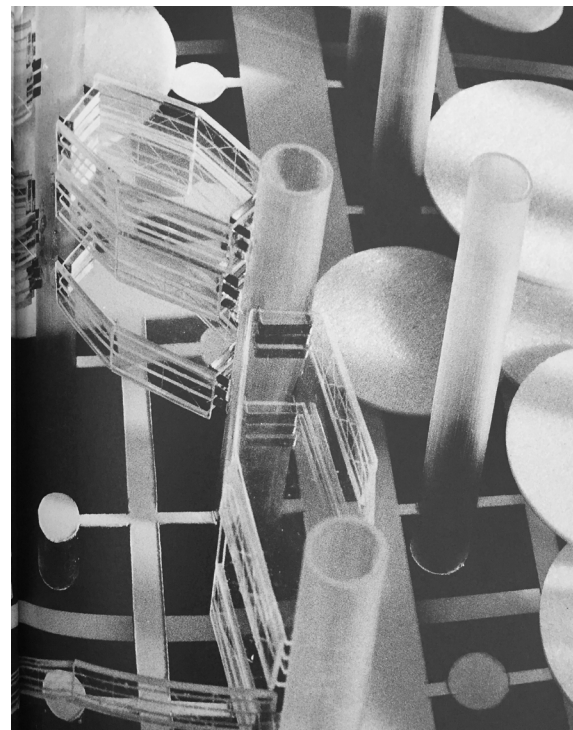
fig. 03.   Arata Isozaki, *incubation Process/Joint Core System* (1962)

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3   This term will be explained further along this investigation. The term is coined from José Angel Valente and translated by the author of this thesis.

different structures capable of altering or constructing urban spaces without the consumption of energy (of all types, including social and personal energies).

Architecture no longer belongs to a closed system unaffected by change. Cities have been transformed systematically. There seems to be something that altered radically the discipline of architecture and therefore, the conception of projects past the midst of the 20th century. For Richard Sennett cities remain paralysed if their system remains closed[4]. An open system however, inevitably starts a process of entropy, as this thesis will try to demonstrate.

The beginning of this transformation had to be triggered by a turning point and the need to open up the system. Most probably it was caused by many factors which will be described in relationship to the topics discussed, just to mention a few: the sudden growth of cities, the disillusion in the modernist urban plans, a new social practices, economic situation, post-war industrialism, the appearance of contextual art, etc.

Little by little the city becomes a transitory destination, of a non-permanent configuration, a series of coincidences which start shaping the city with no specific form. The city as a project is suddenly swinging between utopianism and immediacy sharing more with the future than with the permanent.

Inasmuch, the bi-decade of the sixties and the seventies help to show this transformation; when process is favoured over final objects, indeterminacy over determinacy, instability over stability and fragmentation over universal or holistic approaches.

'The weak', on the contrary leads to discontinuities. Its effects do not always occur continuously or predictably and they appear as an invisible network of events. There is somewhat, a breach of the logical sequence in its process, but that does not mean that 'weak' does not have some internal order. On the contrary, these events appear to be linked by invisible threads and can only exist in a sufficiently open field. In a field where not everything is 'under control', because there, events could not happen. This thesis tries to highlight a series of thoughts in order to make visible fragile structures

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4   Richard Sennett, "Quant, the Public Realm," http://www.richardsennett.com/site/senn/templates/general2.aspx?pageid=16&cc=gb.

in the urban and artistic context, and at the same time showing the environment where they can exist.

The drifts and the movements. They are neither linear nor uniform. In them, the loss of control, the erratic, the spontaneous, will be explored.

The emergence of the weak is explained through the indication of the entropic process. Entropy, as conceived by Robert Smithson is to be imagined as the irreversible transformation of certain urban changes, the contamination of city structures by simple contiguity, uncontrolled and uncontrollable evolution of urban areas from centrality and 'security' to suburbia.

The 'weak' seems to have its place in the city, both in art and architecture. It is ingrained in a way of understanding which surfaced in the sixties. Nowadays we accept and value the mixing of forms, the opening to ideas or new ways of inhabiting space. Even to the extent that uncertainty and indeterminacy become part of the everyday we coexist with, to which we have gradually become accustomed. More so than the impositions of strong and hierarchical orders. Nowadays, this seems to reveal, a way of being or a way of addressing issues, which is also perceptible in this inevitable approach to architectural projects, and inasmuch urban planning.

These initial intuitions have become in some ways the motor of this thesis. The subsequent verification of these intuitions will however require exploring different fields inside and outside the discipline. It is difficult to discover them without a broad look at the diffuse frontiers of architecture. It would be necessary to swing from one side to another, from the zone of concepts to that of artistic movements in order to catch glimpses of subjects that belong to the discipline, but which are not easily perceived from within it.

To speak of weak interconnections in the city only sounds credible, if one is situated on the periphery of the subject, and if one choses to forget what is strictly 'useful' and 'pragmatic'. In a milieu where everyday matters do not fall into the category of 'important' or 'fundamental' (e.g. the need for infrastructure, pollution, segregation, transportation...), the 'weak' may seem secondary or banal. It is difficult to realise from the daily life perspective, the extent to which social actions, exchanges or information actually build the network which will determine that space of emergencies. What we call city, becomes the habitable space. At orbitally scaled complexity levels, the

'direct', 'useful' and pragmatic – the short road to things – is not always able to solve the new challenges faced. It is in the 'natural' complexity of invisible behaviours and networks established among the inhabitants, where one can rest – if at all – and live in such a complex environment; the possibility of this urban environment to become inhabited.

In order to be able to distance oneself from everyday life, different methods can be used, one of which is to 'surround it': A spiral approach to research always seems to be a good way to observe and study. Another way is 'from the outside'. In this case, from thought and artistic action. Both seem appropriate strategies for the next chapters, but always without losing sight of the ultimate objective: architecture and the city.

The following texts, thus try to be attentive observations of specific thoughts, which coincide in their expression to urban or architectural realities. Without trying to look for cause and effect relationships. One cannot speak of a linear chronology between them. One cannot say outright, that architecture trailed behind the idea of weak thought, especially since some resolute architects articulated it sometime before, even without naming it. The same happens with performance artists; occasionally they were visionaries, and many others, great seismographers of what was happening in the city at the time.

In the chapters to follow, this peripheral and spiral approach is sought; the difficulty lies in not losing sight of the focus of this research. In this field, a straight approach through first impressions is unfounded; it would fall into the obvious. It is better to understand the process in the last decades and the ultimate aim in their different proposals.

movement, walk and drift
Movement serves for us to comprehend space. It fact it tells us, much more than stillness. Movement however also constructs the city, as we saw in Guy Debord's *Theory of the Dérive*.

But this drift is not unique to the Situationists, it also belongs to the always-evocative Baudelairean flâneur or the participants experiencing Claude Parent's *oblique angle*. Lastly, it even belongs in the construction of the most Lefebvrian way: produced

by "*thought and action*"[5]; actions of all types including simple walking or simple encounters.

The beauty of walking in the urban landscape can never be lineal or continuous but instead is erratic and predisposes to embrace events of all types.

Michel De Certeau's 'practice of everyday', for example, demands and proposes transgressing the dogmatic determined use of cities. Transgressing it through knowledge that is unique and personal, since only through the personal gaze one can make sense of the discontinuities of the city. It is the notion of the Infrathin applied to the discontinuities of the city.

Therefore, moving in the city as proposed by these thinkers and artists could no-longer take place in a pre-determined and planned manner, but instead drifters and flâneurs would configure the space indeterminably ad hoc.

Suddenly the urban landscape becomes a place of disorientation and getting lost. One can no longer move in the normal parameters of the city. The city becomes a field for experimentation for art and architecture and in particular experimentation through movement.

blurred boundaries and contours

The threshold is particularly essential in the context of this thesis since it will serve to research the in-between as a place where the invisible, the non-determined and weak inhabit.

The threshold is understood as the gap where transformations, shifts, tensions, interactions or continuities inevitably occur. It is the space where Duchamp's notion of the Infrathin offers elucidation. But it is also the space where weak interventions and actions appear more comfortably.

Dogmatisms tend to be non-gradient, polar, boolean, or binary in opposition to fuzzy logic. The relation to others and to context does not often allow for nuances. Closed systems or rigid structures do not create spaces of negotiation between them. However, as soon as this changes and systems open up, whole new relationships

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5   Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, UK Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1991), p. 26.

begin to flourish. An amazing constellation of possibilities and scales emerge which occupy this intermediate space. For this reason Aldo Van Eyck's threshold seems ever more fundamental in this light.

The result of this aperture in architecture and cities often indicate the transformed social interactions but also has a physical implication produced precisely by the social. A city can become more fragmented, weakening impenetrable boundaries and in some cases also dissolving them. Cities loose their centre-oriented order and become expansions with no clear formal definition or structure. Under an apparent disorder they have opened up to the process of entropy described along the thesis.

These changes do not only take place in the augmented scale of the city, but also between private and public space or for example in relationship to context.

fragility, desobjectalisation and disappearance
Art radically changed with conceptual art opening the field of al sorts of arts, such as performance, land-art, process art and many others. This had two consequences: on one hand artists were no longer working solely for traditional galleries and museum spaces and on the other hand, the art object was no longer envisioned as a final product.

The latter is a profound shift in paradigm and, of course, could be applied to any of the creative processes. In fact, as this thesis will prove 'desobjectalisation', became entrenched also in architecture and urbanism. Moreover, 'desobjectalisation' has essentially become yet another symptom of the entropic process.

Another extremely relevant topic appearing as a consequence of this shift of paradigm is the understanding that the artistic work could only belong as part of a larger process. Thus not stand alone as an independent piece, and instead belong to a system or a thread.

The implications of this new approach to the project, having been artistic or architectural, provided the realm for the ephemeral, the event, the invisible and the incorporeal. In the search for these to become traceless or 'impresent'.

Lastly as much as the pieces themselves tended to disappearance the authorship was also diluting. Much in the lines of Roland Barthes notions of the death of the

author understood as a God supervising but also as a way of letting the readers, audience or inhabitants give meaning to the pieces. Furthermore even becoming participatory processes. It is here that we appreciate the relation to our times. How this participatory or democratic productivity has an interest to us.

unbalancing system, event and indeterminacy

Indeterminacy has become a sign of our time, an expression even of the growing complexity in our computer age. Part of it is to be attributed precisely to this interest in computer advances in order to handle more complex orders.

Indeterminacy is also a contingent demand for social changes which began in the late fifties climaxing in May 68 and still being felt nowadays. These social demands particularly centred in and around freedom. Freedom of all sorts which included movement, uses, channels of expression, etc..

In the context of the Situationists indeterminacy is essential to a sporadic and eventful existence. It is the cause of the event, the happening and the accident, but is also meant to search for a degree of instability which could become co-producers of life and infinite number of realities.

For architecture and urbanism it means a new way of permitting open systems, in which to provide for shifting environments and multiplying possibilities or options. New configurations which allow for flexibility, non-linearity, contingency, individualism and transformability are created for a more complex and connected society. These systems can be developed through very different projects or proposals from nomadism to frameworks.

non-plan, non-design, no-center, non-place, etc.

The words in the title offer more than the negation of something; in fact they are reflections of a renewed understanding or a seismographic analysis in the case of Robert Smithson.

In some cases these words address the role of disciplinary approaches and in others the intention of weakening the architecture and urbanism itself. In the first case it is through an initial negation or questioning of the dogmatic approaches by discipline. In the second case the weakening of architecture through disappearance or in finding architecture outside the built environment.

There is also a process which is beyond discipline, a process that in physics is extremely clear but can also be detected in Architecture and that is of entropy. A principle that, outside thermodynamics, has a profound implication in understanding the transformation of architecture through time and discourse.

Only in the opening of the system entropy is produced. Entropy establishes the playing field for discontinuities and indeterminacies, through fragmentation and disorder. And it is precisely in these interstitials between the fragmented and disordered that the Infrathin persuasively lies. The Infrathin gives sense to this apparent disorder and invisibly holds our cities together. Just as we saw at the beginning of this introduction, Isozaki explained the substance of a city are abstract ideas and therefore resilient to destruction. These ideas or what we term Infrathin throughout this thesis is the abstraction and understanding needed even when the entropic process has fragmented and disordered the city and when boundaries are no longer required.

fig. 04.   Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Morphologie City Metaphors* (1976)
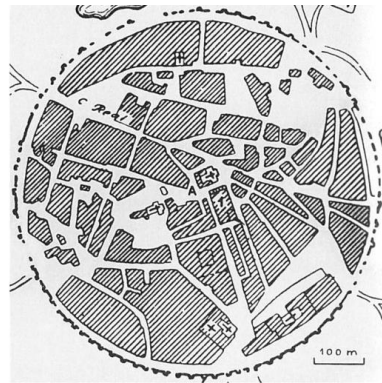
Encirclement

Einkreisung

01.   *personal approach and methodology*

"I have precisely chosen to use the word "thin" which is an emotional and human term and not a precise laboratory measurement. The sound or the music made by corduroy pants rubbing as you walk is related to the concept of infra -thin. The gap between the two sides of a sheet of paper… To be studied!… This topic has preoccupied me for the past ten years. I believe that through the infra-thin it is possible to move from the second to the third dimension." [6]

Each chapter of this thesis touches a unique aspect from numerous perspectives. It establishes relationships not yet voiced between architectural works and performances of a same era. Moving in a space of indetermination or suggestiveness in which, the connections between the architectural postulates and the performative actions occur without needing to be evident. Trying to discover in each example what is close to the invisible, or to the infrathin. An unexpected aspect, an imperceptible detail that nonetheless gives meaning to a piece.

By putting ideas of different origins side by side, sometimes juxtaposing them, in other cases by simple contiguity, the game of Deleuze's 'plateaus', – that of emergencies and of the hidden connections that suddenly become visible – is thereby established.

This thesis, in its approach, tries to transcend a recompilation of merely historical data, opposing ideas and actions of different origin, analysing the emergencies that of this tendentious analysis occur and that certainly, obey to the invisible bonds that can always to be detected between the creation and the creators of a same period.

The approach to this thesis starts by keeping Andrew Pickerty words in *Representation and Performativity* in mind, where he expresses the need to reassess scientific practice. He believes that science cannot only be a representational result of observation, but necessarily needs to account for the powers of materials, relationship between objects, transformations and so forth. Science must then, respond to those 'agencies'. The response forcibly needs to be a performative response, in other words an action.[7]

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[6] Marcel Duchamp and Paul Matisse, *Marcel Duchamp, Notes* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983).
"J'ai choisi exprès le mot mince qui est un mot humain et affectif et non une mesure précise de laboratoire. Le bruit ou la musique faits par un pantalon de velours côtelé comme celui ci quand on le fait bouger est lié au concept d'inframince. Le creux dans le papier entre le recto et le verso d'une fine feuille… A étudier !…C'est une catégorie dont je me suis beaucoup occupé pendant ces dix dernières années. Je pense qu'au travers de l'inframince, il est possible d'aller de la seconde à la troisième dimension".
Ibid.
[7] Andrew Pickering, *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Science* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 5-9.

The objective pursued by this methodology is to discover the transcendental in the un-transcendental, the importance in the invisible. Can we imagine a greater transformation than the one produced by Internet, the most insubstantial and invisible network? This could be an example, but there are many others in the city and in architecture. From the sixties onwards, in these fields and in art, there is a constant probe in the borders of the invisible, in spaces or in tensed bodies, the limits or their dilution, in contours that dissolve or even in the "aesthetic of disappearance"[8].

Everything has a limit and this thesis wants to be and move in that limit. Even in the title the limit can be found; the limit of the finest, the weakest, the subtlest. The essence of this thesis is in that limit.

It seems paradoxical to consider describing the indescriptible. Is some ways this is the forthcoming endeavour with this thesis. Or at least dig into it.

Each chapter of this thesis is, none the least, preceded by one of Duchamp's examples, inasmuch it delineates the process structuring the topics investigated in it. Hence, it is through the use of examples that this thesis will make visible the invisible.

For this task, and being coherent with the methodology described, a series of actions were taken.

First it seemed extremely useful for this research to be in an environment where one could access a great amount of cross-disciplinary documentation. There are probably a very small number of places which have a comparable research ambience and such a large collection of architecture and art as Harvard has. It also offered the appropriate environment of contemporary insights into urbanism offering a great variety of interesting lectures on the subject. As per the access to knowledge, Krzysztof Wodiczko (performance Artist) and Michael Hays (Architectural Critic and History and Theory Professor) provided great theoretical insights which helped along this thesis.

Peter Cook, was teaching a Unit there that semester; this offered a precious opportunity to have one of the main players and witnesses from the ambiance of those years and that shaped the origin of this thesis. He agreed to be interviewed and recorded for this research (see annexes). It was an interesting opportunity to get a

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8   Titel of Virilio's book *Paul Virilio, The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 1991 ed. (Semiotext(e), 2009).

different insight into Archigram not too dissimilar to the one offered by David Greene years earlier when the author of this thesis was doing her Postgraduate Diploma in Architecture in London.

A great part of the research also relied on the research at the Cedric Price's and Gordon Matta-Clark's archives, both located at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA). It not only served to feel, see and appreciate the work of both architects but it helped understand the context of their work either through letters to other artists or architects or, in general, their approach to work.

Finally, perhaps due to the very spirit of the thesis, there was an opportunity for a small investigation in the performative fields, which had a fantastic result thanks to the enthusiastic collaboration of the artists and architects consulted. A small mail art in the form of a questionnaire was sent to several architects and artists (see annexes). The 'questionnaire' consisted of a single question: *What is fragile about the contemporary city?* The aim was to understand this research in relationship to contemporary views about the urban territory. This investigation remains open and yet more cards will be sent out to many of the artists, architects and thinkers who have been studied within this research. Ten postcards have been sent out so far.

Part of an article written about the fragmented contemporary city has been included in a subchapter of this introduction further down. The article is called: The Progressive "Disorder" of the Urban and the Emergence of a Constellation of Subjectivities.

Previous to initiating this specific research, the author, worked on urban installations and conceptual projects with the help of artists. Undoubtedly this has influenced and helped to focus this research in the convergence of disciplines. The annexes include some images of the panels presented to the competitions and the conceptual framework of these projects.

The thesis has relied on a very large number of sources. It is therefore very challenging to identify specific sources or researches which have preceded this study. It was with this in mind that it seemed to make more sense to explain some of the initial concepts which the thesis relied upon. The following subchapter, 'some preliminary concepts: weak thought / performance art / historical context and its trace in the contemporary city' will also try to explain the historical and physical context in which this thesis has been set.

02.   *some preliminary concepts: weak thought / performance art / historical context and its trace in the contemporary city*

"The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis, and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past, with its preponderance of dead men ... the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein."[9]

structures of 'weak' connections in thought

There is quite a bit written about the weak or the fragile, as well as about indeterminacy or uncertainty. These fields became the basis and foundations of this thesis in what was already formulated by thinkers, especially from the seventies onwards. These ideas were not always prior to the artistic and architectural movements, sometimes these thinkers identified or recognized changes that had occurred earlier. It is often the sum of projects or actions that shows a common ground, concern or a collective feeling: this 'magical thing' that brings together artists, architects and thinkers.

One of the transversal lines of this thesis is the notion of 'the weak'.

"This is the force of weakness. That which art and architecture are capable of producing precisely when they are neither aggressive nor domineering, but rather tangential and weak."[10]

In *Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought* one of the essays in the anthology *Weak Thought* edited by Gianni Vattimo and Pier Aldo Rovatti in 1983, Vattimo put forward a concept already anticipated in The Adventure of Difference[11], which was written slightly earlier in 1980. Here, he already speaks about "de-grounding", which means starting to destabilize and debilitate dogmas inherent in any discipline. Vattimo thus acts as a seismographer and captures the spirit, the weakening of dogmas and opening of systems, that were so characteristic of the second modernity.

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9   This text, entitled "Des Espace Autres," was the basis of a lecture given by Michel Foucault in March 1967. Although not reviewed for publication by the author and thus not part of the official corpus of his work, the manuscript was released into the public domain for an exhibition in Berlin shortly before Michel Foucault's death. Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec.
     Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité, no. October 1984 (1967).
10   Ignasi de Solà-Morales i Rubió, "Arquitectura Débil = Weak Architecture," Quaderns d'arquitectura i urbanisme 175(1987): p. 14.
     "Es la fuerza de la debilidad. Aquello que el arte y la arquitectura son capaces de producir precisamente cuando no se presentan agresivas y dominantes, sino tangenciales y débiles"
11   Gianni Vattimo, Pierre Aldo Rovatti, and Peter Carravetta, Weak Thought, 1st edition 1983 ed. (State University of New York Press, 2012).

He determines that Weak Thought dilutes power, in a broad sense. This weakening of power in terms of politics or any hierarchical power structure is evident and reflects the social drift that culminated in May 68. This insurgency, which he calls "*non-bleeding anarchy*"[12], is a form of emancipation and quest for freedom of the individual. This social demand, for Vattimo, should not try to transfer power to the people generically, like communism say, but instead to the individual, through the encouragement of individual freedom.

fig. 05. Situationists and the Beach, *Beneath the Paving Stones* (May 1968)

fig. 06. *Sous les Pavés, la Plage*, slogan by Bernard Cousin (May 1968)

"*Now that God is dead, we wish that many gods may live. We want to move freely, without any classical 'roundness', among many canons, among many styles – of clothing, life, art, ethics - living as a true ethical and religious duty, 'thlipsis', the torment of multiplicity*"[13]

Vattimo no longer sees patterns applied to society since it is composed of multiple subjectivities or multiple rationalities. There is no longer just one reason; or logic hence the need to free or remove strong categories, norms or dogmas. He believed that liberating oneself of universal truths or thoughts makes the human being stronger and freer.

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12 Gianni Vattimo interviewed by Carmelo MartínGianni Vattimo, "Vattimo: "El Pensamiento Débil Es Una Forma De Anarquía No Sangrante","" El País.

13 "Ahora que Dios está muerto, queremos que vivan muchos dioses. Queremos movernos libremente, mas sin ninguna 'redondez' clásica, entre muchos cánones, entre muchos estilos – de ropa, de vida, de arte, de ética – viviendo como un auténtico deber ético y religioso la 'thlipsis', el tormento de la multiplicidad" This uote makes reference to Nietsche's The Death of God
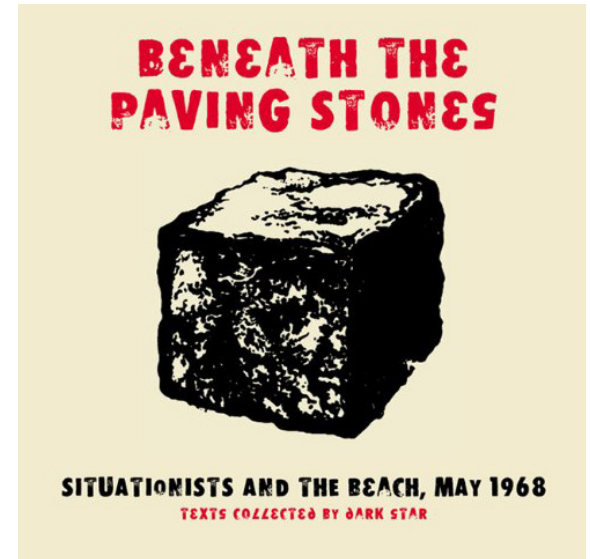
This move from strong thought to weak thought, he believed, is correlated with the transition between modernity and postmodernity. In architecture this shift seems to be sandwiched between the Situationists of the late fifties and the postmodernists that returned to the foundational, as Ignasi Solà-Morales i Rubió explains and develops further. Solà-Morales was interested in understanding Vattimo's weak in relation to architecture.

For him the event occurred at the intersection between the object and the subject, or in other words as an experience of a place and time.

"The crisis of thought in the Classical Age, as Foucault would call it, is the crisis produced by this loss of foundations and also, in the field of art, the loss of artistic projects based on a desire for representation."[14]

Solà-Morales detects the impossibility of closed finished products in a global system. He argues the same is true for art and architecture. He believes that the shift arrives with the modern movement. This thesis attempts to be more specific and pinpoint this moment in the second modernity.

The city as a system starts opening and begins relating to other systems. Thus the process of fragmentation begins. Fragmentation for Solà-Morales produces a broader understanding of what he terms "reality" or superimposed readings.

"This way of thinking developed in the field of philosophy and the humanities, clearly has a counterpart in the experience of the production of form, and therefore also in architectural form. Indeed the experience of some recent architecture is the experience of superimposition. The significance is not constructed through an order but by means of parts that may touch each other; which approach each other but never meet; which are superimposed, which appear in a temporal discontinuity whose interpretation as a juxtaposition is the best approach we can make to reality."[15]

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14 Gianni Vatimo interviewed by Carmelo Martín"El Pensamiento De Vattimo," http://www.filosofico.net/
     vattimospagn.htm.
     "La crisis del pensamiento de la Edad Clásica, como la llamaría Foucault, es la crisis producida por esta
     pérdida de fundamento y, también, por la pérdida, en el campo del arte, de un proyecto artístico que se
     producía desde un propósito de representación."
15 Solà-Morales i Rubió, "Arquitectura Débil = Weak Architecture," p.4.
     Este modo de pensar que se desarrolla en el campo filosófico y de las humanidades tiene ciertamente
     una traducción bien clara en la experiencia de la producción de la forma, y por tanto, también de la
     forma arquitectónica. Porque, efectivamente, la experiencia de ciertas arquitecturas recientes es la
     experiencia de la superposición. El significado no se construye a través de un orden sino a través de piezas
     que acaban tal vez tocándose; que se acercan, a veces sin tocarse; que se aproximan sin llegar nunca
     a encontrarse; que se superponen, que se nos ofrecen en una discontinuidad en el tiempo cuya lectura
     como yuxtaposición es la mejor aproximación que nos es posible dar de la realidad.

However, the crucial point Solà-Morales makes is about discontinuous time or periods of time. He understands that time is no longer sequential but can consist of overlapping times. Initially, he argues, times or periods could be cathegorized in 'movements' such as DADA, Futurism, Cubism, etc. but as the century progresses these erasperiods become more diversified, becoming what he calls "*weak*" and overlapping. The discontinuity time he is describing 'is the ephemeral event'. That can occur anywhere anytime, becoming a question of "*chance*" "*guided by coincidence*"[16]. He explains this idea with an example that is in fact very close to this thesis; he sees these events as performative acts (he mentions dance, theatre, music and installations).

Finally, another interesting author in relation to this thesis (even though his texts are well into the last decade of the 20th century), is Nicolas Bourriaud, who with his texts *Relational Aesthetics*, manages to encapsulate a series of thoughts that later added up to his curatorial work. It comes across a as a summary of thought by other thinkers also mentioned throughout this thesis.

"The setting is widening; after the isolated object, it can now embrace the whole scene: the form of Gordon Matta-Clark or Dan Graham's work cannot be reduced to the "things" those two artists "produce"; it is not the simple secondary effects of a composition, as the formalistic aesthetic would like to advance, but the principle acting as a trajectory evolving through signs, objects, forms, gestures ... The contemporary artwork's form is spreading out from its material form: it is a linking element, a principle of dynamic agglutination. An artwork is a dot on a line." [17]

Bourriaud shares with other thinkers and artists an interest in emphasizing, process, openness and participatory actions. He sums up other notions such as the multiplicity of subjectivities by Roland Barthes or de Certau's *Practice of Everyday Life*.

"Art is a state of encounter." [18]

Relational art, what Bourriaud called the exhibition he curated, was not too dissimilar to performance art. It is mainly about interpersonal interaction through "*normal encounters*" such as eating[19]. His aim is to study the relationship of "*social relations*" and artistic production.

fig. 07.   Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Untitled* (1992)

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16 Ibid., p.11.
17 Ibid., p. 12.
18 Nicolas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics (Dijon: Presses du reel, 2002), p.18.
19 A similar project, many years earlier, was the restaurant founded by Gordon Matta-Clark, Caroline Goodden and other members of the Anarchitecture group, that became known as the performance Food (1971).

What makes his line of thought slightly different however, is that he attributes these actions, or as Guattari called them thirty years earlier "*microscopic attempts*"[20], of great transformative powers. Thus viewing artistic actions as "*learning to inhabit*"[21] or the transformative tools.

"Today's fight for modernity is being waged in the same terms as yesterday's, barring the fact that the avant-garde has stopped patrolling like some scout, the troop having come to a cautious standstill around a bivouac of certainties. Art was intended to prepare and announce a future world: today it is modelling possible universes." [22]

Bourriad simply adds to the ideas of other thinkers such as Vattimo or Solà-Morales that give more importance to the weak than the strong; in their understanding it can be truly transformative.

Downtown Soho / Fluxus / Happenings / Performance Art
Much of the work that will be discussed along this thesis has been chosen in relation to a specific time and a place.

This area in New York City during the bidacade of the sixties and seventies has been chosen not only because it is the epicentre for performance art but also because the artistic production taking place at that moment managed to take over and transform a large part of the city.

Early on, these artistic movements of that period occupied the interstices, abandoned spaces, the facades or even the rooftops of the city as a channel for social demands and actions of that historic moment.

Manhattan's downtown became one of the first urban renewals begun by the artist community on the other side of the Atlantic. The area known as Soho in NYC was locally nicknamed "*Hell's Hundred Acres*", namely because if its proneness to fire. The artists attracted by the large industrial spaces that lay empty and derelict found it attractive to convert them into their dance studios, workshops, galleries and even apartments. They lived in these spaces by either paying very low rents, for free or sometimes by just occupying them even without the owners' permission.

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20   Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics, p. 18.
21   Felix Guattari cited in ibid., p. 31.
22   Ibid., p.13.

Zoning laws were in place prohibiting anything that was not industrial use; some asked for planning permission calling their work light manufacturing, however it was against regulation to live in non-residential buildings. As pressure mounted to legalize the large number of lofts occupied by these artists the City passed what came to be known as the Loft Law. It was not until 1976 that the city reorganized the zoning map adapting it to the down towns reality.

As Ulrich Eckhardt and Werner Düttmann describe in Downtown Manhattan, Soho these artists, through living in these areas, were forced to look at the urban problems of their immediate environment[23]. In truth that awareness became a characteristic of their artistic work.

The influx of artists began in the mid 50's, starting in Greenwich Village and slowly filtering south into Soho, following such relevant figures as Marcel Duchamp (who moved to Greenwich Village in 1942) or John Cage (also settling in Greenwich Village in 1942).

Nonetheless, one of the most important moving-ins was that of the Fluxus Headquarters in Soho (359 Canal St, New York) headed by Maciunas. He was considered the "godfather" of Soho. Following the drip of artists colonising the area, also were, of course, the galleries. The galleries were mainly off-stream.

It is precisely the structure of the neighbourhood with its lofts that allowed for all types of performances and installations away from the theatres or the museums. Being congregated in a specific area, artists could share and work collectively and often crossed mediums, expanding their artistic explorations into other fields. The main art currents originating out of Soho were happenings, video art, performance and conceptual art in general. Some of the most well-known figures of the Fluxus movement were Nam June Paik, with his Video Installations, Joseph Beuys, who was working both in Europe and in the US, Yoko Ono, Wolf Vostell and George Brecht, amongst others.

fig. 08.   Fluxus, George Maciunas, *Manifesto* (1963)

23 Simon Bayly commenting on Psychoanalysis and Performance, ed. Patrick Campbell and Adrian Kear (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

Much of Fluxus' influence, many argue, came from the Gutai Group, and later on many Japanese artists arriving from Japan installed themselves in Soho.

Concurrently and overlapping with Fluxus were the Happenings. Allan Kaprow first coined the term Happenings and was also probably the most prolific organizer of these events. Happenings were not so much an investigation into something specific, but more like an investigation into everything and nothing in one go.

Happenings were an event that was often unscripted, promoting the audience's interaction and was usually 'performed' by a larger group of people.

"It follows that audiences should be eliminated entirely. All the elements - people, space, the particular materials and character of the environment, time - can in this way be integrated. And the last shred of theatrical convention disappears."[24]

Sometimes Happenings were so unscripted they could be confused with extreme orgies, such as Wolf Vostell's *YOU* (1964). People showed up in masses to squirt coloured water in an almost empty swimming pool, except for some typewriters. Some people entered into the swimming pool.

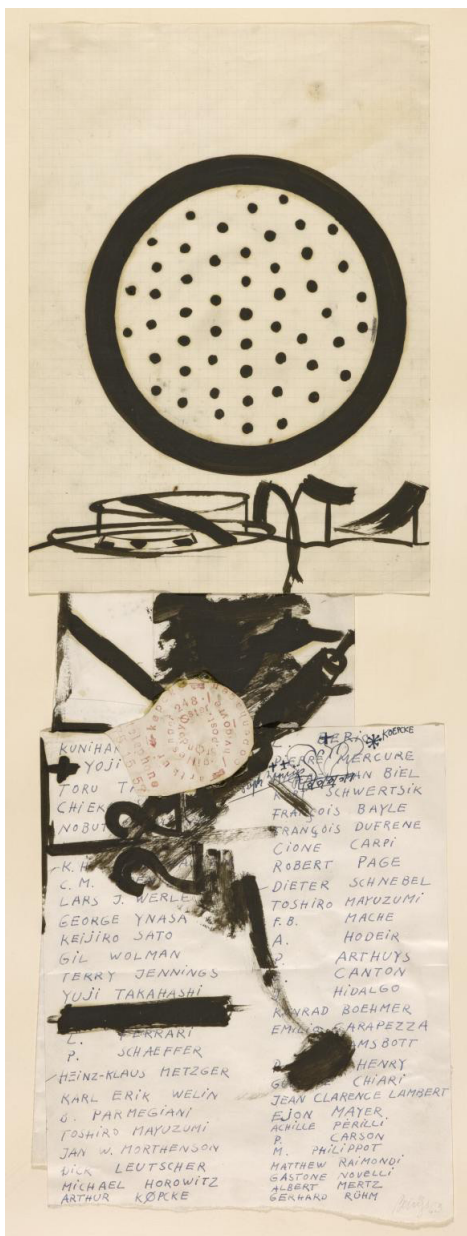**fig. 09.**   Joseph Beuys, *Fluxus-Name List* (1963)
fig. 10. Ben Vautier interpreting George Maciunas. Flux Festival, Fluxhall, New York (1964)

24 René Block, New York, Downtown Manhattan, Soho : Ausstellungen, Theater, Musik, Performance, Video, Film : 5 September Bis 17 Oktober 1976 : [Katalog], ed. Ursula Block, et al., Soho, Downtown Manhattan (Berlin): [Berlin] : Akademie der Künste, [c1976], 1976).

fig. 11.
fig. 12.   Allan Kaprow, *Happenings* (1963)

Sometimes happenings could be one-man shows, but later they started moving into the realm of personal investigations and performance art.

During the seventies performance art exemplifies as just another symptom of the fundamental changes in society during that period. It adheres to the dislocation of art within institutional settings and the socioeconomic situations of the time. Episodes like the Vietnam War, May 1968 or the oil crisis had an important impact on some of the work of these performance artists. To some degree performance art were often political acts. In other cases, the ones interesting us, they were explorations into everyday life, and investigations into the spatial (cities or spaces). But why performance art in relation to architecture?

Richard Sennett asserts that there is a predisposition to comparing qualities and quickly drawing conclusions:

"… there is a danger in applying ideas from one sphere of knowledge to another. We may imagine that the insights of one domain can solve problems in another; this sort of application-thinking neglects the fact that something happens to the knowledge in the process of crossing borders."[25]

25   Nick Addamo, "The 10 Latest Trends in Master Planning," http://architizer.com/blog/the-10-latest-trends-in-master-planning/.

It is precisely this discontinuity, what Sennet calls "*crossing borders*", that is interesting to this research. It proves a certain complex network of ideas that are linked by social threads; they appear to be fragmented but in fact they are just part of a complex system of ideas and sociological events.

It becomes clear that it is precisely in the unplanned interstices of the city, where the artists with their actions discover new possibilities. These actions are, therefore, to be found in the margins of spaces, buildings, neighbourhoods, in the urban fabric.

Performance artists use these spaces as their material, just as Landart artists do with Landscape. Undoubtedly, this is linked and embedded in the conceptual, but also sometimes as an intuitive recognition of a new way of living and using the city.

the progressive "disorder" of the urban and the emergence of a constellation of subjectivities.

This eloquent sketch by Cedric Price ends right in the pre-digital era. However, things have changed, and today a new and contingent urban structure consequence, not only of the growing abundance of information GIS (geographical information systems) is beginning to become visible. It is undoubtedly important, specially because it establishes a new way of orienting oneself and the city uses millions of data produced and poured by the users at each moment. The new structure formed by this new mode of using the city does not rest in those 'scrambled eggs'. What appears now is a new image of the city, as a constellation of active and changing emergencies caused by the instantaneous accumulation of individual choices both by journeys as by thousands of citizen's destinations.

Strong urban structures (understood as the ones defined by geometry, hierarchy or infrastructures) served in the past as the basis to arrange, and then to understand cities' complex shapes. The large axes, the relationship between the center and the periphery, between neighborhoods or the relationship between public spaces and the grid, generated (and at the same time sustained) a control which is eminently organizational and often hierarchical of forms. Therefore, its preservation depended on control, as much as the citizen's orientation.

The urban growth by barrage, produced as a result of the industrial revolution, widely overflowed that 'formalisatory' will. At the same time introducing new areas, which
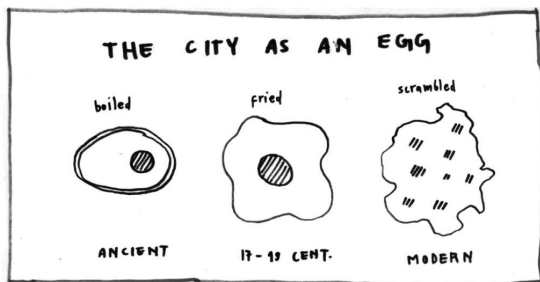

fig. 13.   Cedric Price, The *City as an Egg*.

in the manner of collage and the overlapping of frames, atomized and undermined the previous unitary sense despite the constant efforts 'to order' (synonym even today of 'to plan'). In this progressive complexity, the orientation 'signs' and the understanding of the city are blurred, thus new tools are needed for alternative and more complex information systems. What could not be seen by the bare eye, was replaced by the map, which acting as an artificial abstraction of reality, was able to reveal certain simplified order in this new apparent chaos. Once this new reality was recognized in maps, it became the new manner of representation and a new 'mental construction' of itself.

Already entering into the 20th century, and continuing with the process of the dissolution of the 'strong' forms, the structures became blurred by 'formal pollution' and by the entropic process. Both, the architecture as the configuration of public space, shifted towards a more blurred urban structure. Any geometric purposiveness "*a priori*" lost the ability to arrange complexity, giving rise to the practical impossibility of a holistic understanding of the city, which did not start off from risky, reductive or simplified notions of 'rationalization' (such as zoning).

Ahead of their time, the Situationists' intuition detected this variation in the way of interpreting orientation and the formal structure of the city. Generally artists are seismographers when it comes to perceiving changes.

In the late fifties, the 'Drift' proposed a new way of exploring the city, which went beyond purely formal qualities. This approach lets us deduct that the journey, is not necessarily structured or linear, and therefore offers the possibility to transit the city without pre-established or logical paths, even sometimes unrestrained ones.

Finally, in the contemporary situation, the process of the breakdown of predictable formal structures is intensified. The city is used unconnected from formal parameters and has a random appearance. The paths no-longer follow predefined structures. The uses of a city emerge scattered like a constellation on the cities' ground plan. Surfing above the virtual space, the information reaches global levels and affects all the citizens massively and instantly. GIS information is spread and democratizes. It allows one to travel around the city without relying on its direct knowledge or visible elements of location. Each tour can be built without prior information or memory resources. The information becomes the structure replacing 'form'.

The movements also become more erratic and non-linear, managing to avoid the traditional channels established through planning. The new GIS information allows navigation to be an experience in itself, where movement turns into the discovery of new territories. Continuous flashes of scenarios build the image of the city at different speeds with respect to the predefined by planning. Time is managed with greater precision and even the sequence of the path can be immediately modified.

The current dispersion encountered, caused by instant information and decision-making, affects the global and broad understanding of the city at all levels. The image which the inhabitant makes of reality is no-longer structured in sequences and becomes sprinkled and 'constellar'. The process towards information and a location not dependent on the cities' shape or form is pushed until its limit to the paroxysm. It's a self-reinforcing process: at a greater dissolution form. The need for information becomes greater; thus greater information produces greater dissolution.

The progressive voiding of the center in cities of metropolitan dimension, can serve as an example to explain this phenomenon. It is a fact which has been sensed for decades, but its effect is now being multiplied. The centers, as exceptionally highly provisioned and tensioned places, start to become vacant, engulfed by their own success: congestion makes them difficult attractions. The centripetal force is of such a strength that, paradoxically, the center starts to disappear as such. The suburb then acquires the complicated function previously undertaken by the center. But the question is: How is it done? Sometimes, replacing the center with new magnetisms, by a dispersed multifocality (scrambled eggs by Cedric Price); others, finding alternative ways of dealing with the borders. More recently – and of greater interest – it is achieved by even destroying this multipolarity or focality, making it explode and creating a constelar arrangement of events, more dispersed and unattached, of an almost gaseous organization. This phenomenon is accentuated with the progress of information in real time. It is capable of changing the usual location of its uses, not just to a periphery or to a circle of new polarities, but to a complex and subjective constellation which is hard to appreciate without the new and attractive maps. Maps, which cover all urban surfaces like a foundation platform for all these unforeseen or unpredictable activities. This is a good example of how a new parameter, even when it has no physical presence, as is the case of instant information, is capable of replacing "*strong*" systems of planned urban geometries. It is proof of how the weakest and invisible links can establish new connections which induce new ways of using the city, and therefore of understanding and designing it.

The structure of the city, with all its strong elements, becomes homogenized, dispersed and flat. There are no hierarchical spaces *a priori*. Or center, or periphery, or field. Approaches which are made from Google or the SIG speck the city map in a different way. They do not represent the physical geometry of the actual city; but how it is being used.

Even establishing this new way of using and mapping the city is an important change. Even more so is the exerted impact with which this new perception and direct use has on its configuration; this new freedom and to some extent indeterminacy, builds a map of subjective choices which inevitably predict a new way of planning.

Through the limitlessness of possibilities and the variety of intensities of new actions or interventions, the city becomes increasingly complex. Concepts such as the suburb or the center, orders and geometries or even hierarchies, in fact, getting closer to the concept of the 'continuous city' or the 'no-city' are diluted. They therefore require a reassessment of traditional planning.

Paul Virilio said that the world narrows with speed. And today everything overlaps and happens at the same time. The perception of urban space is built based on possible time scales; speed modifies perception. And if the perception changes, inevitably so does our mental construction of the observed, and consequently of the project.

The digital intercommunication transforms real space. It does not distinguish between cities, the representation is the same for each of them. The approach to the city from space is the same for Rome than for Tokyo. In which case the following question arises: In what way does this interfere in our perception of urban planning, and more so especially, in a homogeneous and globalized urbanism? Does it allow us to approach a 'non-place' or on the contrary, help us discover the invisible city, the city's residents, the personal city...?

Big data and their resulting maps have become the current paradigm of a new vision which subtracts and at the same time distributes the geographical testimony of the planet. It does so by combining images from satellites and maps to provide a plausible image whose information is able to mentally approach someone anywhere in the world. Progressively more data is recorded (there is still a long way to go) transforming itself, not to become an orientation tool, but as an overlapping knowledge or reality; a way of perceiving, and therefore designing the city.
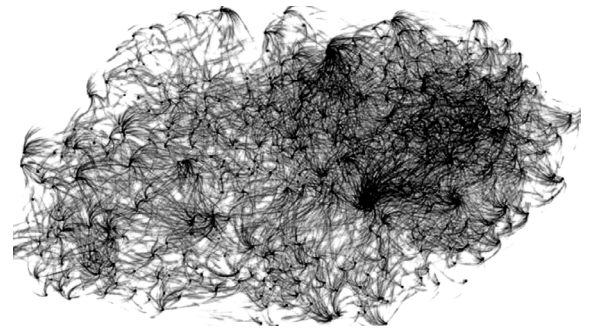
This instant cartography is a powerful information tool. But radical change occurs when it is compounded by the interaction of the user - of the millions of users - whose displacement, choices or activities are recorded on live maps, often in real time. This is no longer information, but it is the project's point of departure.
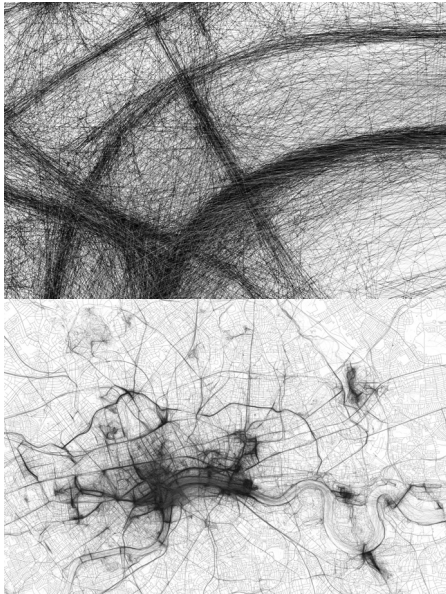
The definition of this new visualization of the city is generated not by one person in particular, but by an accumulation of data. It is a collection of subjectivities; provided in automatic processes by locals and visitors who share information via mobile and other portable technological artifacts.

Sometimes, especially when maps are linked to the traffic's linear space, one can guess that a certain organization or even a certain urban structure is still recognizable. But in general, UBER maps or bike routes build from invisible connections (not always corresponding to the wish for holistic planning), a skein of individual routes whose sum reveals a new urban order in which the matter of the city seems to be more ephemeral or moldable. Sometimes the complexity is even greater. These are cases of greater interest: where the structure of relations among points become visible above the apparent anarchy produced by the homogeneity of the virtual space. In the virtual space all the points of the city have the same importance. They possess the relevance of contingency.

These new relationships between points are invisible or not represented but exist, and often obey to necessary 'transactionalities' for the functioning of the city. Mumbai, for example, is a paradigm of commercial activity based on a functional production system of a chaotic appearance. It is a tremendously productive city thanks to the infinite invisible 'transactionalities' which make up that production fabric.

It is difficult to organize the production system or manage workflows without damaging this fabric and sometimes breaking invisible connections, which have no physical presence. Versus the brutal increase of the transport network (programed by planning) and the development of infrastructures, this type of phenomena anticipates the need to find more sensitive approaches which do not reduce or disrupt the current permeability and 'transactional capacity' of the city and does not hinder the invisible flows existing in the metropolis. This new, more complex reality, is difficult to deal with from a traditional planning standpoint: sometimes 'strong' interventions cut and distort a fabric which works. Informal areas of cities (in the case of Mumbai 40-50% is considered informal settlements) are often not incorporated in

fig. 15.
fig. 16. Eric Fisher, *Geotaggers* (2015)

official records, thus being left out of planning altogether. But these informal cities do appear in the maps produced by internet users, and that is why, the value of this information is transcendent for designing the city.

What then is the role of the architect/urban planner in this internet era? Throughout history moments have emerged in which the need of a discipline that 'orders' our urban and landscape is questioned. The 'non-planners' deeply questioned this need, recognizing that the cities development could be directly in the hands of the society (from a minimum structure). This crisis of the discipline arises when planning processes do not respond or even oppose the current way to use the city, or when the designers' vision is blind to the social changes which are taking place. In short, when the discipline loses its connection with reality due to the lack of an ability to adapt to changing times.

How can we respond with stability and permanency, in this environment of changing society? Isn't it important to work on the subtle, the ephemeral, and the almost imperceptible? The reality which is signaled, represented by internet, a society which is no longer liquid by nature, but effervescent and gaseous, weak, but nevertheless of enormous transformative power. Small forces that can have a great impact.

The difficulty or the challenge of responding is, today more than ever, the approach, criticism, intuition and interpretation of the information which we have. All this is to avoid the digital manipulation of information, the *fake news*. This is sometimes adulterated or manipulated by single or multiple subjectivities; which is easy to do; this is its risk.

In this drift of focuses and distortions in which we move, we produce a perception by points. The user as a 'ciber flaneur', is alien to the real rhythm of the city but manages to transform it through their gaze, defining a constellation of points; a constellation of subjectivities.
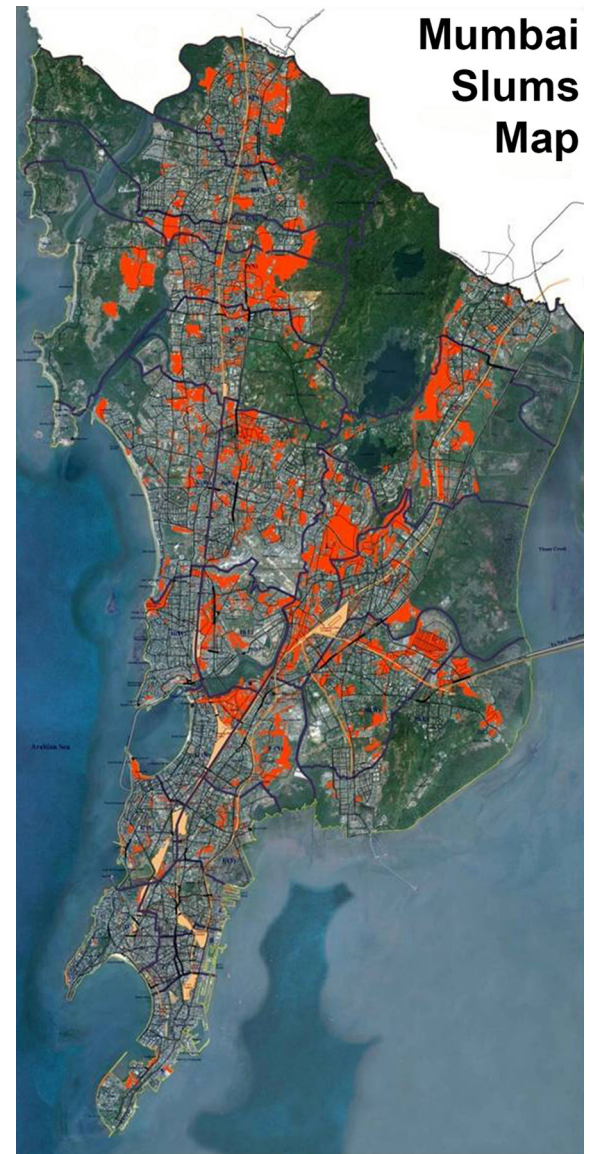
fig. 17.   PK Das, Mapping Another Mumbai (2014)

02] *movement, walk and drift*

9v] *La convention du signe de la flèche produit une réaction infra mince sur le sens de déplacement accepté*

The convention of the direction of the arrow produces an infra-thin reaction on the customary direction of displacement

Since the Baudelaire's *flâneur* first appeared in 1863, walking in the city has sparked a questioning of how one may experience the city. However, it was not until the late fifties that it constantly became part of the theoretical discourse of architects and artists, not just in literary and philosophical writings. It is not that it was not relevant to architectural designs but it was not really questioned in itself.

This questioning was not so much concerned with finding the circulatory structure of cities in traditional terms, but instead it became a search into the insight of weak, sociable strolls and their significance. To use de Certeau's analogy, it was not about viewing the city and its "*immense texturology spread out*" from the top of a skyscraper in New York, but rather to be on the street itself, "*in an urban 'text'*" where the inhabitants of the city "*write without being able to read it*".[25] Just as *the flâneur* of Baudelaire in his walks or de Certeau's assertion, one would experience the city by walking, and therefore this chapter is about the discovery the city through the optics of movement.

This proposition of discovery has been structured in seven parts that correspond to a different notions of movement in the city in each of these parts:

dérive

> The Situationists proposed a new understanding of movement in their theoretical framework and they expressed through their artistic work, how this notion could affect the experience of the everyday in the city. In this context it is interesting to expand or juxtapose their work to other artist's [or artistic fields] such as performance art and in particular the work of Vito Acconci.

the dérive as project

> *New Babylon* serves to embody, through the point of view of one artist, most of the ideas of the Situationists. It is particularly attractive to see how Constant implemented these ideas and once again juxtapose these principles to performance art.

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[25]   Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 3rd ed ed. (Berkeley: Berkeley : University of California Press, 2011), pp. 92-93.

words and mapping to movement

Maps are always a suggestive subject in relation to movement. They reflect more often than not an understanding of movements in the city, but another fascinating subject in relation to maps and movement is language.

structure to movement/disequilibrium

Here the question posed is in what way do movement and structure affect each other. Where is the balance? And how does this affect the understanding of both?

speed / time

Movement is inevitability inseparable from time; therefore, it might seem necessary and unavoidable to look at the relationship between this notion and architectural projects. However how this notion appears is expressed in very different ways or understood differently in architectural terms.

routes, movement and flows

At this point one could conduct an enquiry into how concepts about planning formed or changed during the sixties and seventies. Especially in the sense of how structures evolved from rigid and formal proposals to freer and ad hoc configurations.

movement as methodology and design tool

What happens when movement and choreography is consciously used as a design tool? In this case it seems suitable to look at the trans-disciplinary partnership of Lawrence and Anna Halprin.

Movement implies recognition, thought, mapping, and also socializing. What is intriguing, nonetheless, there seems to be a newfound longing to re-discover and re-write 'known' spaces like the city in terms of setting lost, disoriented and leave the everyday behind. This can be observed throughout the examples in this chapter.

It is also remarkable to see how movement was made visible through mapping and the artistic and architectural works themselves. It appears that through this new way of making movement visible one can value Deleuze and Guattari´s distinction between maps and tracing:

"They compare them by describing the map as a performance where as a tracing "always involves an alleged 'competence'. For me, the map is more open than the tracing. The tracing is much more about trying to capture exactly what something is and being able to recreate it. At the same time, it is hard because the map and the tracing are not meant to be two spectrums with the map being good and the tracing being bad.

[…]

What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation that is in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. […]. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation."[26]

[26]   Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Mil Mesetas: *Capitalismo Y Esquizofrenia*, trans. J.V. Pérez and U. Larraceleta, 2 ed. Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1994 (Paris 1980), introduction.

01. dérive

To juxtapose the principles of the Situationists to the work of some performance artists, and more specifically, those who worked in the Downtown Soho in New York and connecting it to the *Unitary Urbanism* could reveal some interesting connections. It is specially relevant in seeing that the Situationists' principles stuck around for much longer that just a passing movement and affected not only artists but architecture and planning in the longterm.

The Situationists did not only have an important role to play in the European theoretical sphere[27], but also influenced happenings, Fluxus and performance artists in the USA (and also abroad for example Gutai in Japan,).

The most recognizable performance in relation to the Situationists is Vito Acconci's *Following Piece* (1969), which was part of *Street Works IV*[28]. The immediate connection that one makes is of this piece with the Situationists' '*drift*', '*the flaneur*' of Baudelaire (1860´s) or Robert Walser's poetic description in *Der Spaziergang* (1917)[29] or other previous influences[30].

Acconci's piece consisted of following a person during a full day, or as long as they could be followed. He would only stop following this person if they entered a private space, jumped on a bus or if the artist lost the person for other reasons at which point he would choose another subject to follow. The performance lasted a full month following people every single day. The piece was performed throughout New York in a 'random' fashion in the choice of subjects and locations; every morning he would start following someone in a different place altogether.

"My piece, then, was designed to use, potentially all the time allotted [one month], all the space available."[31]

fig. 18.   Vito Acconci, Following Piece (1969)

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[27] The Situationists met the Independent Group of artists in Britain at a forum for avant-garde discussions at the ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts in London). That loosely-formed group was formed by architects, poets, writers, artists and were represented by different … such as Peter and Allison Smithson, Eduardo Paolozzi, Richard Hamilton and many others. Even though the period of the Situationists' membership was short they never disentangled themselves from the institution or from London, holding a conference there later on.

[28] Street Works was a series of events organized by artists in the downtown of New York. Street works IV was sponsored by the Architectural League of New York
Street Works I (March 15, 1969), twenty artists, Street Works II (April18) forty artists, Street Works III (on May 25), Street Works IV (December 1969) seven hundred artists.

[29] Robert Walser, *Der Spaziergang*, Frauenfeld 1917 original ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978).

[30]   The Situationists' drift most probably has its origin in André Breton's and other artists' outings or, as Walter Mehring claims, a Dadaist procession but was truly conceptualized by Ivan Chtcheglov in the "Formulary for a New Urbanism". See page 60-65 Paul Ardenne, *Un Arte Contextual: Creación Artística En Medio Urbano, En Situación, De Intervención, De Participación*, trans. Francoise Mallier, paris 2002. 1 ed. (Cendeac, 2006).

[31] Vito Acconci, *Vito Acconci: A Retrospective, 1969 to 1980* ed. Judith Russi Kirshner and Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago: The Museum of Chicago, 1980), p. 13.

There was a detailed recording of the movements by keeping a written log, yet there were no video recordings and the photographs taken by a contracted photographer were shot at the beginning of some of the followings. The notes exhibited formed part of the exhibition of the collective event *Street Works*.

During *Following*, Acconci walks with no preconceived plan shadowing his subjects while allowing himself to be carried to any particular place or event. Like the Situationists of ten years earlier, Acconci drifts randomly through New York participating in the everyday of this other person. He walks with no apparent urgency following another's pace visiting another reality, in some ways approximating Baudrillards' concept of hyper-reality. Looking at the city through someone else's experiences and understandings, a 'simulacrum' of reality. This idea reminds us of the perception of a city as a tourist through guides, commercial images or novels. The Situationists addressed this idea of subjective points of view by acknowledging that there could exist not only one reality, but rather each time there would be a personal approach, which was close to the idea of how Deleuze and Guattari understood the impossibility of an 'original' reality. Instead, they imagined a constructed reality, of superimpositions recognizing cities for their complexity. Their parallelism to a book explains this idea:

"A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. It is to fabricate a beneficent God to explain geological movements. In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage."[32]

Acconci too, adding layers to the performance, addresses this complexity by 'delocalization' or 'deterriorialization' using Deleuze and Guattari´s term. After each following, he would send his recordings as mail art to a different place establishing another connection, path, sets of events and personal readings of the city. Creating an imaginary map, binding people to places reminiscent of Debord´s collage of fragments in his *Naked City Map* (1957) or even Debord´s desire of visiting another place with the map of another city. By adding layers of understandings or readings one could rediscover a city.

THE NAKED CITY
ILLUSTRATION DE L'HYPOTHÈSE DES PLAQUES
TOURNANTES EN PSYCHOGÉOGRAPHIQUE

G. - E. DEBORD

fig. 19.   Guy Debord, *The Naked City* (1957)

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32   Deleuze and Guattari, *Mil Mesetas: Capitalismo Y Esquizofrenia*, pp. 9-10.

Yoko Ono picks up on this idea in *Map Piece* (1962), where she instructs people to draw a map and pass it on to someone else: "*A Map to Get Lost*"[33]. The following quote by Deleuze and Guattari, much later, exposes the underlying concept of translation, instruction and behavioural observation. Yoko Ono´s piece is important in this context since it merges language to an action, in this case walking. One could nearly venture to call it a 'psychogeographical instruction'.

"There appears a universe in which displacement is affirmed not only as a means of social translation, but also as a psychic fact, as a fictional tool or also as another other name for production."[34]

The second part of the quote includes another interesting point, that of production. Both the historian, writer and art curator Thierry Davila and de Certeau coincide in that through activation and artistic production Locus, or place, is created. It is though this concept of the Drift that the artists shown propose activating and producing the social space in the city.

Another of Acconci's performances that reminds us of the Situationist's concepts is the performance he made on Pier 18 called *Security Zone* (1971). In this piece Acconci lets himself be blindfolded and have his hands tied by an "*untrusted person*"[35]. The artist, who could not swim, entrusts his life to this untrusted person and starts walking in random directions on the pier. Initially he can picture the edges of the platform but as the performance continues he becomes disoriented. Disorientation is to lose orientation which is precisely what makes this performance so interesting in the context of the Situationists. It plays on the same subtle semiotic or conceptual distinction between disorientation and getting lost.

Furthermore, there is another important correspondence since he not only loses his orientation, but also has lost control like a drunken Situationist in a city. He could fall into the water, be shouted at, be held by the 'untrusted person' etc. What is interesting is this profound idea of losing control, which reflects profoundly on the state of letting oneself drift without a concise plan, a state that the Situationists promoted.

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[33] In some places "*A Map to Get Lost*" appears as a subtitle of "Map Piece"
[34] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mil Mesetas: Capitalismo Y Esquizofrenia*, pp. 9-10.
      "Aparece un universo en el que el desplazamiento se afirma no sólo como medio de translacíion social, sino también como un hecho psíquico, como una herramientade ficción o también como el otro nombre de la producción."
[35] Ardenne, *Un Arte Contextual: Creación Artística En Medio Urbano, En Situación, De Intervención, De Participación*, p. 66.

fig. 20.   Vito Acconci, *Security Zone* (1971)

Leaving the work of performance art aside for a moment it is important to understand why losing control is such an essential part of the Situationist's theory. Many authors, including Simon Saddler, believe that the Situationist's concept developed from Jean Paul Sartre´s idea[36] that life is a series of situations over which the individual has no control.[37] What is nontheless clear is that Lefebvre had a special interest in this concept, stressing that "…*everyday life is defined by contradictions; illusion and truth, power and helplessness, the intersection of the sector man controls and the sector he does not control.*"[38]

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[36]   Vito Acconci, "Security Zone 1971," in WhitneyFocus (2014).

[37]   He also argues that that the ideologies of Lefebvre influenced the Situationists and vice versa. Constantly being a founding member of the Situationists International permitted Lefebvre to satellite around the group. Lefebvre was also in close contact to Guy Debord. His influence clearly was noted to such an extent that there existed accusations of plagiarism. Therefore when we talk about the Situationists it is relevant to view it in relationship also with Lefebvre's work, even though he was officially part of the Situationists.

[38]   James Attlee and Lisa Le Feuvre, *Gordon Matta-Clark : The Space Between*, ed. Centre for Contemporary Arts and Architectural Association (Tucson: Nazareli Press,, 2003), p. 26.

Life happened in the interstices of control and the attempt of control, suggests Lefebvre, who also believed that in this contradiction lay the key between boredom and creativity. Hence it was only in the uncontrolled eventful life that people could be creative.

The importance of "*psychogeography*" is often overlooked in the Situationist's work, the importance of "*psychogeography*"[39] being a new approach to geography that explored the "*behavioural*". They understood their work as behavioural experiments and observations but also and more importantly, they viewed their work as an instrument for good planning. Some Situationists, among which the artist Constant[40] reappears, produced projects based on these ideas, but it was also through texts, maps, lectures, and art pieces they believed that through a constructive criticism they could improve urbanism and planning.

"The experimental urbanism that we have to undertake must already be directed toward this goal. It is necessary, as Asger Jorn writes at the end of his essay Image and Form, "to discover new chaotic jungles by way of useless and extravagant experiences." And in issue 8 of Les Lèvres nues, Marcel Mariën declares: "Where reinforced concrete once stood, there will be winding lanes, crossroads, dead-ends. A vague terrain will be the object of all exceptional studies, and can be instituted to aid in the designation of better projects."[41]

They also believed that through this new form of critique they called *Unitary Urbanism*, they would free themselves from the grasps of the powerful and the architectural establishment (in particular Le Corbusier who, in their view, stood for both the powerful and the establishment) and in that planning and projects would again be in the interest of people.

"Unitary Urbanism is opposed to the temporal fixation of cities. It leads instead to the advocacy of a permanent transformation, an accelerated movement of the abandonment and reconstruction of the city in temporal and at times spatial terms. Unitary Urbanism is opposed to the fixation of people at certain points of a city as well."[42]

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[39] Mark Wigley cites them by describing Psychogeography as a "new science" for "the construction of cities and upheaval of the collective unconscious" in, ibid.

[40] It is interesting to note that, Hamilton, Banham and the Smithsons all participated in the Independent Group. Constant first and later Archigram were close to the group and the ICA. (Constant was in London on a grant during the first IG meeting, 1952)

[41] "Constant: New Babylon," (Madrid: Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, 2015).
The letterist International were the direct predecessors of the Situationists.

[42] Internationale Situationniste #3 (December 1959) cited in Ewen Chardronnet, "*The History of Unitary Urbanism and Psychogeography at the Turn of the Sixties*," (Riga Art + Communication Festival, May 2003: The Anarchist Library, 2003).

fig. 21. Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, *Ground Plan of New Babylon over The Hague* (1964)

fig. 22. Luud Schimmelpennik, *Witkar* (1974)

Unitary Urbanism was quite transcendental during the early sixties and inspired activists such as the Provo Group who materialized some of these ideas inspired by the Situationists and Constant´s urban proposals. One of such proposals for example included the first car-sharing system, the Witkar, conceptualized in 1969 and implemented in 1974. Not by coincidence, Constant published his project *New Babylon*, in The Provo Group´s magazine, issue number 4 (1966).

Unitary Urbanism truly began with the Letterist International but was later further developed by the Situationists International. Their focus and the core of Unitarian Urbanism lay within the unidentifiable 'grey zone' between what is at the border of the utilitarian and the ludic.

In relationship to Performance Art it is interesting to observe how performance art translated or participated in these experimental investigations. Some of the Situationist's principles were appropriated and continued by the performance artists and in some cases, as for Matta Clark, it was used as discourse and artistic work by rediscovering the city through the Situationist's methodology.

In this sense, Matta Clark makes a literal appropriation of the Situationist's drifts in two video performances called *Substrait (Underground Dailies)* (1976) and *Sous-Sols de Paris (Paris Underground)* (1977). In both cases, he explores the complexity of the underground constructions in a range of recognizable sites (Grand Central Station, Croton Aqueduct in Highgate, St. Michel, etc.) as well as photographing scenes of tunnels, cellars, crypts, basements, ruins, sewers etc.

"...the next area that interests me is an expedition into the underground: a search for the forgotten spaces left buried under the city either as a historical reserve or as surviving reminders of lost projects and fantasies, such as the famed Phantom Railroad. This activity would include mapping and breaking or digging into these lost foundations: working back into society from beneath. Although the original idea involved possible subversive acts, I am now more interested in the act of search and discovery. This activity should bring art out of the gallery and into the sewers."[43]

It was about the drift, but it was also about the discovery of new spaces and the act of occupying them. As Acconci had done in *Following Piece*, Matta-Clark in *Substrait* establishes a daily routine in which he would explore the undergrounds for the duration of a week. Each day he would project the day's video in the Holly Solomon Gallery. The mapping he refers to in the previous quotation, has no relationship to traditional cartographical mapping, but rather uses collages, charts, and other videos that map the experience. Above all he attempts to register time.

"His projects highlighted such systematizing approaches and aimed to qualify the particular 'truths' they traditionally ushered in, demonstrating their instability by accommodating the apparently chaotic and contradictory."[44]

The places he mapped and their monumentality (large institutions, historic buildings, etc…) try to show a juxtaposing world, 'the grey zone'. In some ways he is exploring the contrary of the everyday, disrupting it, keeping, as Attlee and Le Feuvre defend, the Situationists' imperative of confusion and disorientation.[45] For the Situationists it was about making a critique about the everyday and routine movements within the city. Movements within cities had to become exploration and only that way architecture and urbanism would stop being an "*industry that proliferates suburban and urban boxes as a pretext for ensuring a passive, isolated consumer*"[46].

fig. 23.   Gordon Matta-Clark, *Sous-sol de Paris* (1977)

[43] Gil J. Wolman, "Address by the Lettrist International Delegate to the Alba Conference of September 1956," (1956).

[44] Gordon Matta-Clark cited in: Stephen Walker, *Gordon Matta-Clark: Art, Architecture and the Attack on Modernism* (I.B.Tauris, 2011).

[45] "Baffling Archaeology: The Strange Gravity of Gordon Matta-Clark's Experience-Optics," *Journal of Visual Culture* 2 (2003): p. 162.

[46] Attlee and Le Feuvre, *Gordon Matta-Clark : The Space Between*, p. 30.

fig. 24.   Eduardo Paolozzi, *This Is Tomorrow* (1956)

02.   the dérive as project

…"*only the poet could really know the city; therefore, planning as poesis belonged to the artist, for only the artist could transform everyday life into a practical Utopia…*"[47]

It is difficult to define in someone's work who or what influenced any particular piece. Laura Stamps centres Constant Nieuwenhuys' possible influences in her essay *Pushing the Zeitgeist to Its Limits*[48]. She finds a whole series of interesting connections between artists and thinkers. In the framework of this section of the thesis it seems to be noteworthy to mention just a few: Claude Parent and Nicholas Schöffner´s '*Spacio-Dynamic Art Forms*', Roberto Matta, The Smithsons, Richard Hamilton and in general the Independent Group at the ICA[49] and, in particular, the *This is Tomorrow* (1956) exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery. Another two of Hamilton´s exhibition there, Stamps points out, could have influenced his work since they were designed like a labyrinth, which seems a plausible starting point for *New Babylon*.

"*The labyrinth as a dynamic conception of space, as opposed to static perspective. But also, and above all, the labyrinth as a structure for mental organization and creative method, wanderings and errors, passes and impasses, luminous breakaways and tragic seclusion, in the generalized mobility of the times (more apparent than real), the grand dialectic of open and closed, of solitude and communion*".[50]

Constant´s project, *New Babylon*, developed over eight years from 1959 to 1974, reflects on different issues. He moved from the detail to the planetary scale, from abstraction to some degree of structural indication, from painting to performative installations, but throughout the focus lays on movement.

Mark Wigley notes how at the beginning of his work, Constant only drew movement as trajectory lines without human figures, which only started appearing in his drawings from 1962 onwards[51]. It is a good appreciation, since it reinforces this notion of *New Babylon* truly being conceived around movement and in particular *The Drift*.

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[47]   unknown, "Interview with Gordon Matta-Clark," ed. Internationaal Cultureel Centrum Antwerp (1977).
[48]   Hughes Jonathan and Sadler Simon, *Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* (London: Routledge Ltd, 2013), p. 80.
[49]   "Constant: New Babylon."
[50]   Stamps, Laura, Pushing the Zeitgeist to Its Limits, ibid., pp. 25-26.
[51]   Mark Wigley in Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Situacionistas: Arte, Política, Urbanismo*, ed. L. Andreotti, X. Costa, and Museu d'Art Contemporani (Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona / Actar, 1996).
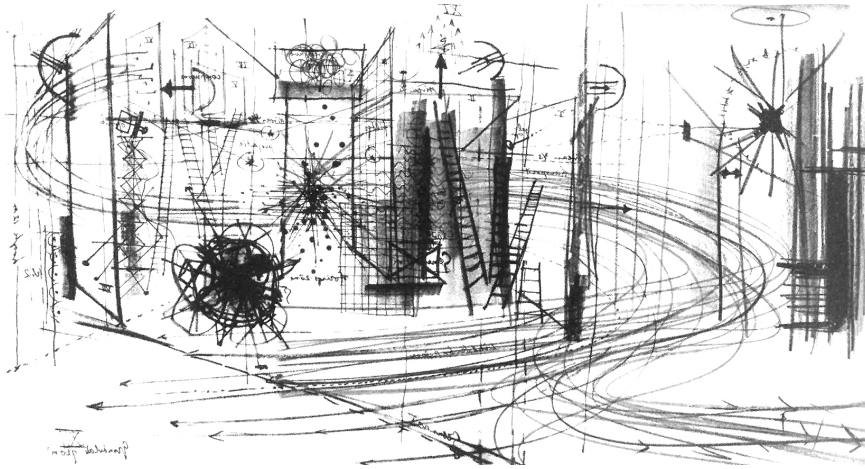
fig. 25.   Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, *New Babylon* (1963)

The artist made many models, paintings, and collages to reflect his idea about a shifting city where one would drift in a collective world of events. This shifting city´s configuration was ephemeral, depending on ambiances rather than function. As Wigley describes the project´s profound shift of paradigm to urbanism and the architectural discipline: "*architecture is no longer the fixed answer to a dense set of questions*"[52].

Constant, like the other Situationists, especially Debord, believed that urbanism had to be a creative act and in turn, good urbanism would facilitate these creative acts. For the Situationists, a productive city would be a creative city; for Constant *New Babylon* was about facilitating creative encounters and disrupting the routine of the everyday.

"To succeed in life is to create and re-create it incessantly. Man can only have a life worthy of himself if he himself creates. When the struggle for existence is no more than a memory, he will be able, for the first time in history, to freely dispose of the whole of his life. He will be able, in complete freedom, to give his existence the form of his desires. Far from remaining passive toward a world in which he is content to adapt himself, for better or worse, to external circumstances, he would aspire to creating another one in which his liberty is realized. In order that he may create his life, it is incumbent on him to create that world. And that creation, like the other, entails the same uninterrupted succession of re-creations."[53]

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[52]   "Constant: New Babylon," p.127.
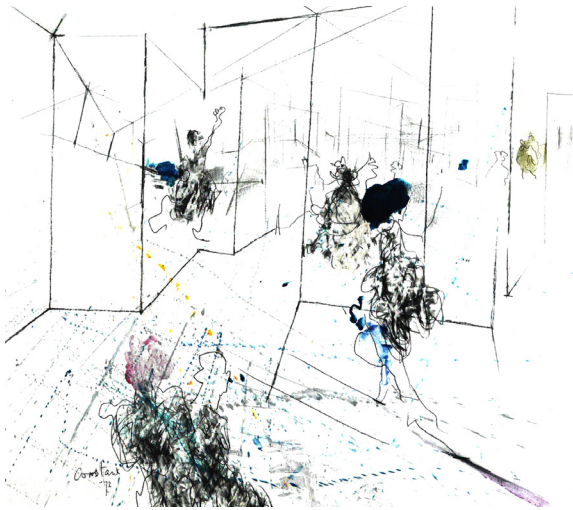[53]   Ibid.

fig. 26.   Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, *Spiegelsaal* (1972)

These encounters could occur in what Aldo van Eyck describes as a threshold, the space *"in-between"*[54]. In this case an enormous and continuous threshold, not just a small comforting zone like in van Eycks' or Herman Hertzbergers idea, but a space in which one would spend most of ones time wandering, and where one could construct ones own reality of the city freely in a permanent nomadic existence. It was no-longer a *"wasted"* space.

"Today´s straying off in such a labyrinth would no longer mean 'getting lost', but simply finding new paths. For, Constant argues, the creative human has an active relationship with the world around him, he wants to intervene, change things, and rather than arranging the space in such a way that he can reach a predetermined destination as quickly as possible, he will make the space increasingly complex and multiply its utilization."[55]

It is in his last year dedicated to the project, in 1974, he finally decides to build a model labyrinth in an exhibition at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague. It is this final piece of a 'performative installation' where he finally wants to materialize his ideas about movement and event.

As we saw, Constant did not use the labyrinth as a formal or compositional tool. Constant, just as Olafur Eliasson nowadays[56], understood architecture as a model for testing a continuum of ideas and concepts. With Constant´s *New Babylon* *"what has been defined is a concept…not its physical form."*[57]
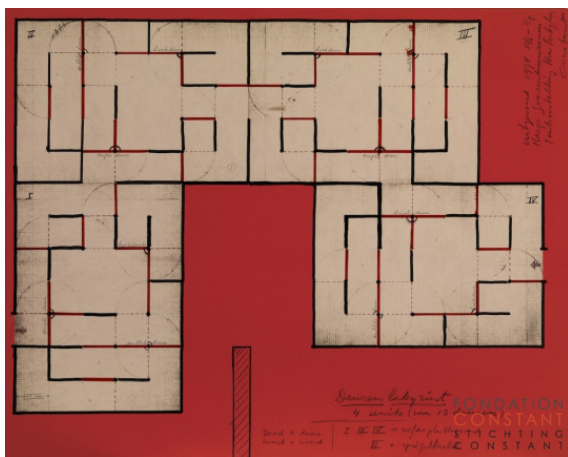

fig. 27.   Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, *Deurenlabyrinth* (1974)

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54   This In-between space is described in another chapter as a place that belongs neither here nor there. It is an undefined space or a space tensioned by objects.
55   G. Kruis cited in Constant Nieuwenhuys, "New Babylon: A Nomadic Town," ed. Haags Gemeentemuseum (The Hague: Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1974).
56   "Constant: New Babylon."
57   Conctant quoted in Olafur Eliasson, *Los Modelos Son Reales / Models Are Real* (Barcelona: Gustavo Glii, 2009).

03. *words and mapping to movement*

Language is fundamentally linked to conceptual art as we all know and the same is true for movement to cartography. This is key in the context of the downtown New York as it was the focus of many of these artists and their work. Some of the work produced, mainly conceptual art, reflected on a new understanding of mapping, one that could no longer be confined to normative conceptions, but instead could register de Certeau's "*rhetoric of walking*" or "*silent grammar*"[58].

It is easy to see how Vito Acconci's literature background strongly influenced some of his work[59], but it is also true that he was amidst many artists fascinated by language, mapping, movement post-Situationists. Most of these artists came from conceptual art such as: Joseph Kosuth, Bruce Nauman, Hannah Weiner, Robert Barry.

Acconci, in his early work, used language for his conceptual pieces and performances. In one of his performances, for example, he randomly placed paper pieces with the letters of the alphabet and picked them up naming locations that would start with that letter. Then he would then visit that location. In another performance Acconci places calls from each public phone booth he found on the way to the gallery. His calls were played out to the audience sitting in the gallery awaiting his poetry reading. He would shout the street name down the line. And in yet another one, called *Move/ Moves (Double Time)* (1969), he "*wanted to make the reading [poem] of the page equivalent to the time it took to walk from one corner to the next corner*"[60]. He did many of these small performances around 1970 that merged names with places. Words were important for him. A poem, for him, was a "*model space, a performance area in miniature or abstract form*".[61]

"What one sees when one looks at geographies is stubbornly simultaneous, but language dictates a sequential succession, a linear flow of sentential statements bound by the most spatial of earthly constraints, the impossibility of two objects (words) occupying the same precise place (as on a page)."[62]

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58   de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.
59   "Constant: New Babylon."
60   Vito Acconci, "Interview by Jeff Rian," Purple Magazine http://purple.fr/magazine/ss-2014-issue-21/vito-acconci/.
61   K. Linker and V. Acconci, *Vito Acconci* (Rizzoli, 1994), p. 15.
62   Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (Verso, 1989), p. 2.

Both language and mapping are significant to us when considering movement in the city. Both forces new readings, revealing invisible layers. These layers not only offer a deeper understanding of a place, but also provide a concept for spatialization.

In other terms, a word on a map, often, has an implied meaning; for example: historic centre can point to its commercial weight. Like a book of instructions a map proposes activities, supplies information, establishes hierarchies and even activates memory. It is this idea that took on in the 60s as a new way of relating to cartographies. Maps were no longer understood as simple information but were starting to be understood for their propositional, suggestive or instructional nature.

Furthermore, for the artist reading a map and then visiting a place was not enough. The map needed to be rewritten and reread in order to practice space[63]. "*Cognitive mapping*", Frederic Jameson explains, "*was meant to have a kind of oxymoronic value and to transcend the limits of mapping altogether*"[64]. Maps needed to record the new realities and visions of these artists and this is precisely what Meredith Monks proposes with her piece *Process Notes on Portable* (1966).

"I started thinking about the idea of residue. Something left behind or coming after a process has ended. [. . .] The past and present in one piece. A map. A map is always used as a guide, a reference before (sometimes during) travel. In this piece, the map would be a continuous process (during the piece) and a residue of the process of the entire piece."[65]

For Meredith Monk, movement had to be recorded. Her performance started by scripting the choreography for a specific place in which she would practice, while another person would simultaneously map her movements with tape on the floor. The result was a map of her movements on the floor of the space she had chosen. For her it was like moving from one materiality (the performative script) to another (the place) and transformed into a trace (the new mapping).

In the same line of using walking as mapping, Rosemary Castoro performs two very suggestive pieces in New York. In one performance for *Street Works III* (1969) she walks about the city with a leaking bucket of paint tracing her movement. In the other, called "*How to make an atoll out of Manhattan Island*" (1969), she unrolls

fig. 28.   Rosemarie Castoro, *Streetworks III* (1969)

63 Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art : Performance, Place, and Documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 103.
64 Frederic Jameson cited in ibid.
65 Meredith Monk cited in Deborah Jowitt, *Meredith Monk* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 18.

an aluminium foil around blocks in an attempt to create an island or map in the downtown.

Either by 'instructions' on a map, the symbolism of words or the mapping of movement these actions try to find the relationship between the manner in which the city is used, how it is produced and the way it is perceived. This newfound gaze onto movement and actions in relationship to words or mapping opened up traditional understandings of cities. Therefore, it is interesting to us as a contemporary approximation and new way of reading, but also in structuring the urban landscape:

"The trajectory is an element that springs from the relationship between the object and the subject. There is, for instance, a trajectory of the body, and of the gaze. And I believe that a future architecture, indifferent to whatever uses it will be put to, will also need to have a 'trajective' conception of space."[66]

This "*trajective conception*" leads to the observation of new layers of urban life. To discover artists' readings and conceptual structures that leave no physical trace, except in a mapping that highlights the importance of free movement over other commonplace coincidences in traditional urbanism.

[66]   Paul Virilio interviewed by Andreas Ruby in 1996 *Virilio Life: Selected Interviews*, ed. John Armitage (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), p.60.

04.   structure to movement / disequilibrium

André Lepecki makes an interesting point when he explains how in Trisha Brown's performances, and in particular, *The Rehearsal* (1971), the suspension system of the performers is of no importance to the performance[67]. It is the constellation of the different dancers that matters; the moment they cross each other, when there is an encounter or a negotiation.

The focus is no longer on the magic of the materiality, the technology used or physical abilities but in the movement itself. If one translates this idea to the city it truly becomes a significant thought.

fig. 29.   Trisha Brown, *The Rehearsal* (1971)

Does a city need structure or is it the actions and movements that make the city? This thought is of course in line with the Situationist's emphasis on The Drift; at the same time it could explain why many architects favoured weaker and weaker structures for their utopic or nomadic proposals.

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67   André Lepecki, "Points of Convergence" (paper presented at the Performance and corporeality, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, 2014).

Going back to Brown´s walks, in this case in the urban context, the piece *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970) portrays a performer walking naturally over a new terrain in the city. Her performances, in contrast to Bruce Nauman´s (as we will see later), were not about testing complex movements and juxtaposing them to space. In her performances she tries to test the space through natural movement.

If you eliminate all those eccentric possibilities that the choreographic imagination can conjure up and just have a person walk down the aisle, then you see movement as activity.[68]

This exploration in understanding space through movement often takes one to conclude that activity is truer than stillness; a place only becomes such when you inhabit it and a public space only exists through social interaction for artist. Actions are implicit for the activation of space and at the same time it offered the possibility to explore new territories in the city. A façade, for example, could become a practical space.

It is in this sense that this newfound idea of movement and new appropriations of terrain could be connected to Claude Parent and Paul Virilio's "*Oblique Plane*" (1963). Under the name of Architecture Principe, the two introduced the idea of oblique plane by imagining what architecture would become if one used inclined walls as a continuation of the inhabitable surface. The walls could become 'experienced' rather than just useful planes for separating space as in Brown´s performance.
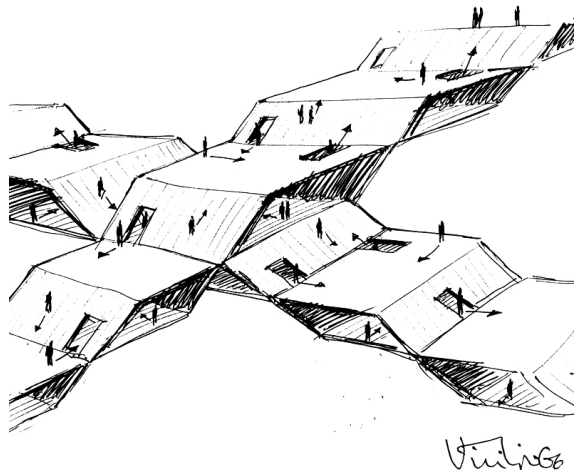
fig. 30. Trisha Brown, *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1971)

fig. 31. Claude Parent and Paul Virilio,*The function of the oblique* (1966)

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[68]   Trisha Brown interviewed by Vito Acconci, *Performance by Artists*, ed. A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto.: Art Metropole, 1979), p. 34.

Parent and Virilio's thesis, however, went a little deeper than this thought; they wanted to juxtapose a new understanding beyond vertical or horizontal urbanism and in direct opposition to Le Corbusier's *Right Angle*. What Group Architecture Principe tried to say was: "*We are going to build topologically*".[69]

"*The idea is to lead architecture and urbanism into the third urban order, to claim that a city can expand both linearly but primarily through topology, through oriented surfaces which allow the ground not to be covered.*"[70]
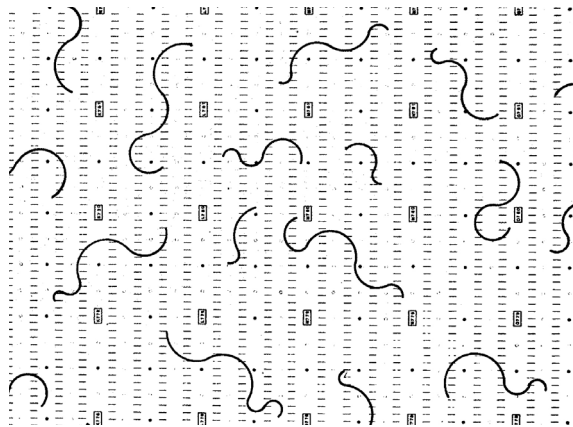
It might be a long shot, but relating it to Deleuze´s and Guattari´s concept of *The smooth and the striated*, it could perhaps materialize the ever-eluding smooth space in architecture.

The smooth and the striated divided urbanism into the following two principles: on one hand a theoretical continuous liquid surface and on the other a striated surface composed of cities, architecture or structuring networks. [71]

The striated can be found anywhere in a city or even the agricultural landscapes; the smooth, however, is much more difficult to find. Only one example comes easily to mind, that of Archizoom and their *Non-Stop City* (1970).

fig. 32. Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, *French pavilion at venice bienale* (1970)

fig. 33. Archizoom Associati, *Non Stop City* (1970)

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[69] Paul Virilio Interview by Enrique Limon, in Sites and Stations: Provisional Utopias: Architecture and Utopia in the Contemporary City, 1996. *Virilio Life: Selected Interviews*, p. 54.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mil Mesetas: Capitalismo Y Esquizofrenia*, pp. 483-510.

However, Architecture Principe's proposal of the oblique plane could theoretically become a smooth space. The oblique plane meant that the surfaces could become continuous, non-interrupted, vectorial and as long as they wouldn´t confine to a grid system, they would be closer to a "*felt*" than a "*woven fabric*"[72]. The proposed theoretical topographical solution could, therefore, be boundless and eventful.

In performance art, the oblique plane was also explored by artists such as Robert Morris. Along with Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown and other artists with a dance background he founded the Judson Dance Theatre. There seems to be a clear line of work between these three artists and the work between Parent and Virilio. There is only one year separating both exhibitions.

Morris' pieces for the Tate included in the exhibition, under his own name *Robert Morris* (1971), had more to do with understanding movement in unstable environments than theoretical thinking about spaces in the city. Nonetheless it helps to prove that some ideas like the oblique plane could become entrenched in the works of artists and become a common artistic field for them.
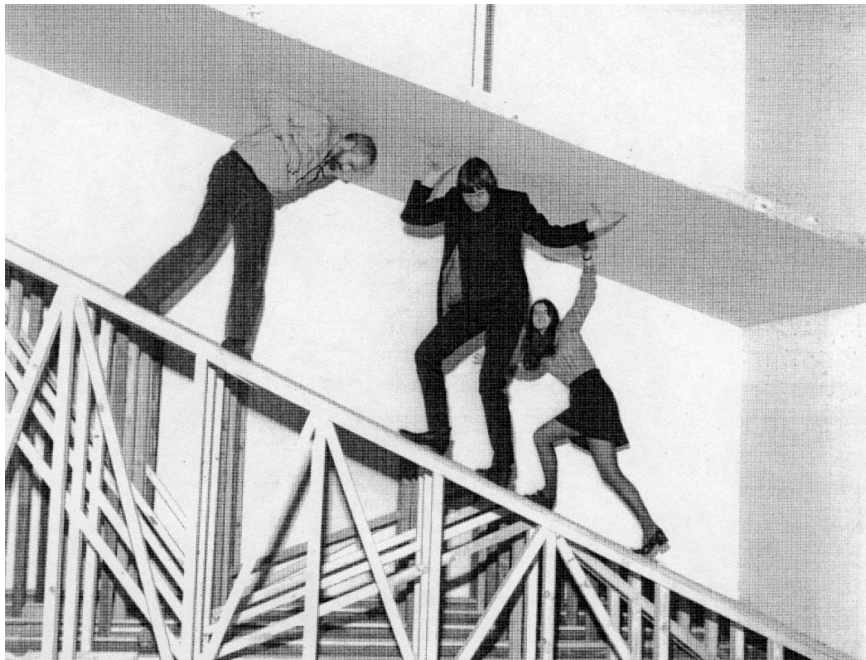
fig. 34.   Robert Morris, *Robert Morris* (1971)

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[72]   Ibid.
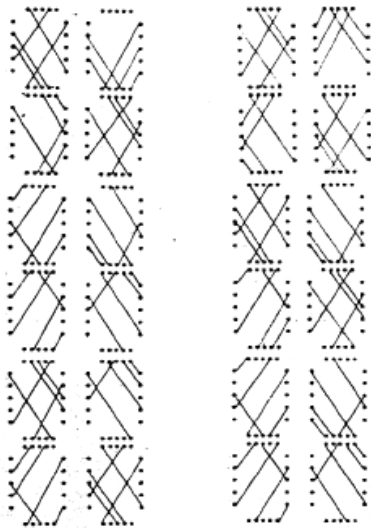
The last piece in relation to the oblique is *Congeries on Edges for 20 Obliques* (1975). This piece does not directly probe the oblique plane, but it is an exploration into movement that is no longer at ninety-degree angles. It appears to agree with Parent and Virilios' understanding that movement could no longer be confined to a single orthogonal structure but could add layers to multiply the possibilities of utilitarian space.

In this piece of Lucinda Childs' *Congeries on Edges for 20 Obliques* five actors move linearly, always keeping at an oblique angle to the room. Since it is a choreographed performance piece, Childs could propose as many possibilities as she could to avoid interference between the performers.

"Thus by adhering to a system which can be applied and re-applied to repetitions of the same sets of movement sequences, the material is continually removed from its original mode of presentation. These dances exist in the time it takes to exhaust the given variables that can be used, without forcing the material outside of its inherent structure in time and space."[73]

Which for many architects and urbanists became an indefinite number of variables and therefore infinite movements and interactions.

"The support structure of the oblique function is a social investiture that can be used for centuries. It adapts to the epidermal mutations of the human species in very short periods of time. It gives way to the true social dimension of architecture."[74]

fig. 35. Lucinda Childs, *Congeries on Edges for 20 Obliques* (1975)
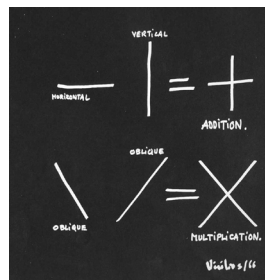
fig. 36. Claude Parent and Paul Virilio ,*The function of the oblique* (1966)

73 RoseLee Goldberg, "Performance: The Art of Notation," Studio International no. 192 (1976).
74 Claude Parent, *Vivir En Lo Oblicuo* [Vivre à l'oblique], ed. Carmen H. Bordas y Moisés Puente, trans. Ramón Faura, París 1970, edición castellana, 1st . ed. (Editorial Gustavo Gili, S.L., 2009), p.54.
"La macroestructura soporte de la function oblicua es una investidura social que puede ser utilizada durante siglos. Se adapta a las mutaciones epidérmicas de la especie humana en lapsos de tiempo muy breves. Da paso a la verdadera dimension social de la arquitectura."

05.   speed / time

"It is absolutely true that space can be measured in at least two ways: one is with a meter and another is with a clock. […]Consequently, I have thought about it with my students and pondered whether it might not be useful to look for some inspiration in the realm of choreography, in the notation of movement, and in the conception of space in terms of time. I believe those established notations like plan, section and elevation have lost their general validity. One should search for a time based notation system that would permit us to factor in the time of the built environment." [75]

It is natural to understand movement as an essential part of trajectory, but it is also important to consider the notion of this basic idea is important for both performance art and architecture; however, in the latter it is rarely notated, mapped or drawn.

"Precisely. This is why I understand speed as an environment. […] Speed is a domain with specific properties. Speed is not simply a matter of time. Speed is also space-time. It is an environment that is defined in equal measure by space and time. In addition, architecture too, whether it is moving or not, is defined by the speed of movements in space." [76]

As in Parent and Virilio's oblique plane, time needs to be understood in terms of its being within a trajectory. Climbing up and down the planes required a different effort each time and therefore also a different measure of time/speed. Virilio argues that cities will shift from space to time, which will mean also acquiring a new consciousness in architecture.

The Architecture Principe members were not the only ones concerned with speed. Archigram[77] reflected their idea of speed in their utopic drawings as a series of elevators, travelators, and cranes within spatial structures. Their idea of movement, in contrast to Parent and Virilio's idea in their proposals, had more to do with efficiency and speed rather than that of the flâneur sensitive to the city and its terrain.

In Archigram´s case the oblique was exclusively intended for the movement of people or loads, whereas in Parent´s and Virilio's case the oblique was supposed to be inhabited.
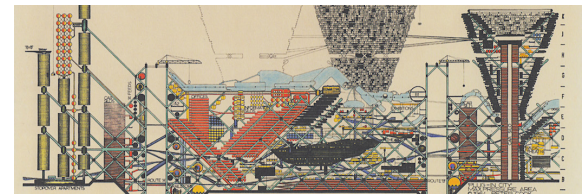

fig. 37.   Archigram, *The Plug-In City* (1964)

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[75]   Paul Virilio interviewed by Andreas Ruby in 1996 *Virilio Life: Selected Interviews*, pp. 59-60.
[76]   Ibid., p. 61.
[77]   It is however noteworthy that Claude Parent was invited to Folkstone by Archigram, which apparently did not turn out very well exposing a rupture of the different approaches to the future role of architecture on each side of the channel.

06. route, movement and flow

There are many different words to describe a path. Each exposes qualities such as type of movement (track), terrain (path), geometry (round), speed (walk) and so forth. Even so, it is difficult, but also critical to find the right word in connection to design.

In the context of this thesis and in the way mobility affects urban configurations there are three important distinctions to be made:

The first distinction refers to structure, for this purpose we´ll call it route. It refers to the traditional understanding of organizing the city along established routes. Take, for example, Haussmann's Paris commissioned by Napoleon III; it consisted of an urban approach based on straight avenues like tracks to direct the logical movement of people or horse cars. Wide streets provided for movement, were less prone to hiding or shelter and at the same time served to organize the city into neighbourhoods. This at a distance also holds true for modernity, which on one hand organized the city along functionality, zoning and expansive city growth and on the other organized point-to-point routes for efficient traffic.

In both cities: Haussmann's and the modern city, routes and hence movements were organized, structured, rigid and in the case of Haussmann's also hierarchical.

The second distinction we will consider is movement; it is also the most relevant to this point, in that it understands a non-hierarchical, structured, flexible, weak and theoretical understanding of movement in the city. It nearly stands in complete opposition to any form of structure that we found in Modernism or Hausmann's urbanism. As we have already seen, the drift of the Situationists and others influenced the theoretical thinking about urbanism during the sixties and seventies, but it also embraces such varied proposals such as ideas from the non-planners, mat buildings, oblique movements etc.

And lastly, collective movement or flows, which this thesis exposes as being a contemporary structuring tool. That means movement is free and ad hoc, whereas flow becomes structured. Flow means designing along the natural movements of people, adjusting the city to the flows rather than organizing the routes in a rigid structure for people to follow. For example, *New Babylon* would belong to movement,

fig. 38.   Candilis, Josic, Woods, *Freie Universität Berlin* (1973)

whereas *Yokohama International Port Terminal* (1995) by Foreign Office Architects would fit under designing for flows. More explicitly, one could say that flows, using Deleuze and Guattari´s analogy, belong to the striated were flows end up carved into the city landscape. Designing starting from flows is a contemporary understanding of how a city needs to be or is constructed.

Making this distinction not only helps to set up a timeframe for these changes, but also aids in understanding the period of the sixties and seventies as a distinct period with a solid theoretical focus on urbanism. Hence, it is not just a transitional period between modernity and contemporary urbanism[78].

What is interesting to us in this distinction we call movements, is how art, architecture and urbanism worked on proposals to understand movement in the city.

"Moving around the city is then one of the bets of the modern artist. It is sometimes a matter of explaining a possibility of geographical misplacement, sometimes of citizen anonymity, sometimes of the city as a psychic matter and a deposit of traces of social or individual life. "[79]

These newfound readings materialized in theories, but also in concrete architectural proposals. Take, for example, mat-buildings' endless aggregations that fostered unlimited possibilities for circulation. No longer was there a defined circulation but one could choose one´s own path in the infinite distribution and movement possibilities that mat-buildings offered. One of such mainstream mat-buildings[80] is the *Freie Universität of Berlin* (1963-1973) designed by George Candilis, Alexis Josic, and Shadras Woods[81].

In the initial drawings of the competition for the Freie Universität, one can appreciate the principle of movement along a specific grid and another superimposing weaker alternative circulation. The dotted lines on their drawings no longer apear rigid but allow for free movement.
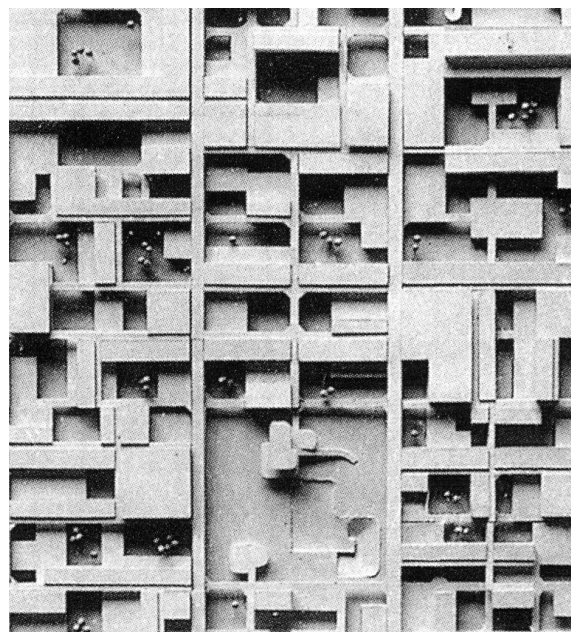
fig. 39.   Candilis, Josic, Woods, *Freie Universität Berlin* (1963)

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[78]   Some thinkers have made called this period Second Modernity (Sosa et al.)
[79]   Deleuze and Guattari, *Mil Mesetas: Capitalismo Y Esquizofrenia*, p. 487.
       "Desplazarse por la ciudad es entonces una de las apuestas del artista moderno. Se trata a veces de dar cuenta de una posibilidad de extravío geográfico, a veces del anonimato ciudadano, a veces de la ciudad como materia psíquica y deposito de huellas de la vida social o individual"
[80]   Ardenne, *Un Arte Contextual: Creación Artística En Medio Urbano, En Situación, De Intervención, De Participación*, p. 64.
[81]   They worked under the name of the firm Candilis Josic Woods

In much the same way, Alison and Peter Smithson understood the concept in the city in their *Hauptstadt Berlin Competition* (1957).

"Therefore if you plot onto a map the motorway system and the railways system you may get left with quite big islands which are potentially places in which you could still live within a big city; then you could build up, within there, a system of quiet ways. That's really all there is to it."[82]

The idea of circulation within mat-buildings was in some regards indifferent to scale in the sense that the same principles could be applied to buildings or to urbanism. There were two layers for movements in the case of the *Freie Universität*: one that was determined and another undetermined one. In some later projects, however, determined orders would dissapear. Indeterminacy would take over leaving it up to the users to establish their own paths. Indeterminacy could imply losing orientation or even get lost.

There are no better words to conclude than Walter Benjamin's about losing oneself in a city:

"Not to find one's way around a city does not mean much. But to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires some schooling. Street names must speak to the urban wanderer like the snapping of dry twigs, and little streets in the heart of the city must reflect the times of day, for him, as clearly as a mountain valley. This art I acquired rather late in life; it fulfilled a dream, of which the first traces were labyrinths on the blotting papers in my school notebooks."[83]
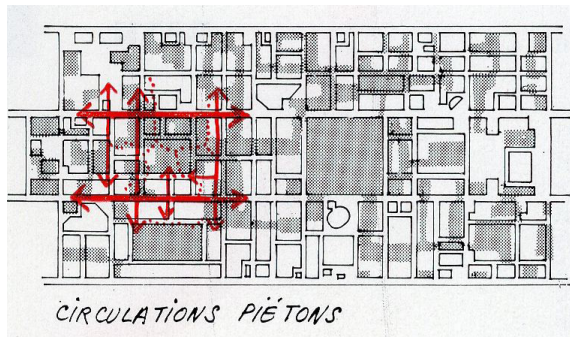
fig. 40. Candilis, Josic, Woods, *Freie Universität Berlin* (1963)

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82   Alison Smithson, *Team 10 Meetings* : 1953-1984, ed. Alison Smithson (New York: Rizzoli), p. 60.
83   Walter Benjamin, *Infancia En Berlín Hacia 1900*, trans. Klaus Wagner, Berlin 1950 (recopilation of text of the thirties). 2 ed. (Círculo de Lectores, 1992), p. 15.
     "Importa poco no saber orientarse en una ciudad. Perderse, en cambio, en una ciudad como quien se pierde en el bosque, require aprendizaje. Los rótulos de las calles deben entonces hablar al que va errando como el crujir de las ramas secas, y las callejuelas de los barrios centricos reflejarle las horas del día tan claramente como las hondonadas del monte. Este arte lo aprendí tarde, cumpliendose asi el sueño del que los laberintos sobre el papel secante de mis cuadernos fueron los primeros rastros."

fig. 41.   Anna Halprin, *Ritual Group Drawing* (1968)

To explore the use of movement as a methodology for design proves to be important in the context of the theoretical work that we have just seen. The best example to do this is probably the work of the tandem Anna Halprin and her husband Lawrence Halprin.

Even though Gianni Pettena describes Anna Halprin's works/performances more as three dimensional constructs,[84] one could disagree since she did, in collaboration with her husband, landscape architect and architect Lawrence Halprin, design workshops for architects, artists, dancers, environmental designers etc. under the paradigm of "new approaches to environmental awareness" [85]. These workshops later influenced the work of architects such as Ant Farm[86], and much of the downtown dance scene that turned into performance artists. Her influence is clear and very important.

Anna Halprin worked, produced and participated in both the 'New York Downtown scene' and the 'San Francisco Scene', but together with Merce Cunningham her

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[84] He is most probably thinking about constructs such as Oskar Schlemmer's work.
[85] Alison Smithson, "How to Recognize and Read Mat-Building," Architectural Design 9(1974): p. 573.
[86] Frédéric Migayrou and Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, *Arquitectura Radical Enero Marzo 2003* (Consejerìa de Obras Públicas y Transportes, 2003), p. 63.

fig. 42.   Lawrence Halprin, *Forecourt Fountain* (1970)
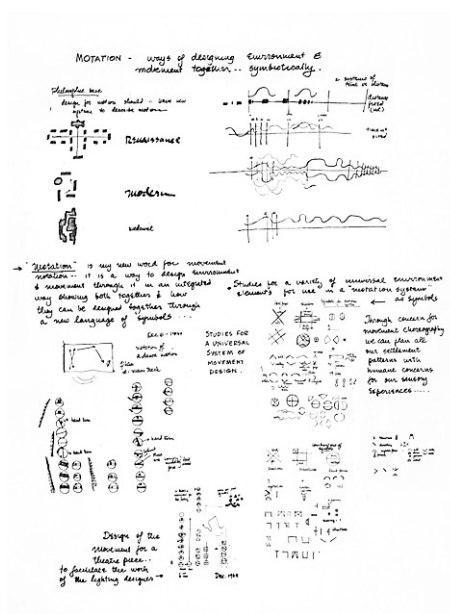
fig. 43.   Lawrence Halprin, *Motation drawing* (1970)

most important contribution was probably to transgress transgres beyond traditional dance and provide a source of inspiration for performers such as Trisha Brown and Yvonne Rainer.

Halprin was interested in exploring participatory engagements within movement and dance practice. The partnership with her husband transcended to major exchanges and interdisciplinary influences for both, in their individual work and collectively.

"Anna and Lawrence effectively created the choreography and urban stage for the great public performance of the counterculture known as the sixties." [87]

Her work was to "*re-engage the gestural vocabulary of everyday life as art and to cast the spectator as a more active participant*", [88] and at the same time the work was a means of exploring the city as a broad field of possibilities. Even though all of these sound very much in line with the Situationists, they mainly put the focus not so much on the mind, but on the body in the search to find an "*open-ended kinesthetic response*" .[89] Their drawings used scoring annotations typically used by choreographers as a tool for design, and recreating participatory workshops based on a "*temporal-situational*" methodology." [90]

Time in the artistic process–or as a tool–was an integral part of performance art and Lawrence Halprin explored this invisible quality in dance score notation. However, it was not a new tool in dance, but as RoseLee Goldberg (1976) puts it: "*Movement evolved from kinaesthetic research rather than from attempts at 'visual composition', 'plot', or 'character portrayal'*".[91]

The Halprins used their own method of notation termed "*Motation*". The M derived from Movement in a clear gesture to separate itself from dance. Their system of notation was used to define spatiality in the sense of planes and at the same time of sensory stimuli. Alison B. Hirsch correctly pinpoints the uses of these as a pedagogical instrument for participatory possibilities.

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87   Chip Lord, "Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966-1971," http://grahamfoundation.org/public_exhibitions/5241-experiments-in-environment-the-halprin-workshops-1966-1971.

88   Alison Bick Hirsch, *City Choreographer : Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014), p. 33.

89   Interview with Janice Ross and published in Janice Ross and Richard Schechner, *Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance* (University of California Press, 2007).

90   Janice Ross quoted in Hirsch, *City Choreographer* : Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America, p.8.

91   Goldberg, "Performance: The Art of Notation."

"By stimulating imagination, direct awareness and a kind of primal spontaneity and impulse, he hopes to free city dwellers from the restraints ingrained by the conditioning of a regimented culture." [92]

The Halprins managed to create a space for encounters, through focusing on movement as a concept for their project. They designed spaces that through the relationship of bodies, dances, activities and architecture became truly activated urban spaces, not just during the late sixties but long after they initially designed[93].

"So I translated what I understood about space into movement for the architects and into conscious use of space for the dancers."[94]

It was not just about dancers, but also people and the importance of reinventing the everyday and public space.
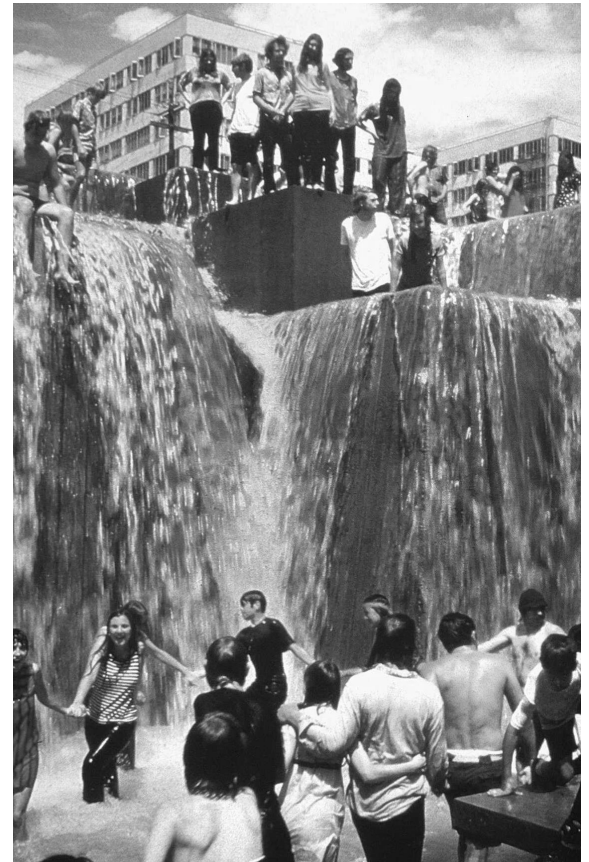
fig. 44.   Lawrence Halprin, *Forecourt Fountain* (1970)

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[92]   Hirsch, *City Choreographer : Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America*, p. 2.
[93]   The autor visited *Seattle Freeway Park*, 1976 which remanis with great activity even though it is quite off the tourist trail.
[94]   *Where the Revolution Began : Lawrence and Anna Halprin and the Reinvention of Public Space*, ed. Lawrence Halprin, et al., Lawrence and Anna Halprin and the Reinvention of Public Space (Washington, DC: Spacemaker Press, 2009), p. 16.

03] *blurred boundaries and contours*

35] *2 formes embouties dans / le même moule (?) diffèrent /
entre elles/d'une valeur
séparative infra / mince-*

*Tous les " identiques" aussi / identiques qu'ils soient, (et / plus ils
sont identiques)
se / rapprochent de cette / différence séparative infra / mince.*

**2 forms cast in/the same mold (?) differ / from each other / by an infra / thin separative
amount. All "identicals" as identical as they may be, (and / the more identical they
are) move toward this / infra / thin separative difference. [95]**

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[95]   Marcel Duchamp and Paul Matisse, *Marcel Duchamp, Notes* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983).

"Architecture is already built into our understanding of body, life and thought. We are simply unable to think of the body, for example, without thinking of the spaces of clothing, including buildings. Even the concept of nakedness already implies an absent architecture."[96]

The idea that will be considered in this chapter is the new notions of 'limit conditions' that appeared during the period between the 50´s and the 70´s. New understandings and readings of limits, in turn, meant new modes of interaction, new readings about context, continuities, affects, etc.

Dealing with boundaries in a broad sense was a very important subject underlying many 'avant-garde' proposals. In performance art it meant transgression from the confined space of the museum to the openness of the city, but it also meant contamination through interdisciplinary working. In this chapter the boundary condition will be looked at through examples of the work of Yoko Ono, Bruce Nauman, Dennis Oppenheim and Gordon Matta-Clark. These performance artists specifically dealt with experimentation and site specificity[97].

In Architecture a parallel blurring of boundaries occurs mainly in conceptual and theoretical proposals but also in some built examples.

One could outline four categories that synthesise a new relationship with boundary conditions. They structure this chapter in six parts:

the dilution of limit (the city and architecture)
> The dilution or loss of the boundary or contour and consequently the loss of a specific form or shape will be explained with some examples like Archizoom, Yona Friedman, Cedric Price, Moshe Safdie and other projects. They several kinds of dilution of limits which will be analysed here. In particular it is interesting to show this appreciation on the one hand toward architecture and on the other toward urbanism.

the bodies to the limits
> This point will not only consider the idea of testing by taking the body to its limits but also how the body confronts physical limits.

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[96] Mark Wigley , Extreme Hospitality,"Constant: New Babylon," (Madrid: Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, 2015).
[97] The term site specificity, is used here to describe any work, not just Site Specific art, that is bound to a specific location and would loose its meaning if placed, built or performed anywhere else.

in-between, affect and intimacy

Looking at three very different terms and concepts we will try to analyse the relationships between bodies and objects and at the same time identify what boundaries mean in this context and how these only become visible the moment one analyses the relationship between them.

boundaries as social constructs

Confronting social constructs was, as we know, one of the main symbols of the late sixties, with the culmination of May '68. What is interesting is to see how artists exposed and antagonized these constructs.

openings / enclosures

A new understanding between private and public is expressed through the skin of enclosures, but it also implied a new way of inhabiting public space through incursions.

the dilution of context

Many architectural proposals, as this thesis defends, had lost rigid limits and were looking for 'weaker' ways of intervening in the city. This inevitably implied dealing with context in new ways.

It is through this focus that we will try to appreciate the 'precariousness' of the boundary and how its dissolution actually created new ways of understanding and dealing with projects from the early second half of the XX century. This study suggests that there was a clear move towards a weakening of boundaries, in favour of more open systems. Even though it had been part of the discourse of the second modernity, it became more evident in proposals from the sixties onwards.

Even nowadays we can notice how these new understandings are being reflected on the contemporary city, be it in formal or informal constructions. Urban structures are moving away from the grouping of defined areas or spaces with specific functions to new systems of communicating networks that often have no concrete form, visible structures or foreseeable growth patterns. Instead, they are undetermined and open.

Once the systems are open, one can no longer distinguish these limits, and one begins to navigate in diffuse 'in-betweens' or one begins to experience what is invisible. It is in that moment that one can grasp the infra-thinness of boundaries.

01.   the dilution of the limit in the city

"In this talk I've compressed a big contrast, that between the closed and open city. Closed means over-determined, balanced, integrated, linear. Open means incomplete, errant, conflictual, non-linear. The closed city is full of boundaries and walls; the open city possesses more borders and membranes. The closed city can be designed and operated top-down; it is a city which belongs to the masters. The open city is a bottom-up place; it belongs to the people. These contrasts of course are not absolutes of black-and-white; real life is painted in greys. Yet to design the modern city well, I believe we have to challenge unthinking assumptions now made about urban life, assumptions which favor closure. I believe we have to embrace less re-assuring, more febrile ideas of living together, those stimulations of differences, both visual and social, which produce openness."[98]

Richard Sennett´s quote is fantastic to describe the thoughts and 'utopias' that, in hindsight, were the conceptual basis of the work of architects in those days, but as Sennet proves, they remain relevant nowadays.
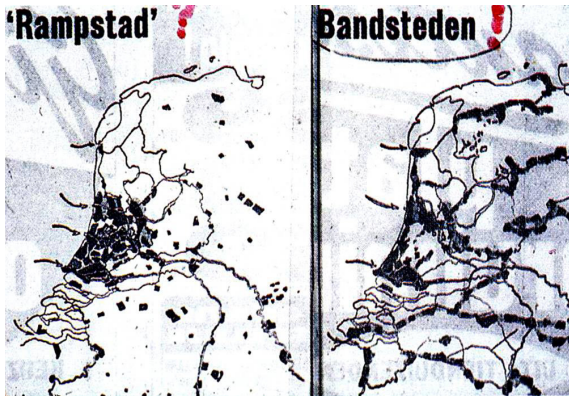
Some architectural proposals during this period were a direct response to the failings of traditional planning (zoning etc.) and at the same time, were a different answer to what was being proposed by the CIAM 8[99] '*The Heart of the City*' symposium[100]. For many architects – most of them belonging to what later became Team[101] – these proposals were not responding to the new requirements of these ever-expanding cities or conglomerations. These architects were determined to investigate new, more open systems to deal with the fast growing conurbations and mega-cities. Some of these endless built surfaces no longer would have clear contours or limits, as for example the Boston to Washington region but extend engulfing several cities.

One of these examples could be Van den Broek and Bakema with the *Rampstad* project in which a whole metropolitan area is connected in a net or bands, or Kenzo Tange´s *Tokaido Megalopolis* (1960-61) with a cyclical system that would be large enough to permit a flow of 200,000 cars an hour or in a more artistic field the proposal *Le Nouvel Ville* of Jean-Michel Sanejouand (1969-72) in which all circulation is simplified and composed of a network of flows and traffic.

fig. 45.   Van den Broek and Bakema, *Rampstad/Bandsteden*

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98   Richard Sennett, "The Open City," (University of Cambridge2013).
99   The CIAM 8 and its title reviewed the problem of the city centre. On the one hand because of the bombed city centres and on the other because of the distance between the city entre and the outskirts.
100 In CIAM 8 proposals were directed to strengthening the core of the city under the principle 'One city one core' (Giedion).
     Eric Paul Mumford, The Ciam Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960 (MIT Press, 2002), p. 215.
101 Ibid., p.206.
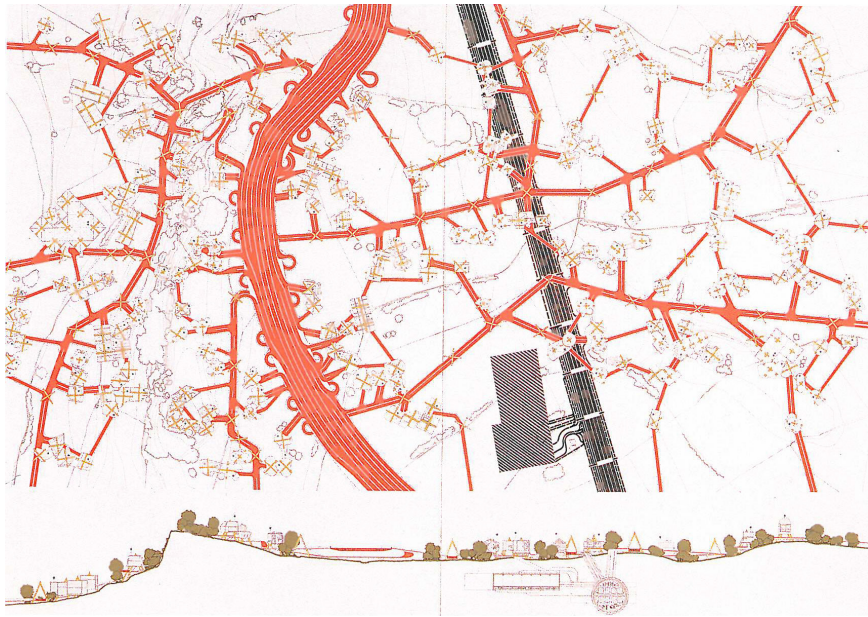
fig. 46.   Jean-Michel Sanejouand, *Le Nouvel Ville* (1969-1972)

These architects understood that the relationship between neighbouring cities was not just about joining and interchanges between points. For the first time they respond with concrete proposals at schematic levels to more complex networks; here, networks become the opposite of boundaries.

Cities had to deal with increasing scales, and as Kenzo Tange states one had in some ways crossed the 10,000,000 inhabitants boundary, which was the pivotal point to become territories[102], and which required larger structures, Mega-structures as they were often called.

In the later sixties these structures became more diluted and more open-ended. They were closer to the original understanding of the Situationists and favoured more ad-hoc and open-ended connections, more in the line of an exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experiences. These examples showed a new understanding of the indeterminacy of cities, of the impossibility to limit the expansion of these cities or control their contours.

第6図　メガロポリス的に理解された日本列島

fig. 47.   Kenzo Tange, *Tokaido Megalopolis* (1964)

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[102] Kenzo Tange, "A Plan for Tokyo, 1960,"*Bauen + Wohnen = Construction + habitation = Building + home : internationale Zeitschrift* 18, no. Utopie und Realität in der Stadtplanung = Utopie et réalité dans l'urbanisme = Utopia and reality in city-planning (1964).
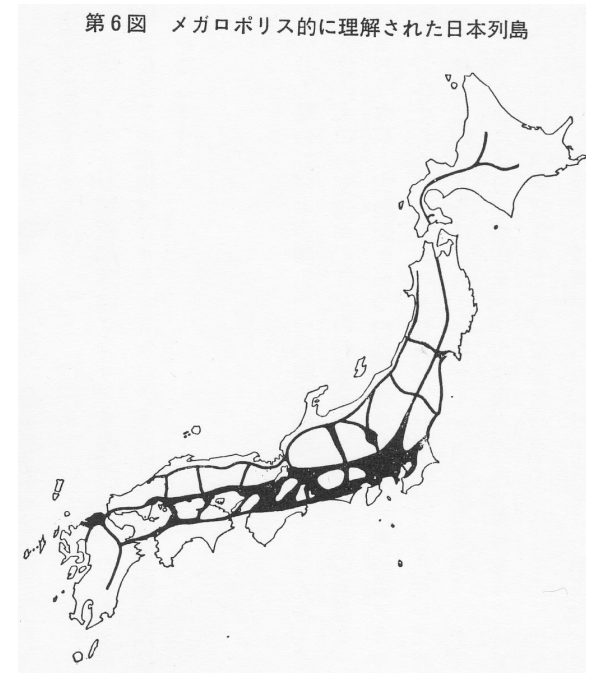
In relationship to this idea of limit Richard Sennett, in his discourse, makes a crucial differentiation between the notion of a limit and a boundary, which is also important to take account of.

For him a boundary allows for permeability whereas with the limit defines zones or has impossible barriers or constructs. It is in the boundary condition, he describes, that the openness or impenetrability of a system would become visible and expose new ways of interaction.[103] Most significantly he argues that the difference between an open and a closed system, is defined by the over-determination of form of the latter, versus the unstable evolutionary configuration of the first.

He goes on to further accentuate that an open system permits contamination and interchange, hence lets "*structures*" "*modulate in response to changing conditions, or*" "*allow experiment in their procedures and processes*".[104]

Therefore there were two main ideas regarding limits or boundaries that these architects began to engage with: indeterminacy and open-endedness.

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[103] Richard Sennett, "The Open City ", ed. Harvard GSD (2013).
[104] Richard Sennett, "Quant, the Public Realm," http://www.richardsennett.com/site/senn/templates/general2.aspx?pageid=16&cc=gb.

02.   *the dilution of the limit in architecture*

In this text we will make a distinction between three 'blurrings' of boundaries or contours: conceptual blurring, physical blurring and perceptual blurring. Conceptual blurring refers to projects that could continue endlessly, for example by additions, aggregation systems, mat systems, isotropic projects, field, structures…. 'Physical' blurring would be comprised of projects that have no boundaries or contours because they are theoretically infinite. Lastly perceptual blurring would encompass the idea of visual dissolution, transparencies, fogs or anything that tries to make the contour disappear.

In "*conditions of the contour*"[105], José Antonio Sosa defines key questions on how these open systems became organizational structures for architecture during the sixties. Sosa describes three possibilities for isotropic structures that were being projected by architects during the second modernity, one of additions or stacking (Moshe Safdie, Justus Dahinden etc), one as a system or 'shelves' frames or as he calls them "*armazones*" [106] (Yona Friedman, Cedric Price), and one as a result of internal organizational 'rules' or paradigms (Van den Broek and Bakema). These systems that could grow organically indefinitely.

Once structures could grow infinitely they no longer had to be contained. At the same time this way of designing was simultaneously a response to sociological changes, rapidly growing cities and their increasing complexity. What modernity had begun around the motorway or the linear city had moved into a world of systems, computers and other forms of networks. Structures had become isotropic and of infinite growth.

For architecture it meant having to respond to these ideas about the growth of the city by proposing projects that were open-ended and hence had no specific shape. It implied the dilution of boundaries of the immediate skin/or facade of the building.

Such buildings included the examples shown here of Safdie's *Habitats of Montreal* (1967) and *Puerto Rico* (1968) or Dahinden's *Trigon* (1965), that through continued stacking could be infinite. The loss of the limit as Sosa argues came from the loss of the need for a specific contour.
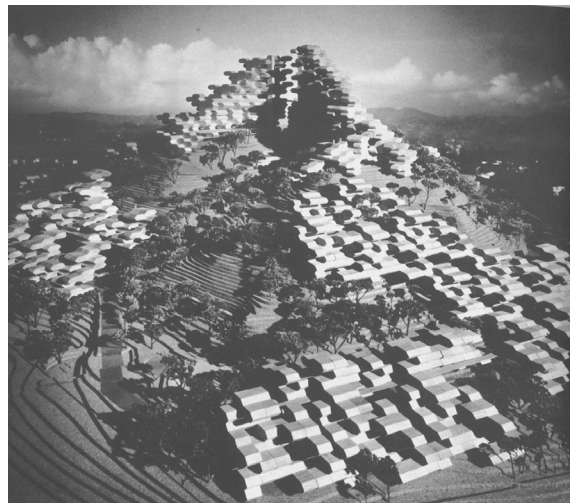
fig. 48.   Moshe Safdie, *Habitat Puerto Rico* (1968)

fig. 49.   Moshe Safdie, *Habitat 67* (1967)

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[105] José Antonio Sosa Diaz-Saavedra, "Condiciones De Contorno," *Arquitectura: Revista del Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Madrid (COAM)* 345(2006).

[106] translated as frames, framework or skeleton

fig. 50.
fig. 51.   Justus Dahinden, *Trigon Structure* (1965)
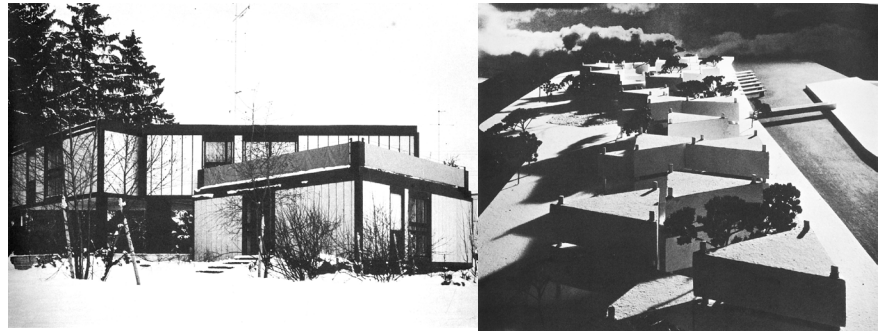
There was, however, another way of imagining blurring in terms of physical boundaries and contours. In Archizoom´s *Non–Stop City* (1970), for example, architecture had no specific shape but was instead more about a space that could be inhabited endlessly and where boundaries dissolved or disappeared completely, truly enabling growth and infinite configurations without ever reaching any theoretical limit.

Archizoom's project provokingly insinuates what a minimal structure would be like, a structure that would have a theoretical infinite, and therefore could not have any contour. Architecture had become defined by an artificial atmosphere just as in Buckminster Fuller´s proposals, but in this case it would be infinite.

fig. 52.   Archizoom Associati, *Non-Stop City* (1970)
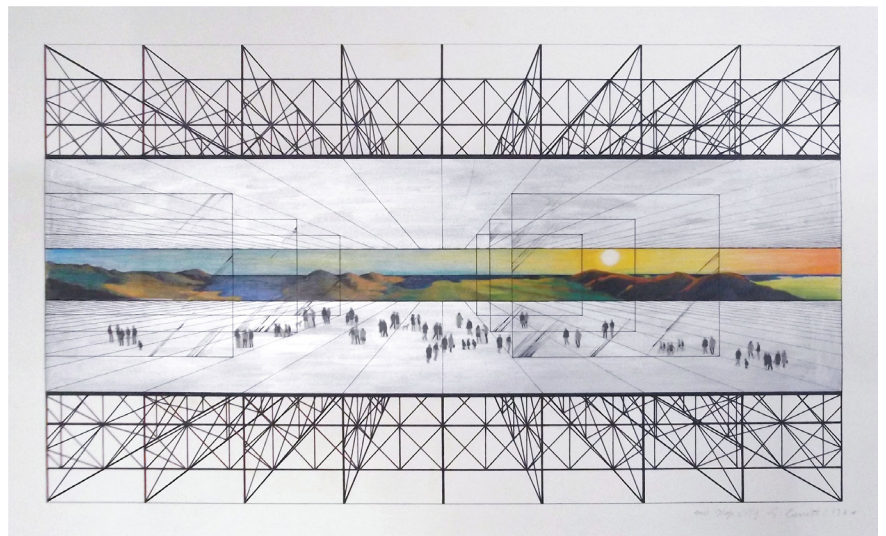
"[...]However, in contrast to the speculations that do in fact tend to the disappearance of the building, in the case of Non-Stop City, the dilution is [not] produced because of the 'absence' of architecture, but rather because of an 'excess' of it." [107]

The quote chosen here reflects on dilution of, even disappearance of, the boundary but not of the architecture. Just as we will see with the 'non-planners', it is not that planners and architects, should not have a role in planning; the loss of contour only meant the loss of form, not of architecture. What it implied is that the essential idea of the project could be immaterial.

Sometimes, when we talk about perceptual blurring, it was about the apparent or formal dilution of the contour that mattered. Some of these examples would include Gianni Pettenas *Ice Houses* or the *Pepsi Pavilion* (1970), which was a collaboration between the group Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) and Fujiko Nakaya. E.A.T. consisted of a loose group formed around the idea of collaborations between artists and engineers. The group mainly focused on performance in relation to technology. The *Pepsi Pavilion* attempted to dissolve the building in a cloud of smoke, making it barely visible. Architects and artists in many ways focused on the same elements of dissolving the contour.

These are three ways of understanding the blurring of boundaries or contours. All of them attempt to move away from understanding architecture as a formal exercise and instead propose projects that dissolve into context of theoretical infinity.
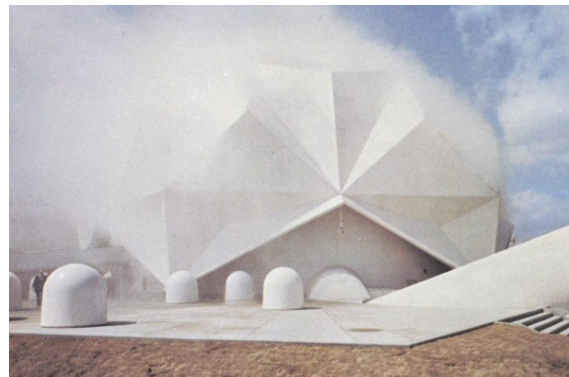
fig. 53.   E.A.T. and Fujiko Nakaya, *Pepsi Pavilion* (1970)

fig. 54.   Gianni Pettena, *Ice House II* (1972)

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[107] Pablo Martinez Capdevila, "Tesis Doctoral: Andrea Branzi Y La "Città Senza Architectura" (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2014), p. 103.
"[…]Sin embargo, a diferencia de esas especulaciones que tienden a la efectiva desapararición del edificio, en el caso de la Non-stop City la disolucion se produce debido a una 'ausencia' de arquitectura sino, más bien a un 'exceso' de la misma."

Parallel Stress- A 10 minute performance piece- May 1970
Photo taken at greatest stress position prior to collapse.
Location: Masonry-block wall and collapsed concrete pier
between Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges.
Bottom Photo: Stress position resumed
Location: Abandoned sump, Long Island

fig. 55.   Oppenheim Paralell Stress, *performance piece* (1970)

Another way to encounter limit is through testing, and in performance art this is frequently done by making the body conform to external limits or its own limits. It is a way to acknowledge space and context. Dennis Oppenheim's piece '*Parallel Stress*' (1970), for example, shows the tensions created between the body and an artificial construct and setting. To what level can the artist hold the tension he is subjecting his body to?

In the first image Oppenheim spans himself between two walls. During this performance he exposes his body to different levels of stress by separating the walls from each other while bridging the gap with his body. The pictures taken reveal information about location and the photograph shows a bridge in the background creating some form of unclear meaning and parallelism. In the second piece the condition of stress is slightly modified, and no context appears other than two mounds of sand with his body again confronting its own physical limit while bending forcefully.

On the same notion of confrontation of limits one can find Bruce Nauman´s performance *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner About the Perimeter of a Square* (1967-68). The performance is as the title implies, a recording of the artist walking around the edges of a marked square. The video recording frames the performance unevenly, with him appearing and disappearing from the image. It also includes a mirror that will only project an image as he walks into that secondary frame. The geometry of the square is on one hand exposed as a simple form and its simple condition in turn exaggerated by his movements. It is not in a compositional manner like, say, Oskar Schlemmer´s work at the Bauhaus, but in a manner that opposes or juxtaposes the square shape to the movement. Movement becomes a method of conducting experience. The invisible becomes apparent through the movement.

"An awareness of yourself comes from a certain amount of activity."[108]

Movement in the case of Nauman´s piece serves as a particularity that becomes very interesting in relation to architecture; its relation to flows, the framing of spaces, the different understandings of a space, a dialogue... The body serves as a way to expose qualitative conditions of the space and experience it in a different manner.
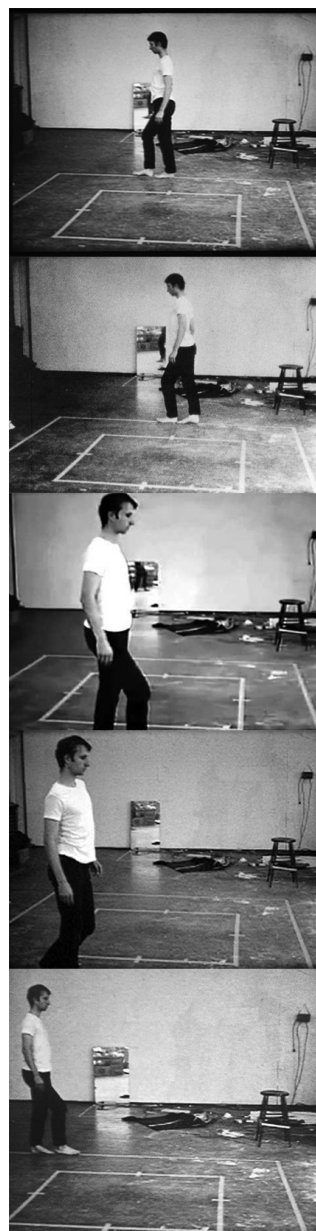
fig. 56. Bruce Nauman, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner About the Perimeter of a Square* (1967-68)

[108] Bruce Nauman : *Exhibition Catalogue and Catalogue Raisonné*, ed. Neal David Benezra, et al., 1st ed. ed. (Minneapolis : New York, N.Y.: Walker Art Center and Distributed Art Publishers, 1994), p. 336.
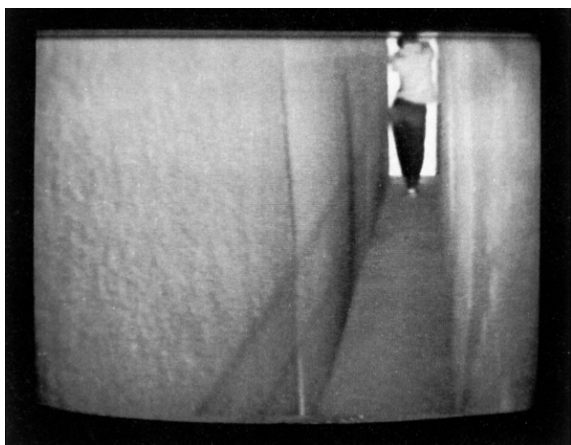
fig. 57.   Bruce Nauman, *Walk with Contrapossto* (1968)

Another of Nauman´s works with the same idea of testing a 'constructed' limit through movement is *Walk with Contrapossto* (1968). Like *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner About the Perimeter of a Square*, this piece investigates the spatial tensions created by the body through engagement with physical limits. For the piece he constructed a narrow corridor in which he would pace up and down in an artificial and formalistic manner, as if his steps belonged to a classical sculpture.

"This convention of 'representation' may also be read as a reference to the conventions that inform 'being'. The corridor represents the exterior forces that determine behaviour identity. Framing both the body and the social identity as a malleable material, this and other work reject the notion of a single unchanging self."[109]

It is through this limit that he confronts and manages to visualise the possibly transformative tensions between the body and its limits.

fig. 58.   Bruce Nauman, *Double Steel Cage Piece* (1974)

His video performances (*Walk with Contrapossto*, *Double Steel Cage*, etc.), explore space and boundaries empirically through the observation and enactment of the movement of his body or a subject's body in a defined space or situation. Most of his works were video recordings of himself, but some pieces like *Double Steel Cage* (1974) were recordings of others. His interaction with the audience is unidirectional to limit improvisations. He explains: "*I mistrust audience participation. That´s why I make*

[109] Bruce Nauman : *Theaters of Experience*, ed. Susan Cross and Berlin Deutsche Guggenheim, Theaters of Experience (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2003), p. 15.

these works as limiting as possible".[110] However, at some point he makes exceptions and the audience is sometimes 'observed' and become part of the experiment.

"As evidenced in the diverse media, content, and methods constituting his practice, Nauman aims at challenging the viewer's epistemological and phenomenological assumptions, both when encountering art and in everyday experience. Consistently negotiating art's theoretical extremes, he works to decrease the distance between everyday life and art, while preserving the latter's self-reflexivity as a system. As a result, his work manifests a critical consciousness that by extension can be said to encourage individual agency within everyday life."[111]

It seems evident that this approach came through a generalized interest in behavioural, phenomenology, and psychological theory and field theory[112] during the 60´s. At the same time as we see throughout this thesis that 'the social' became important, the individual and his cognitive processes also became a key focus of performance art. This is recognizable in Nauman´s work[113], but it also stands true for other artists at the time, such as Dennis Oppenheim *Transfer Drawing* (1971), Dan Graham *Performer / Audience / Mirror* (1975), Vito Acconci *Remote Control* (1971) and many more examples.

What it meant is an intention that through experiment one could recognize boundaries, limitations, understandings and relationships between entities etc. and use the body or embodiment to explore these new grounds.

fig. 59.   Dan Graham, *Performer/Audience/Mirror* (1975)

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[110] Willoughby Sharp, "Nauman Interview," *Arts Magazine* (1970): p. 151.
[111] Jessica Hullman, "The Functional Art of Bruce Nauman," *EOAGH*, no. 5 (2009).
[112] E. Suderburg, *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
[113] *Bruce Nauman: Make Me, Think Me*, ed. B. Nauman and L. Sillars (Liverpool: Tate Gallery , 2006), p. 64.

04.   in-between, affect and intimacy

"Space can be thought of as the cubic area occupied by a three-dimensional volume. Any volume would occupy space. It is air and cannot be seen. It is the interval between things that can be measured. The intervals and measurements can be important to a work of art. If certain distances are important they will be made obvious in the piece."[114]

A shared notion of performance art and architecture is the negotiation between body and space. Not only the cognitive and sensory experience of movement, sound, distance, the perceptual, but also the intellectual exploration of in-between space; "*the interval*" in terms of Sol Lewitt, the ambiguous zone where borders become porous and the skin (literally and metaphysically) no longer serves merely as a barrier and container of identities and subjectivities, but a playing-field in itself. Through performances the artists aim to address response and affect in the truest and most profound sense.

Affect is always in relationship to personal understanding and it is systematically investigated in performance art[115]. Identity and intimacy suddenly became the subject of new explorations and hence required a renewed two-way exchange between audience and artist. Arnulf Rainer describes them as 'anthropological investigations'[116].

"The sense of the work is therefore directly linked to the recognition of the self in the other [or space, time…]- to the presence where they merge"[117]

Yoko Ono´s *Cut Piece* (1964) elaborates on the imagery of exposing intimacy as the active non-scripted participation of the audience advances during the performance. In the filmed piece the audience strips Yoko Ono of her clothes by cutting pieces of her cardigan, bra, skirt and tights.

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[114] Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual " ArtArtforum, no. June (1967).

[115] The first steps in this direction of performance art can be traced back to Happenings in the late 50´s at a time where artists reassessed their relationship with the audience/ public and with space and time. Happenings emerged precisely to deal with this new form of interaction. The aim was to create spontaneous flows between the audience and artists through minimum mediation and scripting. It was the first time art became porous in the sense it became permeable, allowing for interaction between artists and audience. It blurred the boundary that had traditionally separated them in museums or theatres.

[116] Arnulf Rainer, "Selbstdarstellungen," in *Documenta 5* (1967).

[117] *Performance by Artists*, ed. A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto.: Art Metropole, 1979), p. 22.

Her performance exposed the transgression of neutrality between the art object and the viewer. The viewer was assuming an active role in laying bare or exposing Yoko Ono´s intimacy as a transgression of a limit.

Just as important to the dilution of the personal boundary is the space that lies between the physical limits of the objects; the No Man's Land that this thesis upholds is just as much a boundary space.

Boundaries become fluid, space is conceived of as flowing – A countless succession of relationships.[118]

Artists such as Marina Abramovic and Ulay in *Imponderabilia* (1977) test the tensions that exist between two bodies and the audience as they pass through the small gap of two naked bodies.

Bruce Nauman also is aware of the importance of negative space as he casts the space in between objects in *Two Messes on the Studio Floor* (1966). His cast is a form of mapping that portrays the invisible force as a unifying entity.

"What Nauman´s casts force us to realize, that it congeal the possibilities of meaning as well. Which is to say that this conception of entropy, as a force that sucks out all the intervals between

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[118] Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, *The New Vision: Fundamentals of Design, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*, trans. Daphne Hoffmann, 4th edition ed. (New York: Wittenborn, 1947), p.63.
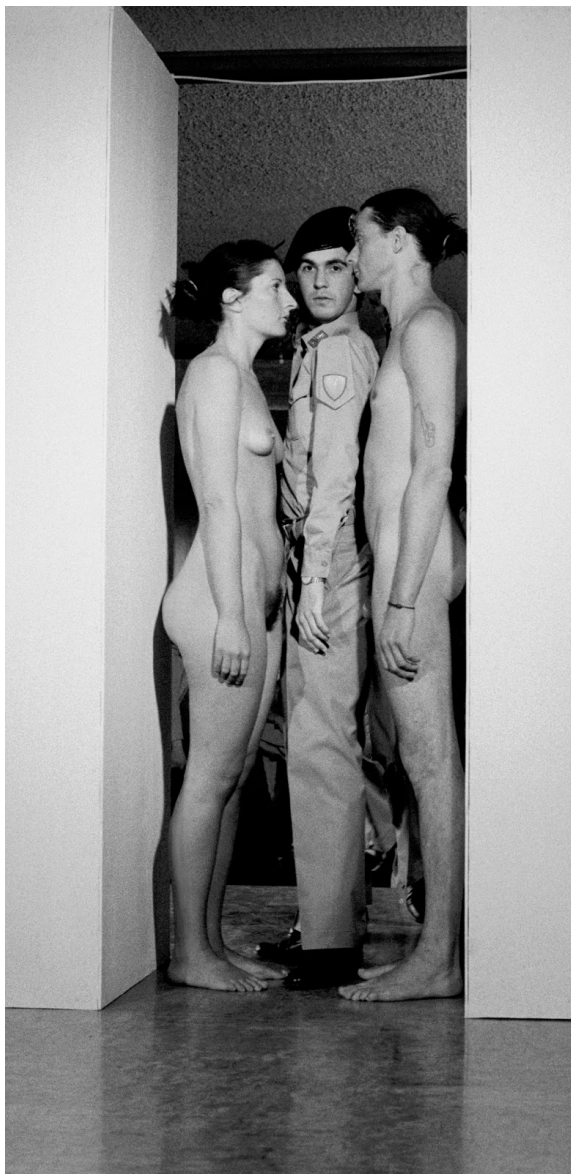
fig. 61. Marina Abramovic and Frank Uwe Laysiepen (Ulay), *Imponderabilia* (1977)

points of space..., but also imagines the eradication of those distances that regulate the grid of oppositions, or differences, necessary to the production of meaning."[119]

Similarly, in the social field, Nicolas Bourriaud redefines this in-between space as a space where small encounters between people and sporadic actions compose the continuum space. He, too, uses Duchamp's term infrathinness, to speak about something small, powerful and transformative.

"...he is operating at the hub of "social infra-thinness" (l'inframince social), that minute space of daily gestures determined by the superstructure made up of "big" exchanges, and defined by it."[120]

In architecture we can find the same concern with Peter Eisenman writing in 1970:

"Traditionally in architecture, considerations of form have played an important role. Previously these considerations were basically concerned with aesthetic problems, with the analysis and the design of specific configurations having proportions, size, scale, contrasts of texture, color and light. Beyond this concern for the physical properties of elements there was equally a concern with relationships - sequence, interval, location, etc.--between elements. These concerns are not aesthetic but more appropriately syntactic in that they are concerned with relationships. However, they are syntactic only in what will be called a surface structural sense.
[...].
Thus, it can be said that even when architecture was concerned with formal relationships, i.e., syntax, these were relationships of the elements or objects themselves, i.e., shapes, or the relationships between shapes in a specific environment dimension, size, scale, etc. This was the limit of syntax. But this did not account for another or underlying level - a more complex phenomenon which can be detected in a specific environment." [121]

All refer to the importance of relationships of bodies between each other or tensions between spaces and how they are affected by these interrelations. Eisenman´s words, however, show a differentiation between two levels of affection.

Deleuze and Guattari[122] portray an interesting understanding of affect through acknowledgement of limits. They picture two types of boundaries: an immediate one they call limit as the interrelation of bodies or objects, and another one which

[119] Rosalind Krauss, "Formless: A User's Guide, Excerpt," *October 78 MIT Press* (1996).
[120] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Presses du reel, 2002), p.17.
[121] Peter D. Eisenman, "Notes on Conceptual Architecture: Towards a Definition," Design Quarterly, no. 78/79 (1970).
[122] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mil Mesetas: Capitalismo Y Esquizofrenia*, trans. J.V. Pérez and U. Larraceleta, Paris 1980. 2 ed. (Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1994), pp. 443-44.

understands boundaries in a longer time frame where the relationship would become something different if transgressed, hence the term threshold.

To explain this they use the simile of a couple. When couples argue the partners always take into account each other's personal limits. That way there is always the option of re-conducting an argument, but there is also a threshold (an extreme limit) where there would be a breaking point, for example a divorce. To exemplify using another simile it would be like imagining entering a square or plaza, and being observed as you cross it. The actual square has not changed even though there has been an affect. There has been an interaction between bodies but it hasn't transformed the plaza into something else.

This idea could be interesting in relation to some of the more theoretical projects of the sixties because it establishes two types of limits. In *Non-Stop City*, for example, there is the idea of infinite relationships between elements. They can interact freely but never modify the essential, never touching the threshold nor possibly changing the 'architecture'. Other such projects include *Fun Palace* by Cedric Price (1961), or Frei Otto, Ewald Bubner and Kenzo Tange´s *Artic Town* (1971). All share the idea of a super-shed where there could be limitless configurations or affects but the impossibility of reaching the threshold as there is no actual limit.

In the 13th Venice Biennale[123] Farshid Moussavi explains the meaning of affect in architecture:

"Whereas meanings are dependent on an individual's biographical background, affects are pre-personal intensities of built forms. […] Affects are therefore the aspect of forms through which architects influence – without determining and limiting – people's experience."[124]

Under these new schemes the relationships within these proposals could be infinite and without being limited by specific contours. The space in between could be Van Eycks negative space.

"Relying on Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue, Van Eyck conceived of the 'in-between' as a place where different things can meet and unite, or more specifically, as 'the common ground where conflicting polarities can again become twin phenomena'. The twin phenomenon, an

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[123] Just as many of the ideas of the sixties, affect, as an engagement of oneself or a subject with space, has made a strong comeback being explored again in the current theoretical investigations.

[124] Farshid Moussavi, "Architecture and Its Affects, 13th Venice Bienale," http://www.farshidmoussavi.com/node/21.

original concept of Van Eyck's, stems from the insight that real polarities (such as subject and object, inner and outer reality, small and large, open and closed, part and whole) are not conflicting, mutually exclusive entities but distinctive components, two complementary halves of one and the same entity, while conversely a true entity is always twofold. Their in- between should not be considered a makeshift or a negligible margin but something as important as the reconciled opposites themselves. Being the moment where contrary tendencies come into balance, it constitutes a space filled with ambivalence, and thus space that corresponds to the ambivalent nature of man. The in-between is 'space in the image of man', a place that, like man, 'breathes in and out'.”[125]

Again it is important to address that this in-between space or no man's land is not just a blurred boundary/contour between two entities (objects, people…) but a space of interaction, tensions and communication, in short, a place where things could occur freely without being limited.

fig. 62. Frei Otto, Ewald Bubner and Kenzo Tange, *Artic Town* (1971)

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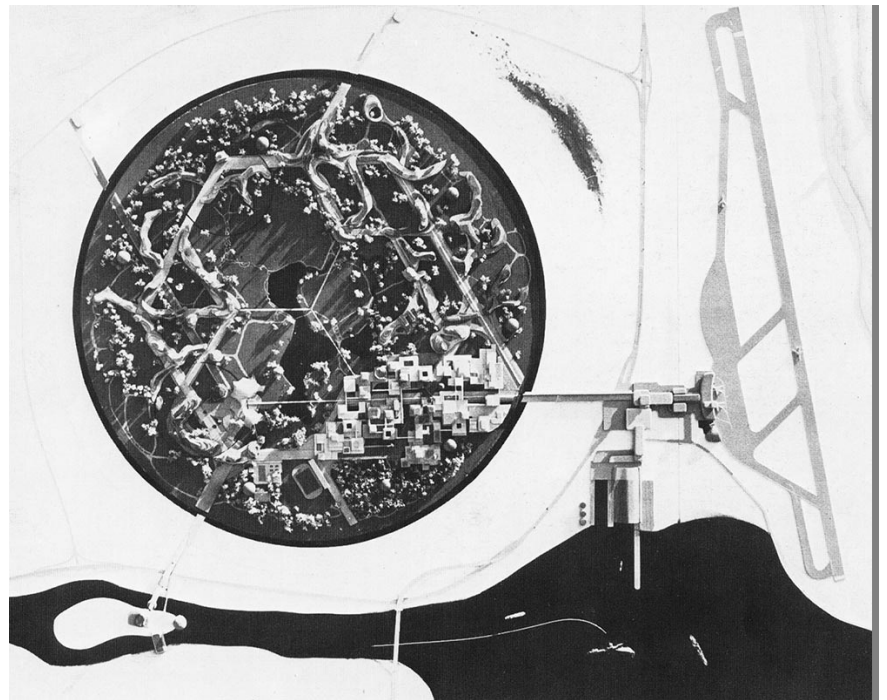
[125] Francis Strauven, "Aldo Van Eyck – Shaping the New Reality from the in-between to the Aesthetics of Number," in *Study Centre Mellon Lectures* (Canadian Centre for Architecture CCA2007).

05.   boundaries as social constructs

In theoretical thinking about urbanism, Richard Sennett elaborates a theory about how communication happens, through the analysis of the work of Hanna Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, Erwin Goffman and Clifford Geertz. He explains that his thinking lies somewhere in between Arendt's school of thinking, which believes that communication happens in the public realm because of the feeling of anonymity, and Habermas' thinking that communication happens around coinciding interests. Hence Habermas argues that there is a detachment from location: the place itself is secondary.

However, Geertz and Sennett coincide under the label of the "*performative school*", in that the way communication occurs has more to do with how people express themselves using all sorts of methods such as clothing customs, drinking... They are, thus, considering that communication is more dependent on cultural adherence.

Proposing this idea as a starting point Sennett explores the way space is used as a vehicle of expression, warning not to treat "*buildings as the equivalent of scenography*" [126] . Through his statements one can somehow see the implicit idea that it is only through an appropriation of the space that it can become a vehicle of expression.

For the artists the move from private safety of the gallery to the public space also meant that a new communication arose forcefully between art and audiences. With that implicitly came a new understanding of dealing with social space and its constructs.

Adrian Piper, for example, explored personal boundary conditions. She painted herself in white with a 'wet paint' sign in order to contextualize a constructed reality often invisible to society, in this case it was denouncing xenophobia. Making visible the invisible. She was disturbing space and Michael Friedman describes it as "*activating space*".[127] An invisible boundary is suddenly constructed. A subtle action or subtle sentence is enough to establish limits.

fig. 63.   Adrian Piper, *Catalysis III* (1970)

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[126] Sennett, "Quant, the Public Realm".
[127] Adrian Piper, *Out of Order, out of Sight: Selected Writings in Meta-Art, 1968-1992* (MIT Press, 1999), p. 262.

This appreciation can also be made of Vito Acconci's work *Proximity Piece* (1970). In this performance he test how close to someone one can get to someone before they feel uncomfortable. He measured this distance, these limits.

Suddenly new barriers could be visualized, confronted and exposed. It is through actions that the city became 'produced'. Space is a product of people's relationship to it, as Lefebvre explains: "*It is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived--and produced*".[128]

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[128] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, UK Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1991), p. 162.

06. openings / enclosures

Often artists attempted to challenge the separation between the private and the public by confronting the contour and its openings while at the same time exposing the private.

Matta-Clarck, like other artists, enjoyed transgressing the boundaries between what is considered private and public by, for example, exhibiting private everyday activities and showing them in public spaces such as *Clockshower* (1973) where he performs daily private routines hanging from a clock, or more literally Vito Acconci´s *Room Piece* (1970) where he moves parts of his private home into a gallery over several days.

fig. 64.   Gordon Matta-Clark, *Connical Intersect* (1975)

In one of his last pieces *Conical Intersect* (1975) for the Paris Biennale, Gordon Matta-Clarck tried to expose one of those encounters between private and public. The Pompidou was still under construction when Matta-Clark heard about the building. He immediately proposed an intervention in it, but he was not granted permission and instead used another building right next to it, Les Halles, a beloved spot of the

Situationists[129], establishing a dialogue between the Pompidou and the "*audience*". Attlee and Le Feuvre writes the following about his cut-outs:

"One of the most intriguing aspects of being within one of the building cuts was the voyeuristic thrill of gaining sight of another viewer, unaware of your presence, through the unexpected vistas opened by the cuts. At the same time, one could oneself be observed at any moment, without knowing it. As usual, Matta-Clark was blurring the line between outside and inside, spectator and participant, art and life."130

He performs an action to expose the sacred private space to the public; it only slightly allows the visitors to view while at the same time only permitting slithers of light into his buildings.

Another proposal expressing the notion of revealing privacy and the everyday is Hans Hollein's *Mobiles Büro* (1969). His inflatable enclosure provided for a nomadic office connected to the outside solely by telephone and telefax.

fig. 65. Hans Hollein, *Mobiles Büro* (1969)

129 James Attlee and Lisa Le Feuvre, *Gordon Matta-Clark : The Space Between*, ed. Centre for Contemporary Arts and Architectural Association (Tucson: Nazareli Press,, 2003), p. 38.
130 Ibid., p. 53.

In a way one could see these incursions of private exposure as a way of appropriation of the public space by blurring the differentiation between the private and the public. Acconci himself seems to point out these questions by stating:

"A public space is occupied by private bodies. These private bodies have hidden feelings, and private lives, and secret dreams. Underneath the manners, underneath civility, underneath the appearances, underneath the clothes, is a seething mass of anger and desire. The terrain of the public space is a plane, a platform that supports bodies; the terrain might have walls, either physical or metaphorical - it functions as a container of bodies. But the platform quakes, the container trembles at the boiling point. The wonder of the city is: with all these bodies crowded next to each other, one on top of the other - why aren't they all tearing each other's clothes off, why aren't they all fucking each other, left and right (and up and down, and in and out, and back and forth...)? The wonder of the city is: with all these bodies blocking each other, standing in each others way, why aren't they all tearing each other apart limb from limb, and wolfing each other down? Public space is the last gasp of the civilized world; public space is the Great White Hope; public space is belief and religion; public space is wishful thinking."[131]

131 Vito Acconci, in *La Generazione delle Immagini*, ed. Roberto and Senaldi Pinto, Marco (Milan: Settore Giovani del Comune di Milano, 1994-95).

07.   *the dilution of the context*

We could argue about the semantics of context but to simplify one could say that within the architectural and artistic disciplines context is defined as the setting one takes into account when acting in a specific space. Adherence to context usually implies a limit to formal freedom or the requirement of acknowledged codes implied in relation to the existing setting. It is in that sense that context will be treated as a type of boundary condition.

Performance art became forcefully entwined with location and context as it left the gallery space. It not only confronted a social reality but also a physical reality. The setting was no longer a blank space but a rich field of possible relations.

Architecture faced the same dilemmas, as it was trying to free itself from rules, which also meant understanding context in a new way. The relationship to context had started to be understood in the same way architecture is, by not mimicking the existing, but in creating a dialogue with its surroundings. Not from the traditional position like in architecture of cultural or vernacular contextualism but of abstraction, interrelation and contamination. This approach offered a new understanding and possibilities for encounters, simultaneity in the relationship that makes up a new context and a new reality. In a way it would be like building atmospheres[132].

New solutions were imagined to deal with a necessity for these new relationships to context that ignored such things as conventions, stativity, and homogeneity, and negotiated solutions for a broad audience. Instead it required experimental solutions found for example, in parasitic architecture, non-architecture or non-planning, participatory architecture, ephemeral architecture and architecture that chose to ignore context altogether as an independent system.

•Parasitic architecture because it establishes a parasitic symbiotic relationship to the existing structure of a city or building.
•Non-architecture and Non-planning proposed an weaker way of intervening that would adapt to the needs and requirements on inhabitants over time.
•In participatory architecture the social took precedence over context. Architects were limiting their role.

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[132] The author cannot find the quote where Allison Smithson writes that in future architect will become builders of atmospheres.

•Ephemeral or nomadic architecture implicitly had no need to relate to context and acts as an independent structure and hardly affects the existent settings.

It is worth mentioning just a few of these ideas with some examples that often treated context as a limiting boundary to be transgressed, used, re-imagined...

In the decade of the 60's, architecture tended to become 'weaker' and 'weaker' (with some exceptions such as the Italian Radicals). Archigram's process in that sense can be extremely well observed as with each magazine one can notice a dematerialization of the architecture. The projects become 'weaker' and less dependent on infrastructure. One of their proposals *Walking City* (1964), for example, had become nomadic.

fig. 66.   Ron Herron, Archigram, *A Walking City* (1964)

"While the infrastructures of 'Megastructuralism' and 'Metabolism' were designed with capacity for organic growth, the consideration of environmental planning was until then explored very little. Its time frame is housed on either side of the oil crisis, hence only assuming a questionable commitment to the environment. Its urban proposals soon proved inadequate and were replaced from 1964 for prosthetic and specific actions on the existing city. In contrast to the utopian scenarios and top-down visions, new effective reflections about the real city and its concrete context began to proliferate." [133]

As the quote implies, there was a change in the second part of the sixties and early seventies in the way of interacting with the environment and also with context.

Plug In City (1964) by Archigram stands as a paradigm of this process and weakening of the Megastructures. A superframe was still included in the idea but just as a way to connect power, air and general installations in order to live in capsules. David Greene expressed concern that the plug in system was being understood for its formal appeal as a Megastructure rather than a system and a positioning that sought the dilution of the architecture.

fig. 67.   Jean-Louis Chaneac, *La Bulle Pirate* (1971)

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[133] Nieves Mestre Martínez, "Ciudad Intrusa Y Ciudad Simbionte: Desde La Autosuficiencia a La Ecología Urbana," *Ángulo Recto* 6, no. 2 (2014).
"Aunque las infraestructuras del Megaestructuralismo y Metabolismo se diseñaron con capacidad de crecimiento orgánico, la reflexión ambiental del urbanismo era hasta ese momento un tema poco explorado. Su rango temporal se emplaza a uno y otro lado de la crisis del petróleo, asumiendo un compromiso cuestionable con la ecología. Sus esquemas urbanos se demostraron pronto inadecuados[12], y fueron sustituidos a partir de 1964[13] por acciones protésicas y puntuales sobre la ciudad existente. Frente a los escenarios utópicos y las visiones cenitales de los primeros, empezaron a proliferar las reflexiones efectivas sobre la ciudad real y su entorno concreto."

Kinder wachsen rasch.
Die Wolken wachsen mit ihnen.

Städte brauchen immer mehr Platz, jeder freie Fleck wird verschlungen. Gärten gibt es nicht mehr. Auch nicht für Kinder. Dafür gibt es Wolken. Kinder-Wolken aus PVC, die hoch oben zwischen den Wohntürmen hängen. Und die so wie Wolken sind, die sich Kinder vorstellen. Weich, luftig, zum Hineinspringen und Verstecken. Wolken verändern sich. Auch die Kinder-Wolken. Sie werden größer mit den Kindern. Weiter, geräumiger, aufgetürmt zum Spielen und Turnen. Solange bis Kinder nicht mehr nur in Wolken schweben.

fig. 68. Angela Hareiter, *Kinderwolken* (1966-67)

fig. 69. Haus Rucker Co., *Environment transformer* (1968)

"Plugging-in…defines an attitude not a style; a way of thinking that shows a shift from the building to the device. A shift from aesthetics to the way portable hardware restructures our behaviour. The city is merely a giant sockery, and architecture has ceased to carry any symbolic value and has thus become irrelevant except maybe as a technology of containers of some sort."[134]

Other examples include Chaneac´s *La Bulle Pirate* (1971) extension of a flat in a building, whereas Haus-Rucker-Co.´s *Environment transformer* (1968) was an appliance similar to an astronaut´s helmet that was designed to transform sensory impressions to create experiences. They were aimed at reducing consistent apathy. *Environment Transformer* was closer to the idea of a prosthetic device.
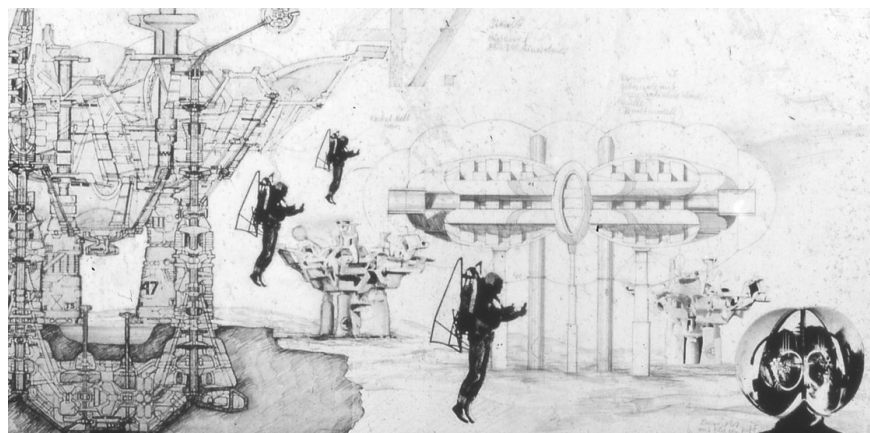
There were, however, lesser-known examples like Angela Hareiter´s *Children Cloud* (1966) that in fact evidenced deep concern with context in the social conditions of the city. In this project Hareiter proposes a bubble attached to and connecting buildings that housed an idealist space for children to play in free of the polluted air and the feeling of the congested city. The project establishes a relationship through the denial of context by exposing, above other aspects, the pollution in the city.

In performance there was a need to understand context and its affect. André Lepecki says this relationship is corporeality; a word first used by a group of artists[135] to describe something that goes beyond the body establishing relationships with things

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[134] David Green, "Video Notebook," in *Archigram* (1972).

[135] André Lepecki, "Points of Convergence" (paper presented at the Performance and corporeality, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, 2014).

that are seen in relation to or contextualized. "*Corporeality, an understanding of the body as multiplicity an assemblage completely enmeshed in the real*"[136].

Colette Lumier for example, in a very literal understanding of acting on the urban fabric, created a series of street pieces dressed as a harlequin where she painted diagrammatic body parts in street crossings. Afterwards she would photograph them from the heights of buildings. She was introducing life in the literal term into the city, hearts, lips… but more interestingly she was proposing an 'engagemental' and propositional way to deal with context, a way of questioning and opening up a dialogue.

Collette Lumier was one of the artists participating in *Street Works* (1969-1970), a collective exhibition of performers of the downtown. The main commission was precisely acting on the street. Some of these works will be analysed in the context of participatory works in another chapter, such as Gordon Matta-Clark's *FOOD* (1972) project.

Gordon Matta-Clark used context as a way of inhabiting or colonizing existing architecture, both in his work as in the way he had started a trend in conversions of lofts in Soho.

Matta Clark´s attitude to context could be seen as a confrontation, for example by decontextualization from the artistic point of view. There are two ways one could argue Gordon Matta-Clark tried to decontextualize his work, in dehumanizing the space by removing personal objects from the houses [137], or decontextualizing by dissecting the performance pieces while converting them into snapshots, images, or videos of the actual performances. The pictures and recordings only refer to blurred contextual information of what happened in a precise moment, but the actual experience has vanished and thus decontextualized.

The latter is the case for his piece *Bingo* (1974). The artist first set out rules that he would follow mapping the pieces to be demolished on a photograph. The result resembled
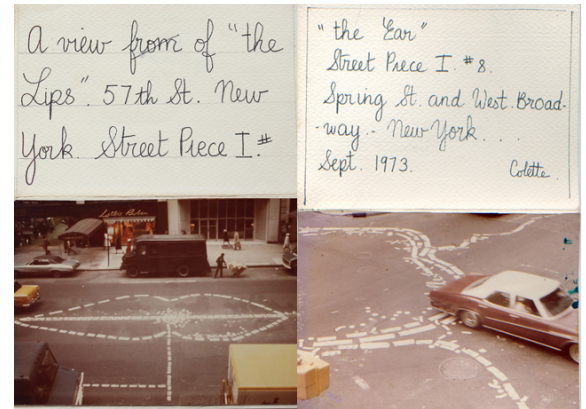
fig. 70.   Colette Lumier, *A view of the Lips, Street Piece I* and *The Ear, Street Piece I #8* (1973)

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136 Ibid., min. 17.
137 Storefront for Art and Architecture, "A Film Screening and Discussion with Kelly Baum, Liza Béar, Jessamyn Fiore, Gh Hovagimyan, Mark Wigley and Marcelo López-Dinardi," in *Screening Series: Visiting Splitting* (2014).

the scorecard of a Bingo Game[138] (3x3). He then proceeded to the demolishing of the marked pieces 1-8 leaving only a ninth of the façade of the building. This piece left of the façade had the number 9 written on it, to suggest hearing someone shout out the word "*house*" and claim the prize.

In this piece there is a shift in the performance action again to a de-contextualization. The intervention is not understood without the scorecard drawn on the photograph, suggesting that this piece moves away from the temporality and experience but enters the linguistic or semantics realm closer to conceptual art. The piece's context stops being neither the setting nor the social but the abstract.

In a way these examples of Matta-Clark point to an interesting notion or rupture with context, or to a construction of new meaning for context through its denial.

fig. 71.   Gordon Matta-Clark, *Bingo* (1974)

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[138] "Bingo is a game of chance played with randomly drawn numbers which players match against numbers that have been pre-printed on 5x5 matrices [or any other matrix such as 3x3] … Many versions conclude the game when the first person achieves a specified pattern from the drawn numbers. The winner is usually required to call out the word "Bingo!" [or "House]*, which alerts the other players and caller of a possible win." Wikipedia.

04] *fragility, desobjectalisation, and disappearance*

11r] *Transparence de l'infra-mince*
Suivant le matériau employé l'infra mince donne des transparences calculables par un faisceau de lumière de plus en plus fort quand le matériau passe de l'animal au végétal et au minéral (par ex. feuille de cuivre sera-t-elle toujours opaque). Autre ex. feuille d'or est-elle infra mince ?
Physiqu' infra mince est-il réalisable à une valeur µ-demander ?
Loupe pour « toucher » - inframince
Chercher dans quel corps de métier on se sert d'instruments à mesurer épaisseur (marchands de plaques de cuivre) qui vont jusqu'à quelle minceur ? 1/10 mm = 100 µ = minceur des papiers
Morceau d'étoffe gorge de pigeon acheté à Grenoble / soie changeant (support d'infra mince visible) en opposition au velours à côté qui en frottant contre même velours donne inf mince auditif

Transparency of the infra-thin
Depending on the material used, the infra-thin gives computable transparencies by an increasingly strong beam of light when the material passes from the animal to the vegetable and the mineral (e.g. will a copper sheet always be opaque). Other ex. Is gold leaf infrathin?
Physics: infrathin; can it be engineered to a value of µ - ask?
Magnifier to "touch" - infrathin
Look for in what trade people use instruments to measure the thickness (traders of copper plates) which thickness do they go to? 1/10 mm = 100 µ = thinness of the leafs.
Piece of cloth "pigeon throat" bought in Grenoble / changing silk (visible infra-thin support) in contrast to the velvet side which rubbing against even velvet gives infrathin sound.

This chapter will attempt to give readings on the ways in which issues such as 'desobjectalisation' and the tendency of disappearance surged in many disciplines amidst the social changes that were happening post war industrialization. It is fascinating to see how this not only shaped aesthetics or form, but instead how it profoundly changed a way of working on and understanding art and architecture.

It is interesting to juxtapose the changes that came about with Conceptual Art – which is at the root of performance art – and Architecture after the tiredness of the discourse post CIAM 8 (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Modern 8).

Within this in mind, we will attempt to show common aspects that reflect on fragility and 'desobjectualization', many of which are still very relevant even for us nowadays; 'Impresence'[139], reduction to the minimal, and ephemerality, and process-oriented rather than final working, became entrenched in this new approach towards architecture and art.

It is important to emphasize that these changes really revolutionized two decades, while producing profound paradigmatic shifts that even went so far as for Jean Baudrillard to write in 1990 (acknowledging the disenchantment post eighties):

"There is much talk of a dematerialization of art, as evidenced, supposedly, by minimalism, conceptual art, ephemeral art[140], anti-art and a whole aesthetic of transparency, disappearance and disembodiment. In reality, however, what has occurred is a materialization of aesthetics everywhere under an operational form."[141]

This thesis, however, upholds that this shift and profound understanding of, and a long-lasting transformation in, art and architecture allowed it to break down dogmas that could no longer withstand the changes in our cities. And at the same time, provoked a new way of relating to audiences and the art market.

The following quote by Paul Ardenne summarizes how these two decades seem to foster experimentation and in general challenging the norm.

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[139] Term used by José Angel Valente in Antonio Dominguez Rey, *José Angel Valente* (Editorial Verbum, 2002).
[140] The author believes he is referring to Performance Art.
[141] Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena* (Verso, 1993), p. 16

"To undermine the dogma of the conventional vision that the system of art establishes, unsurprisingly, is also a way for an artist to explore other sensory paths; it preludes an unprecedented investigation of the delicate."[142]

It was precisely this exploration to the delicate that will be the object of the chapter, since it reflects on the idea that often the intangible or the invisible can often be the essential.

"The value of Performance Art lies in its unpretentiousness, its fragility"[143]

However, this is also true of many of the architectural works that will be examined in this chapter. The specific topics are:

art and architecture as a process (process art) and the unstable environment
> This part of the chapter will investigate the importance of art and architecture losing a concrete form and in what way these disciplines responded by replacing final objects by models in which process became more important than finished objects.

formal disappearance / tracelessness
> These ideas will be studied with examples that show a tendency toward disappearance either in the intention of not leaving traces or with the objective of using minimal material.

the lack of commercial value and the impossibility of preservation
> In art one of the biggest changes was the move from museums and galleries to the street and natural landscapes or from the stationary quality of an object to the ephemerality of an action. In what way was it important, and what did it mean to performance art?

the ephemeral value / event
> This section of the chapter will try to explain why ephemerality and the concept of event were so present in architecture during the sixties.

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142 Paul Ardenne, *Un Arte Contextual: Creación Artística En Medio Urbano, En Situación, De Intervención, De Participación*, trans. Francoise Mallier, paris 2002. 1 ed. (Cendeac, 2006), p. 23.
"Atentar contra la política tradicional de la visión que el sistema del arte instaura, sin sorpresa, es también para el artista explorar otras vías sensoriales, preludio a un investigación inédita de lo sensible."

143 *Performance, Eine Andere Dimension / Performance, Another Dimension* :, ed. Kirsten Martins, Peter P. J. Sohn, and Bethanien Künstlerhaus (Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1983), p. 221.

de-authorize

The symbolic value was lost during modernity but authorship had also started to fade. How and why did collective working and the disappearance of authorship become so relevant to the work produced and how did it materialise?

reproduction / impresence

The aim in this part is twofold: on the one hand to discover what is left behind when the action or performance piece is over, and on the other how in its reproduction it transforms and becomes something else.

01. *art[144] and architecture as a process and the unstable environment*

"The formative processes, or the establishing processes are more important than the finished work. Conceptual art is the culmination of the 'processual aesthetics'."[145]

Similarly to Simón Marchán Fiz, Udo Kultermann in 1967 explains the impossibility of art as an end. This shift of paradigm begins with Conceptual Art. Ideas or concepts would no longer have a concrete form, belonging to the imprecise or unfinished, and would only exist within a process. They began to be thought of in relation to other entities as a part of an infinite and interconnecting map, resembling a neurological system.

Performance art is a form of conceptual art,[146] and as such has, in its essence and formulation, ideas and concepts that are more important than form[147]. Since concepts cannot be expressed through pure formalization, they were often associated to texts and thoughts. In the case of performance, happenings or land art, they often relied on place or time.

Performance art had become unique and in most cases unrepeatable. Therefore, performance was more often ephemeral. Since these pieces rarely consisted of concrete objects or formalizations they, moreover, would not risk dying out as a consequence of tiredness of a specific form or shape.

For Kulterman, art in general terms remains linked to social changes. [148] He describes it as a sign of the emancipation of man, making the case that art inevitably develops parallel to man and society. He then, accordingly argues, that performance art could only be understood as an integral part of the continuous process of artistic creation bound to social changes.

Art had, as always, been a medium of expression for society and the individual in a specific context, and in a way there is nothing new to this affirmation, but now it stopped being a static image of one particular time. Instead, it diffused periods of

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144 Contextual art, Conceptual art and process art the author believes are broader categories with qualities often found in performance art. Performance art is just a sub category were that artists actions and involvements are the fundamental part of the piece.

145 Simón Marchan Fiz, *Del Arte Objetual Al Arte De Concepto*, 5th edition ed. (Ediciones Akal, 1986), p. 249. "Importan más los procesos formativos, de constitución, que la obra terminada y realizada. El arte conceptual es la culminacíon de la 'estética procesual'."

146 TATE, "Glossary of Terms," http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/p/performance-art.

147 Ibid.

148 Udo Kultermann, *Art and Life* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 8.

time, societies, etc.; the art piece no longer belonged to a specific artist but as an illustration of a collective feeling in continuous transformation.

These 'illustrations' were therefore experimental at first. Lucy Lippard describes the transition between the experimental and the conceptual:

"During the 1960's, the anti-intellectual, emotional/intuitive process of art making characteristic of the last two decades have begun to give way to an ultra-conceptual art that emphasizes the thinking process almost exclusively."[149]

What has been said about art also stands true about architecture, especially when looking at what we term utopian architecture. There was a twofold interest in experimentation and intellectual process. But another important factor that made the actual process more imperative, was that Architecture had become participatory, contextual and ephemeral.

"When surroundings are thought of as stable, we tend to lose a feeling of responsibility for the environments in which we move. Space becomes a background for interaction rather than a co-producer of interaction. But what takes place is, in fact, a double movement: The user's interaction with other people co-produces space, which in turn is a co-producer of interaction. By focusing on our agency in this critical exchange, it is possible to bring our spatial responsibility to the fore."[150]

What Olafur Eliasson describes brilliantly about our time was very much in the understanding of many architects during the sixties. It was the principles of architecture as a discipline that had become unstable.

As a response architects became experimental, obliged by the need to reassess tired dogmas. Participatory architecture or auto-constructs allowed architecture to become part of an ever-changing system. No need to conform to the established or normative rules, a new stance that allowed for experimentation. It also meant new parameters to consider, such social context and rapidly changing new realities.

This participatory architecture that started in the sixties, was probably more authentic and more real than what is now considered participatory architecture such as, for example, Alejandro Aravena´s awarded project *Quinta Monroy* (2001). It was not

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[149] Lucy R. and Chandler Lippard, John, "The Dematerialization of Art," *Art Forum International* 6 6(1968): p. 31.
[150] Olafur Eliasson, *Los Modelos Son Reales / Models Are Real* (Barcelona: Gustavo Glli, 2009), p.7.w

simply about letting users "finish" their houses. Fundamentally it was about direct decision-making and consideration during the whole process by the users.[151]

Consequently new more adaptable solutions were explored. It gave way to new materialities or structures in response to temporality. There was a need for open systems that could continuously be transformed, not just as a dissolution of the limit, but in the sense of adaptation to new contexts.
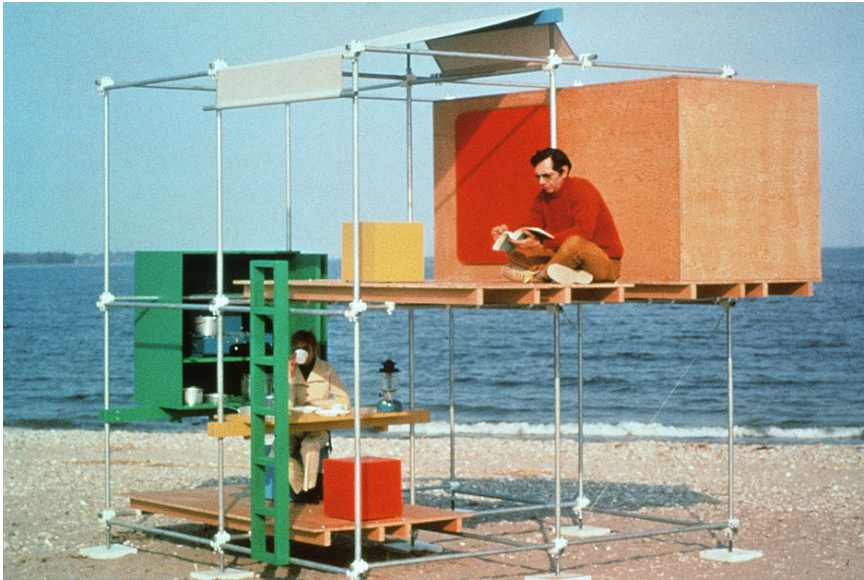
fig. 72.   Ken Isaacs, *Beach Matrix* (1967)

Ken Isaacs offered manuals as guidance to do-it-yourself users, Kristian Gullichsen's and Juhani Pallasmaas' *Moduli 225* or Yona Friedman´s in-frathin structures that would be colonised by users offered open-ended possibilities through user configurations. One of these proposed participatory projects is *Beach Matrix* (1967) by Ken Isaacs. In this proposal the idea was to offer possible configurations that could be continuously transformed by users at any time.

The other fantastic example mentioned, *Moduli 225* (1969), is a house based on a 2.25m x 2.25m modular prefabricated system. The interior could be configured by

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adhering to a modulation of prefabricated panels that came in three variations: wooden, wooden strips or glass, depending on the users' interior configuration.

Sixty of these houses were built. They included the possibility of being dismantled and rebuilt as needed, so they could be used as vacation homes.

fig. 73.   Kristian Gullichsen and Juhani Pallasma, *Moduli 225* (1969)

The Architect's role was no longer to assure permanence through formal coherence or materiality, but to adapt to infinite contexts and possibilities of 'unstable relations'[152].

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[152] Eliasson, *Los Modelos Son Reales / Models Are Real*, p. 9.

02.   *formal disappearance / tracelessness*

Robert Barry stands as a good example for what Lucy Lippard describes as "*Dematerialization of the Art Object*"[153]. Barry was one of Seth Siegelaub's Gallery artists who proposed art that wanted to become free of the "*art-world commodity status*"[154]. His line of working, of dematerialization of art, originates from the piece, *Inert Gas Series* (1969) where the material of the art piece is invisible.

In this piece he presents the process of displacement of matter where gas is captured and stored in a container to be released again somewhere in the desert. The action is only documented with a photograph.

Nonetheless, there is no true dematerialization of an object in the strictest sense. There is an idea of portraying an invisible object. Moving it from one place to another.

As we will also see later on when we look at 'impresence', what is interesting in Barry´s work is that he consciously works with a material that is invisible to our senses yet still exists, in fact has mass and can be measured.

"'Inert Gas' pieces were an attempt to use material – inert gas – which is an undetectable material, you can't smell it or see it, and use this material to create a kind of large environmental sculpture, if you will. It was one of the last works that I did in '69, where I actually used physical material. And so it was a kind of transitional work, in that I was still using material, even though one's understanding of the work and appreciation really had to be totally mental. One would have to use one's imagination. I used inert gas – neon, helium, xenon, krypton – because they were, first of all, called the "noble gases". I always thought they were sort of romantic. They were completely unknown about 100 years ago, we didn't know they existed, and yet we breathe them in and exhale them, we live around them and move in these inert gases. They have very beautiful names, like "new", "hidden" – their names in Greek are quite nice…"[155]

This is interesting in relationship to Pickerty's idea that small particles in physics only become visible once you look at or agitate their context.[156] This is often necessary to understand the invisible, which is similar what this thesis is trying to do.

Barry continued, after this piece, to work on other pieces that explored the idea of creating nothing. In *Carrier Wave* (1969) he used a wave at very high frequency

fig. 74.   Robert Barry, *Inert Gas Series* (1969)

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153   Lippard, "The Dematerialization of Art."
154   Lucy Lippard, 'Escape Attempts' A. Goldstein, A. Rorimer, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975 (Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), p. 296.
155   Vitus H. Weh, "A Conversation with Robert Barry," http://www.mip.at/attachments/180.
156   Andrew Pickering, *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Science* (University of Chicago Press, 1995).

fig. 75.   Michael Web, *Suitaloon Archigram* (1967)

to create interferences with any other devices – such as a transistor radio – that were near the place where he was exhibiting. Thereby, he would seek to 'silence' everything else around the gallery.

"I noticed that my friend would listen in to Moscow Radio and when Moscow Radio came on, the transmitters were so powerful that when they first turned them on – when the transmitters were warming up, for about an hour or so – they would just blot out everything else on that frequency, so all the other stations just went completely silent. So for about an hour, there was this complete silence on that frequency. And I thought that was a kind of interesting idea – that it was no space, no nothing, it was just absolutely silent."[157]

The concept was having something invisible and with no visible form that in reality could be measured and in fact, designed extremely precisely. Another notable aspect of the piece is that the carrier waves themselves were 'affected'[158] by the audience in the gallery and would therefore interact with the visitors.

In architecture just as we saw in performance art, there was a similar interest in the idea of minimum material, displacement, and reuse as in Barry´s pieces. Predominantly, what challenged various architects was attempting to achieve greater freedom through the reduction of the dependence on traditional building methods and materials. It was a question of reduction of the materiality to a minimum. To some it meant nomadic architecture, hippie architecture, and to others it meant scaling architecture to the body; that is to the weight that could be carried such as, for example, inflatable architecture.

 "It used to seem a nice idea to carry your environment around with you (spaceman, cushicle, suitaloon) but it can be as much as a drag as having it stuck in one place" it just freed *"from the pornography known as buildings"[159]*

Archigram's work was a natural procession to architecture without architecture[160]. Archigram had started with Megastructures at the beginning of the sixties and had reduced their proposals to the minimum of survivals with the *Suitaloons* towards 1968. Archigram expressed a linear reduction of materiality in their proposals, this process can most clearly be appreciated in the Archigram magazines.

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157 Weh, "A Conversation with Robert Barry".
158 Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (MIT Press, 2003), p. 115.
159 David Greene quoted in Hadas A. Steiner, Beyond Archigram : *The Structure of Circulation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 228.
160 Simon Sadler, Archigram : *Architecture without Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachussets. London: MIT Press, 2005), p. 8.
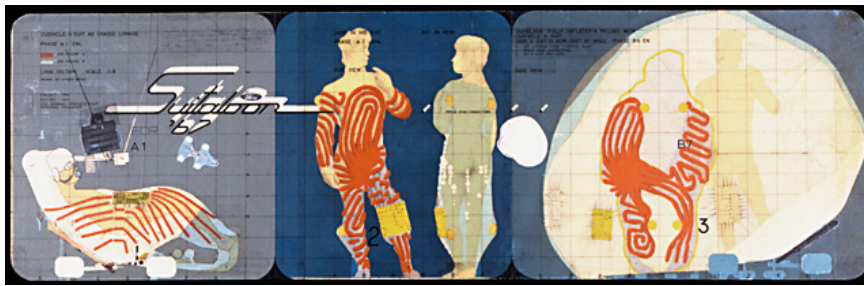
fig. 76.   Michael Web, *Suitaloon Archigram* (1967)

 "In seven years the discussion has shifted: first from a search for form to the throwaway building. From this to the notion of the all-happening city and from this, inevitably to the future of the 'building' as such. In Archigram Seven the notion of assemblies of programmed or designed objects was beginning to loosen-up so that it is no surprise to us that Archigram Eight is entirely concerned with the problem of direct personal provision: of comfort, facility, satisfaction, enquiry, and above all the effect of all kinds of phenomena upon each other."[161]

"if it wasn't for my Suitaloon I would have to buy a house."[162]

In *Village de Vacances en Carton* by Guy Rottier (1969) the idea of the disappearance of materiality was taken to its upmost literality. The temporary houses were burned down each year after the holidays.
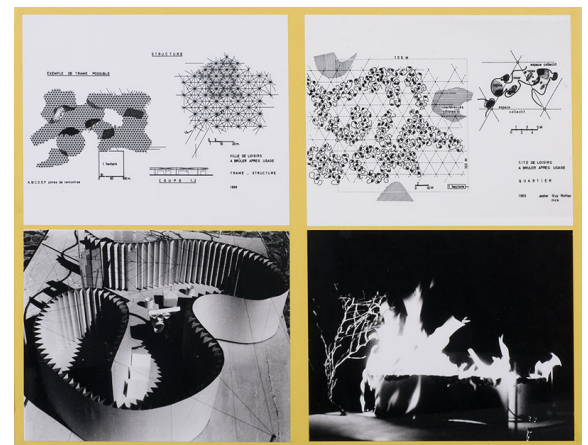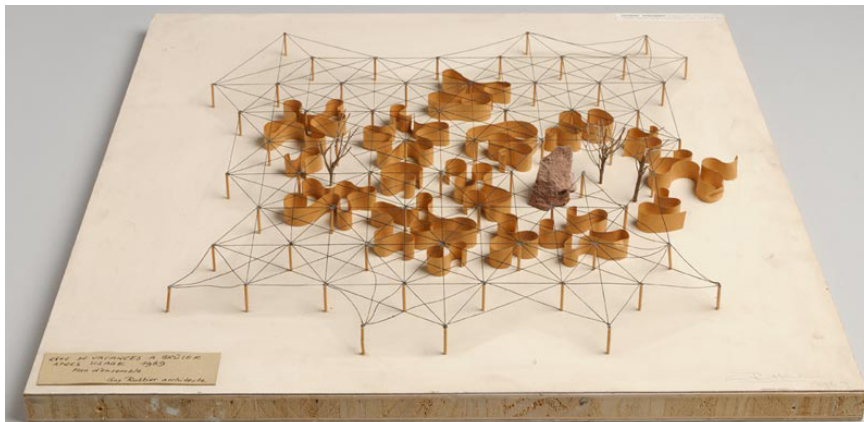
fig. 77.   Guy Rottier, *Village de vacances en carton à Brûler après usage* (1969)

fig. 78.   Guy Rottier, *Cité de vacances à brûler après usage. Plan d'ensemble* (1969)

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[161] Peter Cook, Archigram 8 Editorial Steiner, Beyond Archigram : *The Structure of Circulation*.
[162] Michael Web, Archigram 8 ibid.
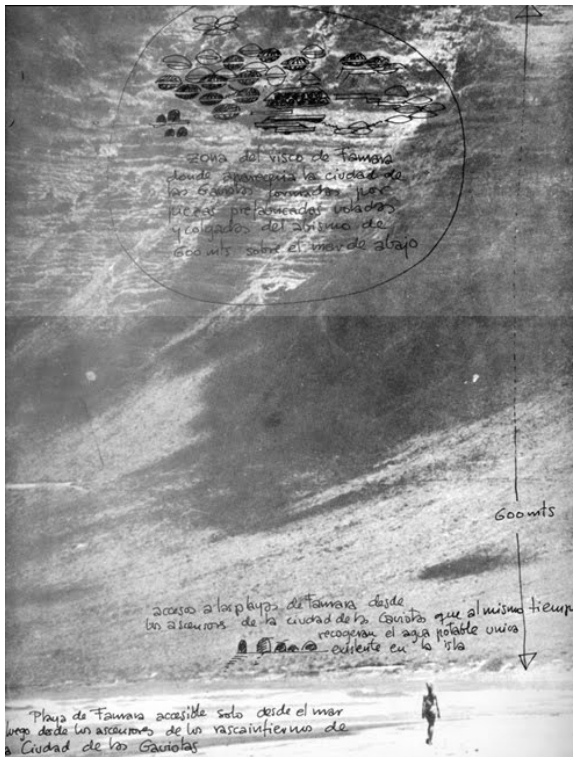
fig. 79.
fig. 80. Fernando Higueras, *La Ciudad de las Gaviotas* (1972)

Two more projects worth mentioning in this context are a proposal by Spanish architect Fernando Higueras and a partnership between the artist Yves Klein and the architect Claude Parent.

Both projects attempt a reduction of materiality to a minimum and are concerned with the idea of leaving a minimal trace.

The project of Higueras' captures his fascination for the landscape of Famara in the Canary Islands. The project *La Ciudad de las Gaviotas* (1972) proposed a series of platforms for gardens and swimming pools within existing caves. These caves would protrude only slightly, while trying to achieve a minimal impact on the natural landscape.
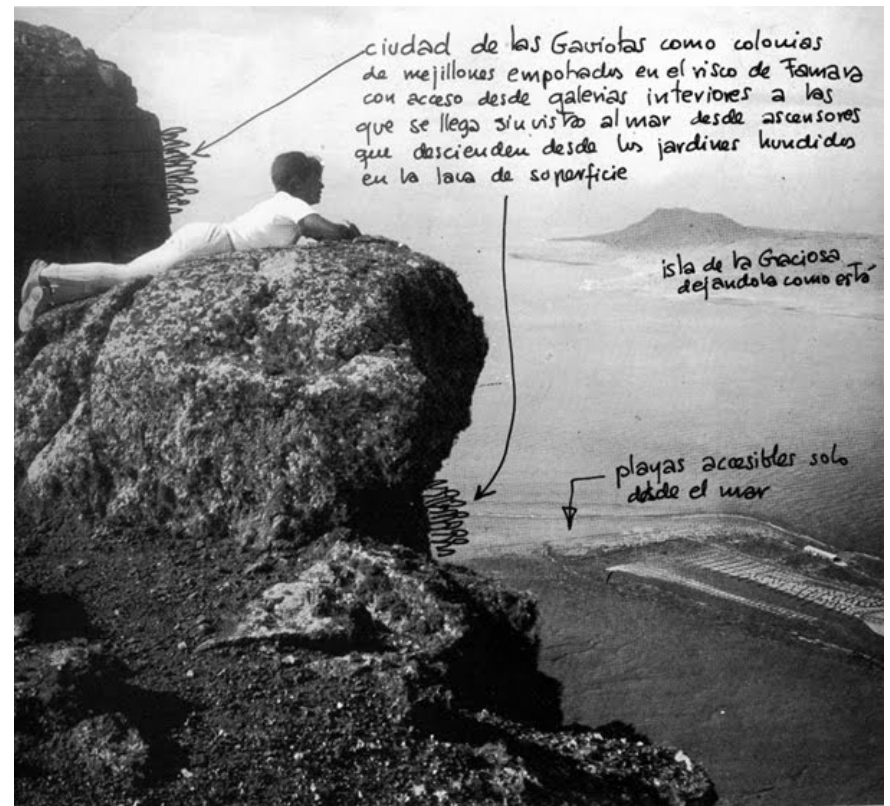
Or, perhaps even more invisible, would be Yves Klein's and Claude Parent's proposal for *Air Conditioned City - Access to technical Eden*[163] (1961) which would remind us of Robert Barry's piece described earlier, but is in this case an architectural piece. The couple felt the need to find the most minimal impact on the surface of the ground. The pair speculated with the idea of making the planet a continuously featureless surface. This idea probably came from the recognition that the planet was suffering irreversible scarring from industrialization. Their piece was an attempt at "*Living with no traces, leaving no traces, no carbon footprint.*" [164] This is very much in the same line that architects have been working on recently, as for example Philippe Rahm.

Nevertheless, there was also a search for freedom by Klein just as we saw in Archigram's piece, through minimum materiality.

"*The willpower of Man will at last regulate life on a constantly "wonderful" level. Man is so free he can even levitate! His occupation: leisure. The obstacles that traditional architecture used to put up with will be eliminated. Body care will occur through new methods, such as "The air bed."* [165]

Yves Klein was extremely passionate with the idea of immateriality or "*desobjectalisation*" of art and he famously gave a conference at the Sorbonne on June 3, 1959 with the title *L'evolution de l'art vers l'immatériel* [The Evolution of Art Toward the Immaterial]. He was one of the clearest voices behind this trend but there were many others in the search to minimize materiality.

fig. 82.   Yves Klein, Cité climatisée-"Accés à l'eden technique" (1961)

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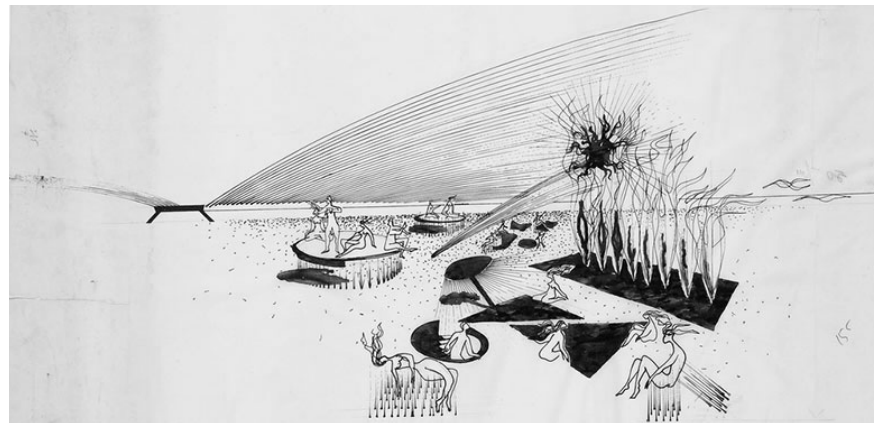
[163] *Cité climatisée — "Accés `a l'eden technique"*
[164] Philippe Vergne, *Earth, Wind, and Fire or to Overcome the Paradox of Yves Klein, the Molecular Child Who Wrote to Fidel Castro on His Way to Disneyland* (Walker Art Center, Walker Publications, 2010), pp. 42-66.
[165] Yves Klein Cited in The Origins of Air GridVictoria Watson, *Utopian Adventure: The Corviale Void* (Taylor & Francis, 2016).
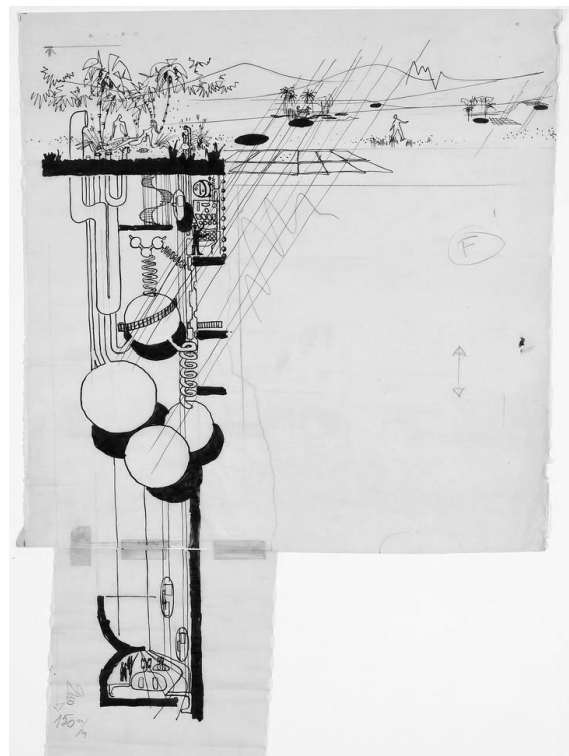
03. the ephemeral value / event

The event must probably came after the realization that in modern cities expansion was so great that 'suburbians' could no longer reach the city centres. Being left without access to city centres, also implied they were not able to reach spaces that contained culture and activities and social encounters; in brief, the city no longer served all inhabitants.

The value of a city was often understood in connection with the amount of culture and social interaction it contained. This concept was interesting to artists. It was the case of the Situationists and paralleled by thinkers such as Roland Barthes, who writes in 1970:

"…..the center of our cities is always full: a marked site, it is here that the values of civilization are gathered and condensed: spirituality (churches), power (offices), money (banks), merchandise (department stores), language (agoras: cafes and promenades): to go downtown or to the city-center is to encounter the social "truth," to participate in the proud plenitude of "reality."[166]

The response was to create 'architecture' that would provide for events that in turn would 'construct' cities. Bringing cities to suburbia implied that events had to leave the stability of symbolic buildings such as theatres and move about to suburbia often using ephemeral structures.

Some of these structures were purposefully created in the Situationists' understanding allowing for ad hoc situations or random encounters. Events could pop up anywhere. Archigram's '*Instant City*' (1968) stands as a paradigm of such a way of understanding its functioning. The value of cities for the Situationists lay in what occurred in these cities. Architecture was to create place rather than space.

"Cities should generate, reflect and activate life, their structure organized to precipitate life and moments. Situation, the happenings within spaces in the city, the transient throwaway world of people, the passing presence of cars, etc., are as important, possibly more important than the built environment, the built demarcation of space."[167]

Archigram were interested in the spontaneity that could occur in cities: the event that was not planned.

fig. 83. Archigram, *The Instant City* (1968)

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[166] Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, 1989 ed. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), p. 30.
[167] Archigram, *Living Cities Exhibition*, 1963.

fig. 84.   Archigram, *The Instant City* (1968)

Ant Farm expressed the same idea with their *Clean Air Pod* (1970) creating inflatable pods that would serve as incubators for artistic expression, such as a performance with Andy Shapiro and Kelly Gloger at the University of California, Berkeley. Ant Farm produced various events, manifestos, videos, performances and installations. As Paolo Dagnello expressed, the event was more important than the architecture itself.

"The form in architecture has become a really secondary concern; it is a transformable, infinitely configurable event.[168]

Inflatables often were seen as the minimum structure or shelter needed to allow for an event to take place. What made it interesting was their ephemerality and transparency, as they became nearly invisible in the settings placed.

fig. 85.   Ant Farm, *Clean Air Pod* (1970)

"As a child in the mid-seventies I remember that Haus Rucker Co. (an important architect´s group in Austria) created a large space with giant inflatable mattress and lots of clear balloons. The visitors were allowed to jump on them… This event remained in my memory as a happening. I am not sure, though, if I understood it as such already then, or this came later on."[169]

Carola Dertnig, author of *Perform, Perform, Perform*, was referring to the Haus-Rucker-Co.'s *Giant Billiard* (1970), which an equal amount of pieces of the period placed

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[168]   Paolo Deganello cited in, Pablo Martinez Capdevila, "Tesis Doctoral: Andrea Branzi Y La "Città Senza Architectura" (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2014), p. 133.

[169]   Email from Carola Dertnig to Yvonne Rainer June 19th 2012

in the intersection of performance art and architecture. Where the event was the central conceptual idea.

fig. 86.   Haus Rucker Co., *Giant Billiard* (1970)

"From an architecture conceived in this way no formal or linear habit can grow, since the fundamental characteristics of Futurist architecture will be its impermanence and transience. Things will endure less than us. Every generation must build its own city. This constant renewal of the architectonic environment will contribute to the victory of Futurism which has already been affirmed by Words-in-freedom, plastic Dynamism, Music without quadrature and the Art of noises, and for which we fight without respite against traditionalist cowardice."[170]

To say that ephemerality is part of modern culture is not new. However, the urban phenomenon of a growing suburbia will make artists and architects elevate it to a social 'purpose', by way of seeking to inject peripheral neighbourhoods with 'culture' through temporary, removable, transportable installations.

These new forms become fixed in the architectural imagery.

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[170] Antonio Sant'Elia, "Manifesto of Futurist Architecture," (Milan 1914).

04.   *the lack of commercial value and the impossibility of preservation*

The inability to sell (not value) performance is one of its first characteristics. But eventually, some of the artist or their states will sell their photos, sketches, drawings, and even waste, which become relics for museums.

The most important point here is the inevitable commodification of art, which the artists themselves become part of, while often looking away. It is the commodification of everything that has become a sign of our time.

The more degraded the urban space, brownfields, neighbourhoods occupied by the homeless are, the higher in 'value' they become. This is through artists and their actions, which act as a signal - used by the market.

A permanent chase that is moving through the city, a process that is sometimes gentrification and at other times is simple renewal. The market can 'consume' neighbourhoods the same way it may 'consume' actions or performances through their wastes.

Neighbourhoods and urban areas with new artistic and commercial value, like all forms of waste, are suddenly considered relics, all a consequence of the artist as mediator in the market. As much as the artist (and precisely for that reason) rebels again and again against this reality, protesting over and over, it still re-enters the consumption cycle.

fig. 87.   Gordon Matta-Clark, *Bingo* (1974)

"Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance´s being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance"[171]

Peggy Phelan in *Unmarked* expresses the importance of the ephemerality of performance art, but she also explains how performance art "*resists the balanced circulation of finance*", referring to the attempt to get away from the commercial circuit.

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[171] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked : The Politics of Performance* (London New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 146.

Oct 76   Trisha Brown

fig. 88.   Trisha Brown, *Locus* (1975)

Performance art attempted to detach itself from the commercial value of art. This by moving out of the museums and galleries, but also by removing a sellable object. Performances did not leave any trace, and therefore no souvenir could be recovered in most cases. In other cases pieces were recovered, such as in the case of Gordon Matta-Clark. Or scripts of performances zealously kept in archives, such as Trisha Brown´s drawing for *Locus* (1975).

Even though they are an attempt at preservation and try to become sellable, these pieces are no longer performance art[172].

Phelan argues, based on J.L. Austin´s differentiation of constative element (a description) and performative element (to say to do or make something e.g. 'I promise', 'I bet', 'I beg'), that repetitions of performances become constative statements.[173] In other words they are simply descriptions of the original performance.

Another question arises as to the economic value of conceptual art. The same is also true for performance art. Previously to conceptual art, aesthetic evaluations were to some extent defining the value of the piece. How could conceptual art be valued once it would not entrust itself to traditional judgements?

"There is a parallel to this escalation in the art market itself. Here too, because an end has been put to any deference to the law of value, to the logic of commodities, everything has become 'more expensive than expensive' - expensive, as it were, squared. Prices are exorbitant - the bidding has gone through the roof. Just as the abandonment of all aesthetic ground rules provokes a kind of brush fire of aesthetic values, so the loss of all reference to the laws of exchange means that the market hurtles into unrestrained speculation.

The frenzy, the folly, the sheer excess are the same. The promotional ignition of art is directly linked to the impossibility of all aesthetic evaluation. In the absence of value judgements, value goes up in flames. And it goes up in a sort of ecstasy."[174]

These value judgements were often made through museums, critics or galleries. Valuation relied on things like artist trajectory, where their art had been exhibited and a whole set of unlinked qualities. It drove the economic value of art up the roof

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[172] Recently the moma acquired the right to a performance, but as repetitions, the autor believes, they differ to the original ideas and contexts
[173] Phelan, *Unmarked : The Politics of Performance*, p.149.
[174] Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, pp. 18-19.

and it also meant the selective process was driven by other factors away from the pieces themselves.

This was one of the reasons for artists to revolt against the institutions that governed the art world. It drove artists to collective working, leaving galleries and attempting new ways of expression, in search of sensitive appreciation rather than commodity. It is relevant to note that economic crisis was severe during much of the seventies, which caused notable frenzy in the art world. This had a profound impact on thinking in the arts.

What had also changed in the art world with the arrival of conceptual art is that it no longer had to fit within the constraints of good or bad, beautiful or ugly… art had become a collective process and an ad hoc expression of a process. Baudrillard goes a step further in stating its anthropological significance. The second part of the quote points to what is interesting to us: realizing that what is important is no longer in the visible field but somewhere else.

"So perhaps we ought to treat all present-day art as a set of rituals, and for ritual use only; perhaps we ought to consider art solely from an anthropological standpoint, without reference to any aesthetic judgment whatsoever [……]
We find ourselves in the realm either of ultra- or of infra-aesthetics. It is pointless to try to endow our art with an aesthetic consistency or an aesthetic teleology. That would be like looking for the blue of the sky at the level of infrared and ultraviolet rays."[175]

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[175] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

fig. 89. Lucinda Childs, Judson Dance Theatre, *Street Dance* (1964)
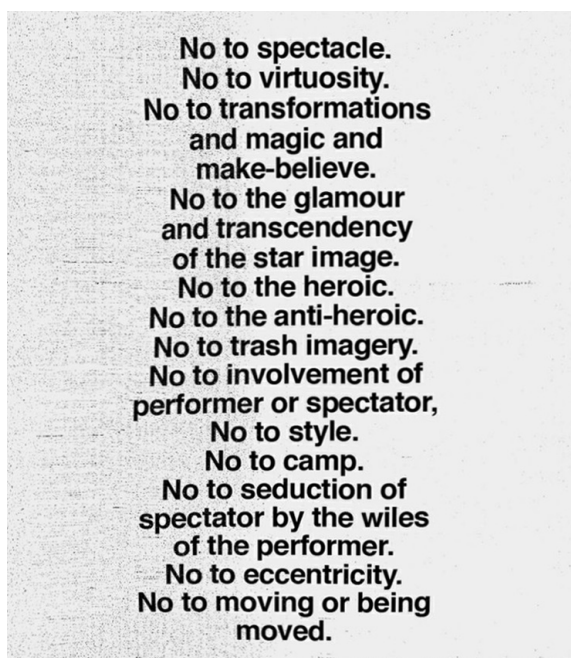
fig. 90. Yvonne Rainer, *No Manifesto* (1965)

05. de-authorising

The relationship between the social, the producer and the author had changed, as we saw in previous chapters. In performative actions the artist had become principally the producer delegating authorship. Consequently, he or she also lost ownership of the piece. The link between performer and authorship had been broken. This is an important shift, since the pieces no longer had a nameplate to their side placing them in the contextual line of the artists' previous and posterior work, or stating the collection they belonged to. The pieces became contextualised within space and social practice.

"The dance was entirely based on its found surroundings…we were engaged in pointing out… details and/or irregularities in the facades of the buildings: lettering and labels, the…display in the storefronts…while the spectators were not able to see in…detail…what it was we were pointing to, they could hear the information on a tape."[176]

In this piece called *Street Dance* (1964), which the quote describes, we can only rely on the descriptions and interviews from which this excerpt is taken, an interview with Lucinda Childs. The piece was performed by the Judson Dance Theatre. A company which was an example of collective production. In the piece, the audience had no idea who the person on the tape was nor to whom he was directing himself while he describes details of the scene pinpointed by the performers, such as urban furniture or signs. The performers choreograph their movements freely while engaging with city life as they go about their business performing[177]. All this mounts up to a disconnection and fragmentation of actors, making it unclear who is performing, creating, directing, etc. The piece no longer belongs to just one specific person; in this example it belongs to many, including the passers by, which inevitably get involved with the piece.

Yvonne Rainer in the '*No Manifesto*', highlights the importance of a collective and experimental approach that was prevalent in those years.[178]

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176 Lucinda Childs inContemporary Dance: *An Anthology of Lectures, Interviews and Essays with Many of the Most Important Contemporary American Choreographers, Scholars and Critics*, ed. Anne Livet (New York: Abbeville Press, 1978), pp. 61-63.
177 Valerie Briginshaw, *Dance, Space and Subjectivity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).
178 Many of the performers that are being mentioned in this thesis started at the Judson Dance collective, such as Trisha Brown, Meredith Monk or Yvonne Rainer. There was of course a convergence of artists in the downtown New your that encompassed architects (Matta -Clark..), musicians (John Cage), literature (Acconci) and others.
    All these artists belonging to the collective had worked under a certain anonymity and collective working, being the Judson Dance company, Fluxus, FOOD or the anarchitecture group during those years.

Roland Barthes wrote *The Death of the Author* in which, like a seismographer, he records the feeling existing in the sixties. In the following quote he speaks about literature, but it clearly could have been written for any artistic project as a response to disavowal of authorship.

"Nevertheless, the feeling about this phenomenon has been variable; in primitive societies, narrative is never undertaken by a person, but by a mediator, shaman or speaker, whose "performance" may be admired (that is, his mastery of the narrative code), but not his "genius." The author is a modern figure, produced no doubt by our society insofar as, [....] it discovered the prestige of the individual, or, to put it more nobly, of the "human person" [.....]We are now beginning to be the dupes no longer of such antiphrases, by which our society proudly champions precisely what it dismisses, ignores, smothers or destroys; we know that to restore to writing its future, we must reverse its myth: the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author." [179]

In architecture a good example of the attempt to distance oneself from authorship was probably Habraken´s *Supports Theory*. In his scheme the self-supporting structure would be the minimum intervention needed on the part of the architect. The supporting structure was to contain any element the inhabitants, such as a trailer or a garden. The sketch was included in the book *De Dragers en de Mensen*[180] which first appeared in 1961 and afterwards reappeared in the 1972 English edition *Supports*.
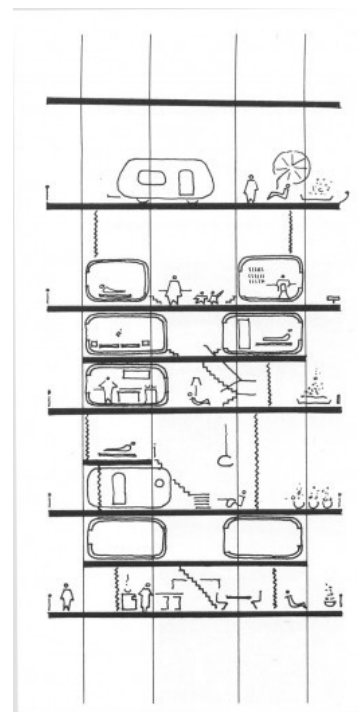
fig. 91.   Nicholas Habraken, *Supports theory* (1961)
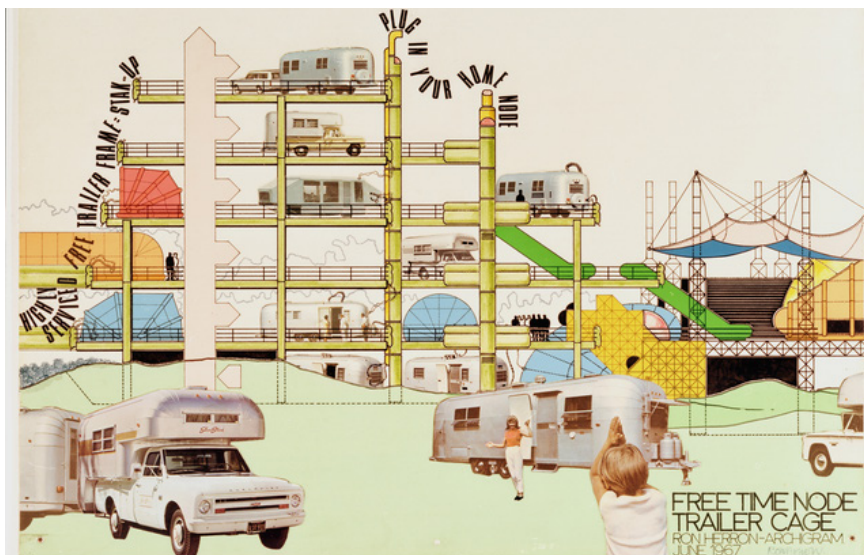
fig. 92.   Archigram, Ron Herron, *Free Time: Trailer Cage*, (1967)

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[179] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Manteia* (1967): pp. 2,6.
[180] The Supports / Carriers and the People

This project probably served to Archigram's as reference for *Free Time Node: Trailer Cage* (1967).[181]

In both cases the architects used the idea of frame structures for users to fill with their homes and belongings. Here, architecture was made by the users, themselves.

Another interesting reading that can be made from these minimal structures or architectural gests, is that with modernity, architecture had moved to a de-symbolization by adopting "*functionality*" as the focal idea. From then on up to postmodernism, where symbolism was once again re-introduced, there was a transitional period captured brilliantly by Umberto Eco where he describes architecture as 'communication'.

"In other words, the principle that form follows function might be restated: the form of the object must, besides making the function possible, denote that function clearly enough to make it practicable as well as desirable, clearly enough to dispose one to the actions through which it would be fulfilled."[182]
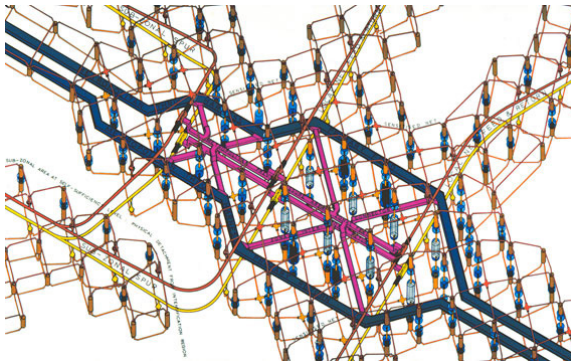
During this time, function, just as shelter, had become implied. Architecture became part of more complex systems such as Archigram´s *Computer City (1964)*, where it had become subservient to bigger ideas. It no longer defined form but enabled ideas.

"Alison and Peter Smithson in their House of the Future, had already proposed to release the object of its function, to include it in the architecture. Maybe in a naïve or perverse manner, in full expansion of consumer society, the Smithsons experimented on the possibility of an (almost) object-free functional architecture."[183]

With the Smithsons in the late 50´s we could already see how function had started to be taken for granted. Therefore the modernist need for buildings to resemble machines was no longer necessary.

fig. 93.   Archigram, *Computer City*, (1964)

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[181] Hector Garcia Sanchez, PhD Thesis "En Cada Casa Un Jardín" (Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2015), p. 129.
[182] Umberto Eco, "Function and Sign: Semiotics of Architecture," *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory, Neil Leach* (1976): p. 178.
[183] Fernando Espuelas, "Un Futuro Sin Memoria," DC PAPERS : Revista de Crítica y Teoría de la Arquitectura Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya 24(2012): p.16.
        "Alison y Peter Smithson en su Casa del Futuro, ya habían propuesto liberar la prestación del objeto para incluirla en la arquitectura. De manera tal vez ingenua, o tal vez perversa, en plena expansión de la sociedad de consumo, los Smithson experimentaron la posibilidad de una arquitectura de prestaciones (casi) sin objetos."

"If architecture is privileged in needing the past then for modern arch, the greatest of the past qualities order – measure are found in the machine.
These are admirable qualities law and order – But architecture is a search for qualities beyond the rule. A closer awareness of all the senses with little faith in the efficient army of problem solving – problems solved – non problems."[184]

Therefore architecture had not only become de-symbolised during modernity, but also freed itself form the burden of order and measure, to be able to relate more closely to a new-found conceptual engagement. The loss of the symbolic in the 70´s went beyond the loss of authorship, the collectivization of construction through everyday use and anonymity; it occurred through multiple ways of participation, constant transformation, minimal structures of relationships.

"We should all be busy persuading ourselves not to build but to prepare for the invisible networks in the air." [185]

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[184] Gordon Matta- Clark, "Gordon Matta-Clarks Art Cards " in *Gordon Matta-Clarks art cards* (The Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1973).
[185] David Greene quoted in Steiner, *Beyond Archigram : The Structure of Circulation*, p. 228.

06. 'impresence'

"Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance."[186]

What Phelan describes is the need for performance art to be ephemeral to exist. It is in precisely that quality of transformation of the past existence to its disappearance, that the piece suddenly becomes something, a stable memory. It is no longer affected by context. It is no longer performance as Phelan stresses.

"The act of writing toward disappearance, rather than the act of writing toward preservation, must remember that the after-effect of disappearance is the experience of subjectivity itself."[187]

However, performance art like all other conceptual arts, had a common ground, the transcendence of the concept beyond materialization. Through art and mediation, concepts could be materialized in one way or another, but most importantly, concepts would always remain and continue their existence even when matter disappeared. This in performance art theoretically took place when the action was over.

"...Through reproduction from one medium into another the real becomes volatile, it becomes the allegory of death, but it also draws strength from its own destruction, becoming the real for its own sake, a fetishism of the lost object which is no longer the object of representation, but the ecstasy of the degeneration and its own ritual extermination: the hyperreal.[188]"

It is not about "*representing the humane in its life context*" or representing an action in its context that "*would not be more than 'representations', productions of images*"[189]. It is an understanding that concepts can transcends reality.

Robert Barry describes his *Inert Gas Series* (1969) as sculpture. He describes the limits of material possibilities:

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[186] Phelan, *Unmarked : The Politics of Performance*, p. 146.
[187] Ibid., p.148.
[188] Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (Sage Publications (CA), 1993), pp 71-72.
[189] Ardenne, *Un Arte Contextual: Creación Artística En Medio Urbano, En Situación, De Intervención, De Participación*, p. 20.

"Sculpture is the only word I could think of for it, because they were, the boundaries were, theoretically, infinite. But because our technology isn't infinite, there were limits as to where we could actually perceive this piece to be. And so technically, there were bounds; conceptually, it was infinite."[190]

But there is also another interesting aspect and that is when in the performance itself the artist plays on the subject of presence/impresence[191]. We have seen Marina Abramovic and Ulay's pieces where they very much impose their presence upon the audience for example in *Imponderabilia* (1977).

To use José Angel Valente´s term, the *"impresence"* is a presence that has no physical manifestation. It applies to an idea performed in Vito Acconci´s *Seedbed* at the Sonnabend Gallery. In this piece Acconci builds a platform that is to mimic the gallery floor. He hides underneath and masturbates while the visitors enter into the space. The visitor can only hear Acconci´s voice narrating his fantasies through a speaker in the corner:

". . . I'm doing this with you now . . . you're in front of me . . . you're turning around . . . I'm moving toward you . . . leaning toward you . . .[....]

Through the viewers: because of the viewers: I can hear their footsteps, they're walking on top of me, to the side of me – I'm catching up with them – I'm focusing on one of them: I can form an image of you, dream about you, work on you.

. . . you're on my left . . . you're moving away but I'm pushing my body against you, into the corner . . . you're bending your head down, over me . . . I'm pressing my eyes into your hair . . .I can go on as I think of you, you can reinforce my excitement, serve as my medium (the seed planted on the floor is a joint result of my presence and yours). You can listen to me; I want you to stay here; you can walk around me; walk past me; come back; sit here; lie close to me; walk with me again.

Reasons to move away from a space: there's no need to stay – I've left something there, outside, that used to be here, inside—I've left something there that can grow, develop, on its own.

Reasons to move: I can move with an easy mind – what's left behind is safe, in storage."[192]

Acconci on the other hand hears the resonating footsteps of people's shoes on the platform. The presence is there just not visually materialised. It is the invisible that makes the performance.

fig. 94. Vito Acconci, *Seedbed* (1971)

[190] Weh, "A Conversation with Robert Barry".
[191] Borroving this beautiful word by José Ángel Valente. Impresence is different to absence
[192] Vito Acconci, *Seedbed*, 1972. MoMA web page.

"For to acknowledge the Other's […] presence is to acknowledge one's own […] absence."[193]

Roland Barthes frames these concepts in architecture by understanding the invisible forces (in this case symbols or signs):

"The city I am talking about (Tokyo) offers this precious paradox: it does possess a center, but this center is empty. The entire city turns around a site both forbidden and indifferent, a residence concealed beneath foliage, protected by moats, inhabited by an emperor who is never seen, which is to say, literally, by no one knows who. Daily, in their rapid, energetic, bullet-like trajectories, the taxis avoid this circle, whose low crest, the visible form of invisibility, hides the sacred "nothing."[194]

Cities and architecture, as we know, are more than physical form they are constructs of concepts, symbols, etc. The empty city centre for example is actually full conceptually.

"When it is raining in Oxford Street, the architecture is no more important than the rain, in fact the weather has probably more to do with the pulsation of the city at any moment in time."[195]

This beautifully visual quote by David Greene captures the sensitivity that the group had towards the underlying, less obvious forces that can generate city life. As it emerged from the frustration post CIAM, where there was no longer a shared view about the future of cities that followed structure order etc. Cities started to be observed and thought of outside of the traditional architectural paradigms.

Juan Navarro Baldeweg´s *Casa de la Lluvia*[196] (1978) is another delicate example of how something other than the building can make a more powerful construction. The architect designed and built a house for his brother based on an idea rather than simply a form or layout. Baldeweg had formal education in both architecture and fine arts[197].

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[193] Phelan, *Unmarked : The Politics of Performance*, p. 149.
[194] Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, p.31.
[195] Hughes Jonathan and Sadler Simon, *Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* (London: Routledge Ltd, 2013), p. 137.
[196] Translates as Rain House
[197] Halldóra and Sánchez Merina Arnardóttir, Javier, "La Casa De La Lluvia (Santander), De Juan Navarro Baldeweg," http://historiasdecasas.blogspot.com.es/2006/02/la-casa-de-la-lluvia-santander-de-juan.html.

The house is designed like a sound box so that when it rains the idea is perceived. When the rain hits the roof it resonates. When it doesn't rain the idea is still present in the way it is constructed; the materials were chosen to reverberate the sound.

"World society has throughout its millions of years on earth made its judgements upon visible, tangible, sensorially demonstrable criteria. We may safely say that the world is keeping its eye on the unimportant visible 1 percent of the historical transformation while missing the significance of the 99 percent of overall, unseen changes. Forms are inherently visible and forms no longer can "follow functions" because the significant functions are invisible."[198]

This new way of looking, attempting to find the essential allowed for more powerful ideas to last longer than the materiality of buildings. Concepts prevail while actions and buildings eventually disappear.

The infra-thin cannot be described, but it lies in this space that we can find transformative ideas and transcendent constructs.

fig. 95.
fig. 96. Juan Navarro Baldeweg, *Casa de la Lluvia*, (1979)

[198] Buckminster Fuller, "Whole Earth Catalog: Access to Tools," Portola Institute (1969).

05] *unbalancing system, event and indeterminacy*

01] *La possibilité de plusieurs tubes de couleur de devenir un Seurat est « l'explication » concrète du possible comme infra mince.*
Le possible impliquant le devenir – le passage de l'un à l'autre a lieu dans l'infra mince.
allégorie sur l'oubli

The potential of several tubes of color becoming a Seurat is the concrete "explanation" of the possible as infra thin.
The possible implying the becoming - the passage from one to the other takes place in the infra-thin.
allegory about oblivion

Indeterminacy is a consequence of complexity; the more complex the system, the more undetermined it becomes. This doesn't mean it belongs to the unclear or vague, instead, it means complexity opens up options or opportunities which can be very specific. Similarly, entropy does not necessarily means chaos. Meaning that even though a structure or pattern is not visible it could hold an open system together, using Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's material analogy of the 'felt'; like the material of 'pressed' particles versus the more tied threads of a warp. One could say that indeterminacy has a profound impact on all artistic and creative disciplines as they move from the dogmatic to the 'open', from the apparently structured to the apparently chaotic.

Indeterminacy is also a response and reflection of an increasingly unstable social, economic, environmental and cultural state of affairs. Therefore it has often to do with a sudden urge or emergency to change things that cannot be planned with a prolonged time-frame. Part of this idea is also the event or sporadic action.

Both notions, event and indeterminacy will be explored in this chapter, and specifically from the following subchapters:

architecture as the event / accident
> Here the aim is to explore how the event is interpreted in architecture through the work of Bernard Tschumi. The translation from the action to architecture and vice-versa.

the unbalancing system
> Through the work of Ugo la Pietra we can understand the event as an unbalancing and disruptive proposal. As a way of habiting the city discontinuously.

indeterminacy, chance or randomness
> Indeterminacy is explored through music and early performance art to make distinctions of terms, which could serve to centre the focus.

indeterminacy / complexity
> Through the work of Yona Friedman indeterminacy can be explored in relation to complexity.

indeterminacy as a project

      Fun Palace by Cedric Price could help us see the limits of indeterminacy in architecture and in which way indeterminacy is an essential part of art and architecture.

Guy Debord states:

"THE SPECTACLE IS NOT a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images"[199]

Architecture is not created by a collection of spaces, but instead architecture is the relationship between spaces and human interaction. This often happens in the form of an event. Architecture could, therefore, be thought of as a system of juxtaposing, superposing spaces and events that often through complexity generate indeterminacy or create disruptions in the way we experience the city.

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[199] Guy Debord, "Society of the Spectacle," (1967).

01. architecture as the event / accident

"I think that in every building, every street, there is something that creates an event, and whatever creates an event, is unintelligible."[200]

fig. 97.   Bernad Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts* (1976-1981)
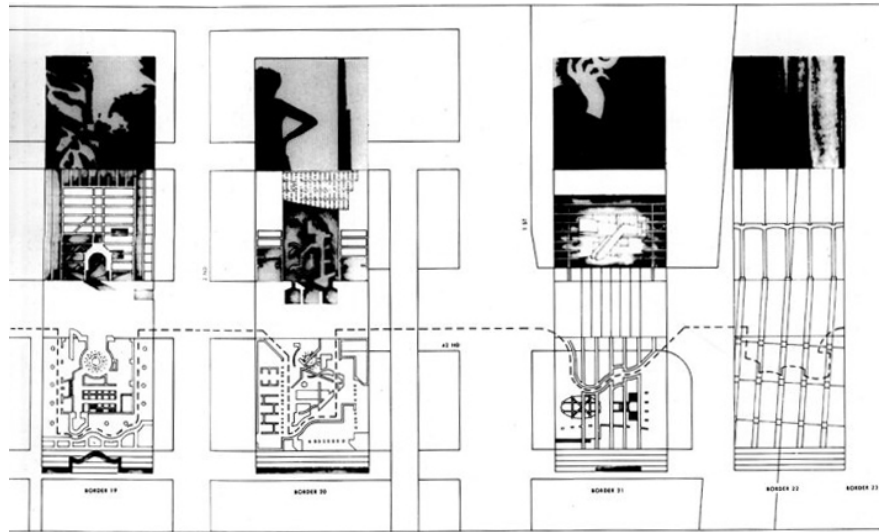
For Bernard Tschumi architecture is produced by the event. For him there cannot be any architecture without activity.

"Architecture is not simply about space and form, but also about event, action, and what happens in space."[201]

He expresses these concepts for the first time with the *Manhattan Transcripts* (1976-1981). For him the transcripts explain the difference between three conditions; space, movement and events. At the same time as they are independent they necessarily need to relate to each other. This way, he argues, the "*conventional components of architecture*" are inevitably reassessed. Furthermore he explains:

"Their explicit purpose is to transcribe things normally removed from conventional architectural representation, namely the complex relationship between spaces and their use; between the

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200 Conversation between Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel, *The Singular Objects of Architecture*, trans. Robert Bononno (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 16.

201 Bernard Tschumi, "The Manhattan Transcripts," http://www.tschumi.com/projects/18/.

set and the script; between 'type' and 'program'; between objects and events. Their implicit purpose has to do with the twentieth-century city."[202]

Tschumi developed the transcripts for four solo exhibitions (Artist Space in New York, Architectural Association P.S.1 New York and the Maz Protetch Gallery). He developed the transcripts to narrate invented events in New York through drawings and texts, for example a murder in Central Park.

The *Manhattan Transcripts* was an interesting manifesto which truly focused on the event in architecture. For Tschumi, Architecture had to describe the constant interaction between bodies and the spaces; but this interaction is a profound one; one that imposes itself onto the other. Hence one of violence. For him there cannot be architecture without violence, without program or event. It is through this interpretation that Tschumi proposed to test architecture to its limits, to juxtapose, superimpose and blur "*the conventional relationship between plan, graphic conventions and their meaning in the built realm*".[203] It is through working and using different approaches and overlaying them that interesting things could start happening.

"The insertion of any additional space within a spatial sequence can change the meaning of the sequence as well as its impact on the experiencing subject (as in the noted Kuleshov experiment, where the same shot of the actor's impassive face is introduced into a variety of situations, and the audience reads different expressions in each successive juxtaposition)." [204]

fig. 98.   Lev Kuleshov, *The kuleshov effect* (between 1910 and 1920)

The event, is not only the relationship of bodies but it is also the point of confluence of flows where the concentration grows and therefore indeterminacy is most intense. Tschumi was determined to record these moments in his transcripts.

In *The Right to the City*, published in 1968, Lefebvre argues that transferring function to form directly did not take into account the complexity of cities. Neither did it manage to reflect the historical and social practice.

This text was the key for Bernard Tschumi, inviting Lefebvre to many of the lectures at the AA. For Tschumi the text acknowledges the need for an architecture that is constantly transformed, a model. So does Lefebvre:

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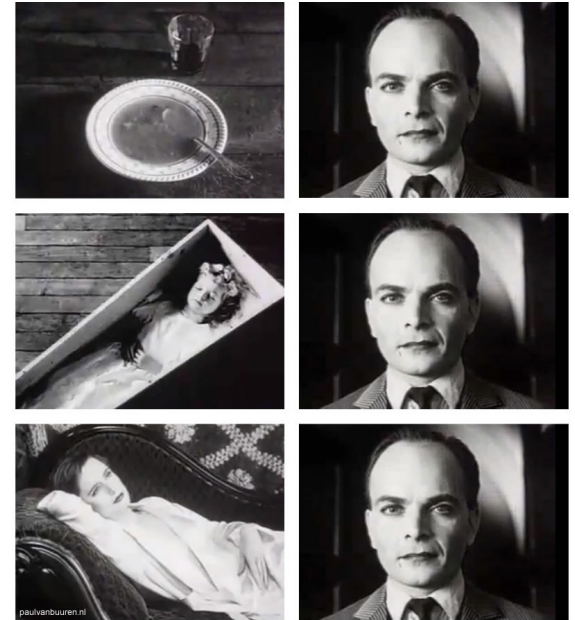
[202] *The Manhattan Transcripts*, ed. Max Protetch Gallery (Virginia: Academy Editions, 1981).
[203] *Architecture and Disjunction* (MIT Press, 1996), p. 148.
[204] *The Manhattan Transcripts*, p. 12.

"Knowledge can therefore, construct and propose models. In this sense each object is but a model of urban reality."[205]

Lefebvre uses the terms 'transduction' and 'experimental utopia' to imagine a disciplinary change in architecture which would move from the conceptual to the empirical and back (transduction) and on the other hand think in utopian terms.

"An event is neither substance, nor accident, nor quality nor process; events are not corporeal. And yet, an event is certainly not immaterial; it takes effect, becomes effect, always on the level of materiality. Events have their place; they consist in relation to… the cross-checking accumulation and dispersion of material elements."[206]

For Tschumi this renewed appreciation of planning also meant a new way of transcribing architecture into drawings, suddenly making visible the invisible. In this case, the event. Once projects no longer followed compositional structures, aesthetics or functions, they could then focus on the social practice, the everyday, the events and the actions.

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[205] The Right to the City (1968) in Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford, Cambridge, Mass, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 154.

[206] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Rupert Swyer, L'Archeologie du Savoir (1969) Paris 2 ed. (New York: TAvistock Publications Limited, 1972), p. 231.

02.   unbalancing system

fig. 99.   Ugo La Pietra, *Immersion 'Homme-œuf-sphère'* (1968)

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From 1967 to around 1972 Ugo La Pietra works on what he calls *Sistema Disequilibrante (Unbalancing System)*. The main principle behind the Unbalancing System is establishing "*degrees of freedom*" inside "*organized structures*". This is quite an important aspect for this investigation since here in contrast to other proposals, it is not about designing an 'open' system, but instead it is about finding mechanisms to 'open' the 'closed system from the inside.

In other words, La Pietra was creating or trying to find 'disrupting' events in regulated or organized environments, for example the city. He calls these events "*moments*" and they could be introduced to unbalance or destabilize these closed systems at any time. For La Pietra these moments act as "*revelatory tools*" [207], as a way of showing or demonstrating a different non-mediated reality. Returning freedom to the inhabitants.

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[207] Ugo La Pietra, *Ugo La Pietra: Habiter La Ville*, ed. Centre Fonds régional d'art contemporain du (Orléans: HYX, 2009), p. 60.

La Pietra did many installations, performances, and films for this series of works around this concept of an *Unbalancing System*. *La Grande Occasione (The Great Occasion)* (1972) or audio-visual tools for *Trigon 71* (1971) among others, propose actions to reveal the city as a numbing and distorted reality constructed by signs and "*traffic functionaries*" (town-planners).

Some of these pieces belonged to the series called *Immersione* (*Immersions*) (1967-70). These pieces where mainly pods one could submerge into, in order to extract oneself from the hostile surrounding urban environment. These spaces reproduced music, natural environments or erotic texts for audio-visual experiments and hideaways from every day life in plexiglass spheres, head capsules or concrete boxes for example. They were a series of pieces which beautifully tried to encapsulate experiences for 'the urban environment' that would show a different reality or context. They were all different, in material, spatial qualities and form. For la Pietra it was important that these pieces could be all different with no specific form, thus he was not proposing a specific model but different 'moments'.
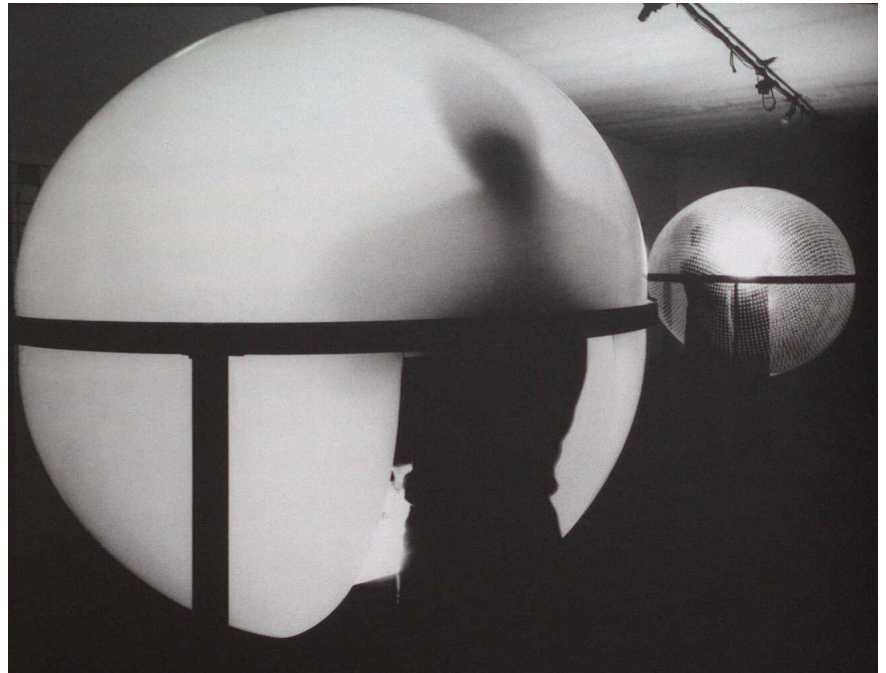
fig. 100.   Ugo La Pietra, *Immersion 'Globe lumineux et sonore'* (1969)

Many of these pieces were produced for exhibitions, like the Triennale of Milan in 1968, but some were designed as real projects such as the *Altre Cose boutique* (1969) (together with Aldo Jacober, Paolo Rizzatto). All pieces were highly crafted using all sorts of state of the art mechanisms and technologies.

These pieces became a didactic tool into awareness by inducing strong emotions, such as isolation, confrontation with the natural etc. Arranged around the urban landscape they would become a series of points or spaces – and this is very important – to create awareness by opposition to the urban environment. A form of critique into the lack of freedom of choice.[208] Both the urban environments and these capsules were ordained, and by this antagonism of exposing two different realities, La Pietra hoped to create an 'unbalance of the system' and start a natural process of change and transformation of the city.

"I tried with different instruments to break an acquired balance. Among the various experiments, many serve as containers where one can immerse and recover 'matrix values' by isolation, formal, luminous; Isolation by which, however, the user does not succeed in making them completely his own. Immersions are an invitation to exit reality and regain shelter in a kind of privacy which is a separation and a tool for verifying the possibilities of interference, through elements of rupture that displace the terms codified by tradition." [209]

La Pietra just as many of the artists, writers and architects during that period were concerned with radically changing the dogmatic postulates of modernity, especially those which came from inside the discipline.

The transformations La Pietra proposed could also occur from the privacy of the home. With the *Telematic House* (1971); part of the MOMA exhibition *Italy: The new Domestic Landscape* (1972); he proposed a system that could accumulate information from the outside and vice-versa. The house was designed with a triangular shape, to symbolize a basic structure, and not to distract from the concept and idea he was trying to express.

fig. 101.   Ugo La Pietra, *Immersion 'Casques sonores'* (1968)

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208 Ibid., p.62.
209 Ibid., p. 62.
"J'ai essayé avec différents instruments de briser un équilibre acquis. Parmi les diverses expériences, nombreuses sont celles qui se servent de récipients où l'on peut s'immerger et récupérer par l'isolement des valeurs matrices, formelles, lumineuses ; isolement par lequel, cepen-dant, l'utilisateur ne réussit pas à les faire siennes complètement. Les Immersions sont une invitation à un comportement de sortie de la réalité pour retrouver le refuge, dans une sorte de vie privée qui est séparation et outil de vérification des possibilités d'intervention à travers des éléments de rupture qui déplacent les termes codifiés de la tradition."

"The ideology of décor shows us that revolution is a permanent 'happening', enacted in our own homes in the free play of existential contrast"[210]

This project, an interconnected house which he already anticipated in the early seventies, has now become a reality. The house and its privacy were suddenly connected to the public space just as nowadays.[211]

In this project he was interested in portraying the individual endurance of the city. He was especially attracted to the influence of the city in regards to the behavioural and mental conditions. Referring to another project belonging to the Unbalancing System, *Il Commutatori* (1970) he says:

"This instrument is the synthetic representation of the theory of the Unbalancing system: creating instruments for the transcending of a codified reality is the first step to deliver a new society`[...] An instrument of knowledge, thus, and of proposition created at a time when 'radical design' was constructing evasive and utopian projects. Day after day, we are ever more losing the ability to recapture the values and meanings of the urban scene, in which our eye sees nothing but signals. Signals to which we automatically conform our behaviour. With this work, I tried to express the attempt to define instruments capable of creating a new way of reading the urban space, for knowledge, not so much for a definitive formula, but rather for its deep structure. By referring to the analytical concept of the urban structure's two characteristics, the superficial structure and the deep structure (the superficial structure is of a topological nature, based on notions of proximity, continuity, limit, the deep structure is based on the relational aspects that determine the meaning in terms of actions in space and the semantic content of organization). In the passage from one to the other, a particular moment is identifiable and can be expressed through the idea of a switch understood as an element based on the reflection of the observed and the formalization of these reflections."[212]

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[210] Pierre Restany in *Ugo La Pietra,* ed. Pierre Restany and Maurizio Vitta (Barcelona: GG, 1991), p. 6.
[211] Internet only started functioning from the early nineties, up to then only early prototipes of packet switching were being researched, far from the world wide web that appeared in 1989.
[212] *Ugo La Pietra: Habiter La Ville,* p. 54.
L'instrument est la représentation synthétique de la théorie du Système déséquilibrant: Réaliser des instruments pour le dépassement de la réalité codifiée est le premier passage pour arriver à une nouvelle société. [...] Un instrument de connaissance, donc, et de proposition réalisé à un moment où le 'design radical' construisait des objets évasifs et utopiques. Jour après jour, nous perdons de plus en plus la capacité de récupérer les valeurs et les significations de la scène urbaine, dans laquelle notre oeil ne voit rien d'autre que des signaux. des signaux auxquels nous conformons automatiquement notre comportement. Avec cette oeuvre, j'ai essayé d'exprimer la tentative de définir des instruments capables de créer une nouvelle attitude de lecture à l'égard de l'espace urbain, pour la connaissance, non pas tellement de la formule finie mais plutôt de sa structure profonde. En me référant au concept d'analyse de la structure urbaine dans ses deux aspects qui la caractérisent la structure superficielle et la structure profonde (la structure superficielle est de nature topologique, fondée sur les notions de proximité, de continuité, de limite; la structure profonde se base sur les aspects relationnels qui déterminent la signification en termes d'actions dans l'espace et de contenu sémantique de l'organisation). Dans le passage de l'une à l'autre, un moment particulier est identifiable exprimable à travers le concept de commutateur compris comme un élément qui se base sur la réflexion de l'observé et sur la formalisation de ces réflexions. (translated by the author of this thesis)

La Pietra's *Telematic House* and its connection to the city is constructed by what he calls Macrostructures and Microstructures. The first one refers to the telematic house where everything merges and information is captured. Microstructures are "models for comprehension". These are pods or stations scattered around the urban scape where one could perceive reality without interference or mediation by distractions in the city such as signs.
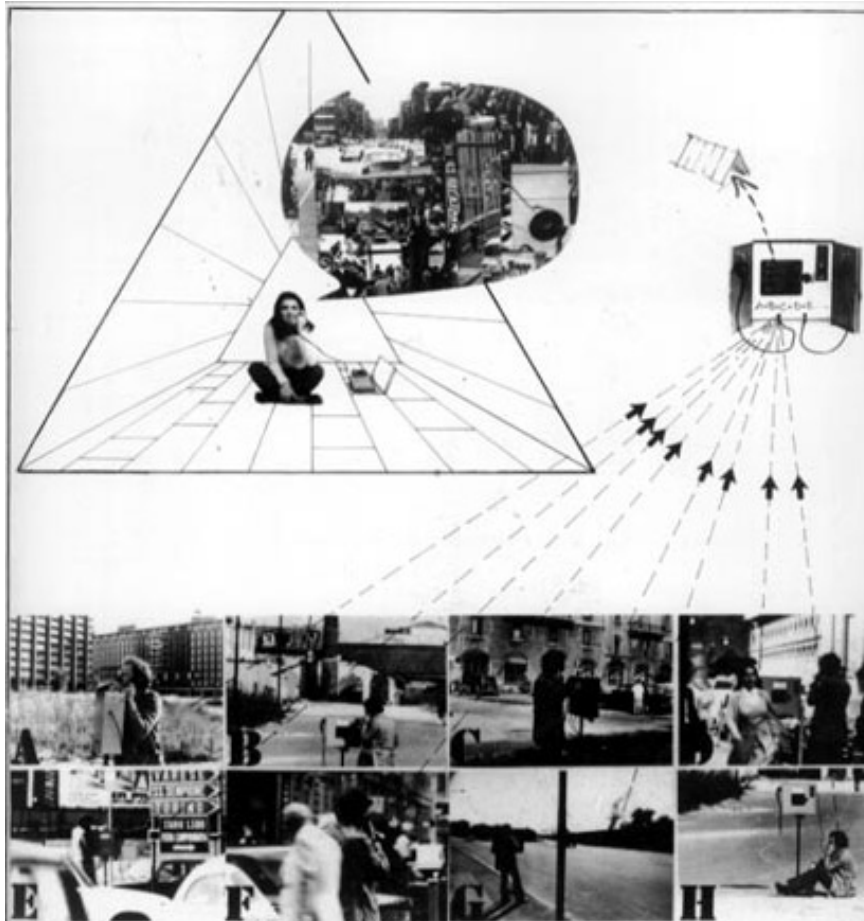
fig. 102.   Ugo La Pietra, *Maison télématique: la cellule d'habitation 'La cicérone électronique'* (1971-1972)

His *Degrees of Freedom (Gradi della Libertá)* can best be observed in *The Great Occasion*. Here he centres his focus on Milan's outskirts with the aim of finding "*minor*" individual artistic interventions. These became "*re-appropriations*" of the city and markings of identity. But also, for him, this project was about exposing empty spaces

where one could find this creative identity amidst the disorienting "*whirlwind*" of the urban sprawl. Using mixed media he attempted to stimulate social engagement but he also pretended to allow for interaction between inside and outside, domestic and public, and as well a sort of urban de-codification, mapping, tracing and appropriating.
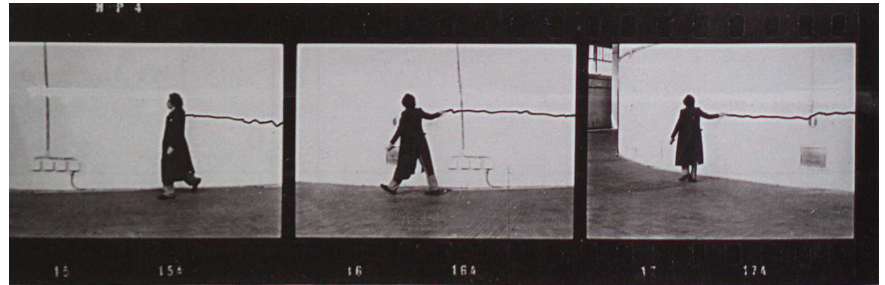
These projects under the principle of 'unbalancing' pretended to rupture and open up the system from the inside. Form the inhabitants understanding, knowledge, experience and action.

The strength of these ideas and actions go beyond these installations. La Pietra takes them to another level during his dedication to the Global Tools Group (1973-1975). He proposed a new education for architects based on these principles. He shared this need for a new school with other members, most of them belonging to The Italian Radicals (Ettore Sottsass, Andrea Branzi, Archizoom, Superestudio, Gianni Pettena amongst others). The group organized workshops as a way of proposing an 'outside the institutional frame' approach to architectural education, even calling themselves a "*non-school*".

Their focus lied on: education, ecology, industry, survivalism, marginality, communication, body, failure, community, theory, construction (in terms of 'humble' and traditional). They also included technology, handcraft, communication and ideas around archaeologies of the future. One of the main objectives was to offer tools for independent living.

"[...] The crux of the discourse is to re-propose the de-intellectualized man, in the sense of his archaic possibility of wisdom, with all the associated consequences, perhaps even with the recovery of nomadism, and the destruction of the city. The school Therefore proposes enhancement

of the creative faculties in every individual human Being, faculties that are presently stifled by specialization and the frenzy to achieve efficiency. The terminology, assumptions, methods and structures of the school are curiously simple: as if formulated by those who intend to bridge the alienating gap that has formed between the work of the hands and that of the brain."[213]

The Radicals and the Viennese were "*engaged in a transformation of the instruments and methods of project design, a radical transformation by brilliantly provocative approaches, all of them concerned with discovering ways of improving the quality of life in terms of the relationship between individual and environment*"[214]

La Pietra considered that he was closer to the Situationists and their protests than to the Florentine Radicals, which together with Archigram were too concerned with pop culture[215]. Neither did he share Yona Friedman's or Cedric Price's belief that architecture (or design) was limited in itself and had to be intervened and participated by the user. Instead he believed that design could create the event itself and freedom would be found within the existing city.

fig. 104.   Ugo La Pietra, *Les Degrés de liberté 'Récupération et réinvention'* (1969-1975)

La Pietra thus used this *Unbalancing System* as a way to unregulated, free and let the user live subjective and indeterminate experiences in the city. It is an attempt to confront the closed systems of the existing or at least make it visible and show how this apparent 'hard' order is not indestructible.

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213 *Bulletin No. 1 Global Tools, 1974, Valerio Borgonuovo et al., "Global Tools, 1973-1975,"* ed. SALT (İstanbul: SALT, 2015).
214 Ugo La Pietra in *Ugo La Pietra,* p. 14.
215 Ibid.

03.   *indeterminacy, chance or randomness*

To explain the difference between indeterminacy and chance or randomness it would be clarifying to look at a piece by Marcel Duchamp. His 'Dadaistic' piece, *Erratum Musical* (1912) was performed about 30 years before Cage explored randomness in musical pieces. They served as a base for some of Fluxus' ideas and the happenings later on, especially since both were extremely recognised figures of the downtown artistic movement. Cage was also involved in the early happenings.

Duchamp's musical piece is composed by chance. Through a very precise construction of funnel balls and toy train wagons, the sequence of notes and time durations are defined to form a piece, that in theory through repetition becomes endless. The result being a series of notes that through randomness form a piece.

Stravinsky and Charles Ives on the other hand worked with 'indeterminacy'. Offering several possibilities as a form of open-ended compositions for the performer to choose from.

Cage interestingly noted, that it is precisely the differentiation between the act of composing and the act of performing. This can be applied also to architecture or performance art.

"In Cage's terminology, "chance" refers to the use of some sort of random procedure in the act of composition. […] "Indeterminacy," on the other hand, refers to the ability of a piece to be performed in substantially different ways - that is, the work exists in such a form that the performer is given a variety of unique ways to play it."[216]

The move from chance to indeterminacy could be set at the Happenings. And in particular Kaprow, believed that "*involvement in chance*" is the "*most problematical*" aspect of happenings.[217] In which case, this study boldly upholds, the insight that transformed the core of performative art. It meant that actions were not finalistic but processual. In other words what became interesting was not the result of chance, but instead, the process of what had occurred. As the music of Charles Ives "*The Unanswered Question*" (1908)[218], in chance one is left without an answer whereas in

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216   James Pritchett, *The Music of John Cage* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 108.
217   Joseph, Branden W. "Chance, Indeterminacy, Multiplicity" inJulia Robinson, "The Anarchy of Silence: John Cage and Experimental Art," ed. Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) (Barcelona2009).
218   It was revised in 1930-35 and performed for the first time in 1946.

indeterminacy there is always a "*traceable*" response to an action. It can be a "*non-linear trace*", but action and response are connected.

One example of those happenings that would follow Cage's understanding between the composition and the performance, is Kaprows *Yard* (1961),
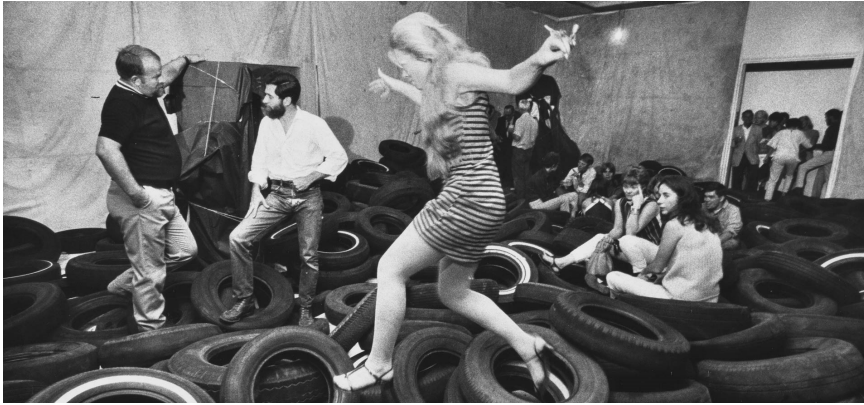
fig. 105.   Allan Kaprow, *Yard* (1967)

"Yard was originally made in the sculpture garden of the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York. It consisted of hundreds of used tires covering the ground in no particular order. Five tarpaper mounds emerged from the tires …. (The tarpaper actually covered Mrs. Jackson's sculpture collection, which couldn't be moved!). Visitors were encouraged to walk on the tires, and to throw them around as they pleased."[219]

As Philip Ursprung accurately portrays in *Movement to Movement-----Space*: "*The trend shifted from linear progress to recycling, and from the static object to the performative event.*"[220]. Just as Ursprung, André Lepeckí, argues that Kaprow had moved directly from sculpture to performance art through the annotations written as a score on his notebook. And it was in a sense the score that had given him the energy to choreograph this new form or art called Happenings.[221] This piece shows the shift between the static determinate and the indeterminacy of movement. From the static sculpture to the interactive sculpture. After this shift in performance art, one can appreciate how indeterminacy become intentional process and characteristic of this type of art.

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[219] Allan Kaprow, "Allan Kaprow on Reinventions," http://allankaprow.com/about_reinvetion.html.
[220] Philippe Ursprung's essay 'Movement to Movement ---Space'*Performance and the Politics of Space : Theatre and Topology*, ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte and Benjamin Wihstutz (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 238.
[221] André Lepecki, "Lecture: Performance as the Paradigm of Art," ed. Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (2013).

fig. 106.   Trisha Brown, *Roof Piece* (May 11, 1971)

Trisha Brown in her work *Roof Piece* (1971) wanted to study the relationship between actors in a city and the traceless relationships they construct. The performance piece consisted of fourteen performers dressed in orange lined up on the rooftops of buildings from 420 West Broadway to Wall Street. She established an invisible network above the cityscape enjoying the fact that nobody was aware of their existence above the buzzling New York City.[222]

The performers' communication happened through improvised movements. The performers were mimicking the children's game *Chinese Whispers* with movements instead of words. The game consists of whispers passed on from ear to ear while the original meaning of the word or sentence is lost as it is passed along from child to child. In Brown's performance small variations are produced each time it is passed to another performer. No one could get sight of the whole performance, just some part

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[222] Trisha Brown : *L'invenzione Dello Spazio : Reggio Emilia, 2009*, ed. Trisha Brown, et al. (Pistoia: Pistoia : Gli ori, c2010., 2010).

of the process. Nor could anyone appreciate how any of the gestures disappeared with each step. Maybe something valuable was lost or maybe only the essence remained throughout to the end of the performance.

"Whether in the order of spoken or written discourse, no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present. This interweaving results in each 'element' – phoneme or grapheme – being constituted on the basis of the trace within it of the other elements of the chain or system. This interweaving, this textile, is the text produced only in the transformation of another text. Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces. The gram, then, is the most general concept of semiology — which thus becomes grammatology…"[223]

The movements are improvised and the performers inadvertently introduce small changes. The indeterminacy of the piece is its evolution, how it progresses, changes or develops. Additionally, the performers belong to a system which apart from the orange suits is invisible to the audience or the city below. This piece serves to exemplify how indeterminacy can exist even within a system, as we saw earlier with Cage's piece; planned but undetermined.

Maybe one should make a further distinction between what is indeterminate and what is just the inability for human determination. Browns piece was vaguely planed but the piece itself was undetermined.

"'Unbestimmtheit' talked about seemed to arise from human inability to predict with precision in space-time, arguably owing to limited powers of observation and discernment, to yet-improvable human thought processes, and even to fallible human memory—altogether giving reason to distinguish between what is physically indeterminate out there, and what (maybe) is indeterminable by human observation or in human action—over here, on the inside, right now."[224]

It is in this intersect that artist's enjoyed placing these pieces. While in some actions the result could not be determined, in other performance pieces, the audience could be in charge of creating, borrowing Debords term, a detournement(diversion) of the piece or directing its outcome.

In architecture framework systems provide the space for indeterminacy. These artistic and architectural proposals, search unexplored possibilities, and open up to ever-growing indeterminacy.

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[223] Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, ed. Alan Bass and Henri Ronse (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
[224] Jose V. Ciprut, Indeterminacy: *The Mapped, the Navigable, and the Uncharted* (MIT Press, 2008), p. 2.

fig. 107. John Weeks, *Northwick Park Hospital and Clinical Research Centre* (1970)

fig. 108. John Weeks, *Northwick Park Hospital and Clinical Research Centre* (1970)

04. *indeterminacy / complexity*

How could anything be determinate in an unpredictable future? This question is at the core and a reflection of the social, natural, cultural, economic, environmental, and political. It generalized uncertainty to which indeterminacy became the only possible answer.

As a term, indeterminacy used in architecture, appears in 1963 in a lecture by John Weeks at the Bartlett School of Architecture[225]. Weeks was a distant member of the independent group and at the same time was attracted to the work of John Cage and Merce Cunningham[226]. He was interested in an approach to architecture which was beyond Post War 'flexibility' so prevalent in the architectural discourse of the time. He was also absorbed in "*time-motion studies and photographic and cinematic observation*"[227], close enough to what we term nowadays as big data. In one of his projects, the *Northwick Park Hospital* (1968) this approach is clearly visible:

"In short, Weeks looked for a new relationship between data, designer, and time. […] In his vision, the designer would neither prescribe nor predict how the hospital functioned, nor what it looked like. Weeks wanted the actual building to retrodict intentions, not to use intentions to predict how the building would function in the future. The architecture would not only be flexible enough to make room for new data (the unlimited new information coming in from medical research), but would also help make sense of it by influencing information flows, instead of simply being shaped by them."[228]

It can be argued however, that he never really managed to fully implement his concepts and that 'retrodiction' could never really happen at that point in history. Weeks, however, shares the basis and the original driving force, with his piers and in general with mat-buildings, where the main idea is designing open-ended systems. This was probably the initial move into the realm of indeterminacy.

Nonetheless, designing for indeterminacy, meant not only creating structurally open ended proposals, but it meant thinking about processes that would allow for contingency, nonlinearity, flexibility, adaptability, transformability etc. and most

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225 Reyner Banham, '*Revenge of the Picturesque*' in Nikolaus Pevsner and John Summerson, *Concerning Architecture: Essays on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolaus Pevsner* (London: Allen Lane, 1968), p. 266.
226 Theodore David 'Oedipal Time: Architecture, Information Retrodiction' in Pablo Lorenzo-Eiroa, *Architecture in Formation: On the Nature of Information in Digital Architecture* (Taylor & Francis, 2013), p. 74.
227 Theodore David 'Oedipal Time: Architecture, Information Retrodiction' in ibid., p. 75.
228 Theodore David 'Oedipal Time: Architecture, Information Retrodiction' in ibid., p. 76.

importantly, architecture that could deal with complexity, fragmentation and even the notion of entropy[229]
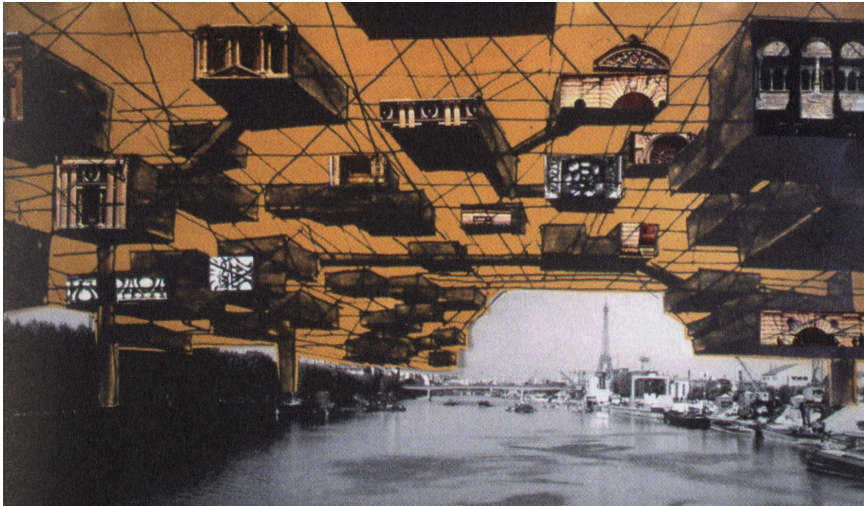
Yona Friedman is probably the person who best understood this new paradigm and in *Ville Spatiale* (1956-2006) they come together more than in any of his other proposals. He even criticised the Smithson's concept of urban mobility (presented at the CIAM 10 in Dubrovnick in 1956) as lacking radicalism. As Hadas Steiner points out, for him they confused extensions and continuous open-ended networks with true flexibility[230].[231]

Eckhard Schulze-Fielitz, also GEAM member, introduced Friedman to Constant in 1960 and from then on their work, Friedman's and Constant´s, cannot really be disassociated. This is especially true of *New Babylon* and *Ville Spatiale*, both, as working processes for concepts and new thinking in architecture.

Friedman proposed an elevated city for living and working. His basic idea was to give the opportunity to the inhabitants to configure their own spaces. In his own words he describes:

fig. 110. Yona Friedman, *Ville Spatiale Extension to the George Pompidou Center* (2008)

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[229] Entropy is discussed in relation to Robert Smithson´s work and will not be discussed here. However complexity and fragmentation are usually a direct consecuence of the entropic process. in cities, this autor believes.

[230] The term indeterminay was not used then and instead most architects spoke about flexibility.

[231] Hadas A. Steiner, *Beyond Archigram : The Structure of Circulation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 191.
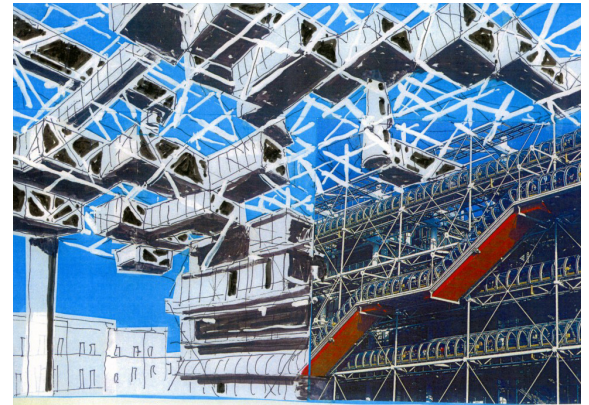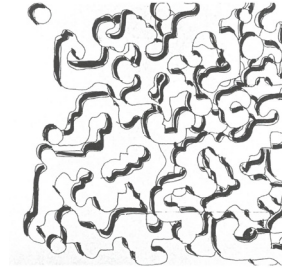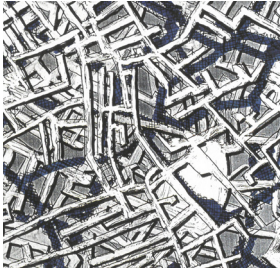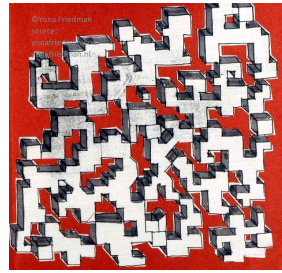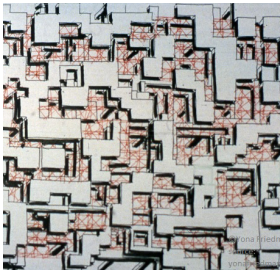
fig. 111.
fig. 112.
fig. 113.
fig. 114. Yona Friedman, *Ville Spatiale Floor Plan* (1960-2005)

fig. 115. Yona Friedman, *effort diagram* (1963)

"Critical for the Ville Spatial is what I call 'spatial infrastructure': a multi-storey space-frame-grid, which is supported by widely-spaced piles [...]. This infrastructure forms the fixed element of the city. The mobile element consists of walls, base-surfaces and dividing walls which make the individual division of the space possible; it could be called the 'filling' for the infrastructure. All elements which come into direct contact with the users (i.e. those they see, touch etc.) are mobile, in contrast to the infrastructure, which is used collectively and remains fixed."[232]

Within the term 'infrastructure' is the idea of minimum and for Friedman this was an inexorable paradigm. Even though we usually associate infrastructures to large heavy constructions etymologically it appears to mean exactly the contrary.

infra
ˈɪnfrə/
adverb
adverb: infra
Origin: Latin
infra → infra
meaning: below

The adverb 'infra' clearly defines the meaning of Infrastructure as below something and infrastructure whose origin is French translates as founding (verb), support structure, foundation and what underlies something visible.[233]

It is with this clarity that Friedman thought about his framework as a minimal support for the visible constructions placed in it. In fact, Yona Friedman was fascinated with Fuller´s work on tensegrity (or tensional integrity), Friedman developing it further into Irregular *Tensegrity*[234] between 2000 and 2005. In *Ville Spatiale* he was equally concerned about creating a spatial structure of minimum interference with the ground and structure that would become nearly invisible and interfere the least with the existing urban fabric below it.

For Friedman, his vision of an indeterminate structure floating over the topography of the city was to achieve the freedom and individuality they had been denied through

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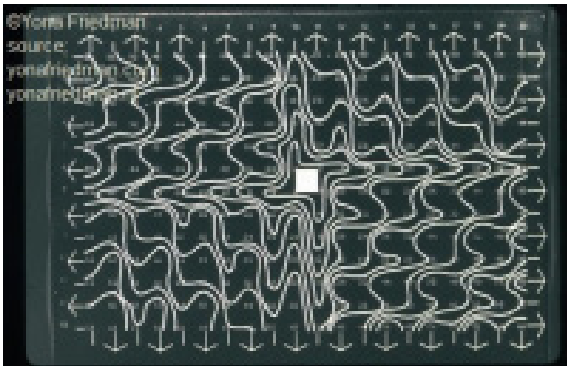
[232] Ruth Eaton, Ideal Cities : *Utopianism and the (Un)Built Environment* (New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson, 2002).
[233] fondation, soutènement, fondement / ce qui sous-tend quelque chose de visible
From the french to english in the late 19th century. The origin of course is latin composed of the latin wordrs infra + structura. Structura meaning arrangement, fitting together, order, adaptation and adjustment
[234] Friedman claims that with geometrical pattern, 'irregular tensegrity' does not follow a pattern: the roads or compression members are kept stable between two tension elements.

orthodox planning[235]. One of the key issues which he proposed was a modular system through a computer model, '*The Flatwriter*'. This program would interpret customer's preferences, resources and communal needs and design the best option for the users. If unsatisfied the program could come up with other organizations. This way planners and architects could be practically taken out of the equation:[236]

"The expert's error can be prevented if the expert has time to discuss with the future user. But if there are many future users, it is no time for anyone to express his wishes. Then the expert will invent 'average man'. Obviously, the real future users will not be satisfied by these plans, and 'average man' (for whom they were made) does not exist. The actual crisis of planning is the result of the impossibility to communicate between user and expert.
So what should one do?
The future user learns, himself, an interpersonal language. This language shows him what consequences to expect from his project….
Thus the future user will be able to plan himself without any expert.
The expert can keep for himself the technician's job."[237]

For this thesis what is essential is Friedman's understanding of Complexity; he makes a distinction between the two levels of complexity. On one hand what he calls simply "*complexity*" and on the other "*the complicated order*". The first one is composed by a number of elements (structure, housing units, panels, etc,), which therefore produce a finite number of configurations, "*The Flatwriter*" or the architect. The second, "*the complicated order*" is infinite because it introduces "*the process which creates reality*". This makes the result unpredictable, undetermined in form and infinite. This he calls the Merz Principle.[238] The word 'Merz' originates from the German artist Kurt Schwitters that used the cut-out of the letters from *Commerzbank* in one of his collages in 1919[239].

235 With his 10 principles for his "spatial agglomerations" one could more than duplicate the number of inhabitants of a given metropolis like Paris:
"*The future of cities: recreation centers. Other functions are increasingly automated.*"
"*The new society of cities should be unaffected by the planner.*"
"*Agriculture in the city is a social necessity.*"
"*The city must be 'climatized'.*"
"*The buildings that form the city must be on an industrial scale.*"
"*The new city should be the intensification of an existing city.*"
"*The technique of three dimensional urban planning also allows juxtaposition or superimposition of different neighbourhoods.*"
"*Buildings must be skeletons that are refillable at will.*"
"*The city of three million inhabitants represents the empirical optimum.*"
"*The entire population of Europe in 120 cities of 3 million inhabitants.*"
236 Steiner, Beyond Archigram : The Structure of Circulation, p. 191.
237 Eaton, Ideal Cities : Utopianism and the (Un)Built Environment.
238 Yona Friedman, "Merz Principle," http://www.yonafriedman.nl/?page_id=676.
239 Kurt Schwitters came up with the Word as he was cutting out letters from the word "Commerzbank" for his collage. He called his Collages Merzbilden (Merz pictures) which later bacame Merzbau (Merz buildings). He did three Merzbuildings one of which left incomplete. He belonged tangencially to the DADA Movemnt and The Sturm Information
Source: The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists (Oxford University Press)
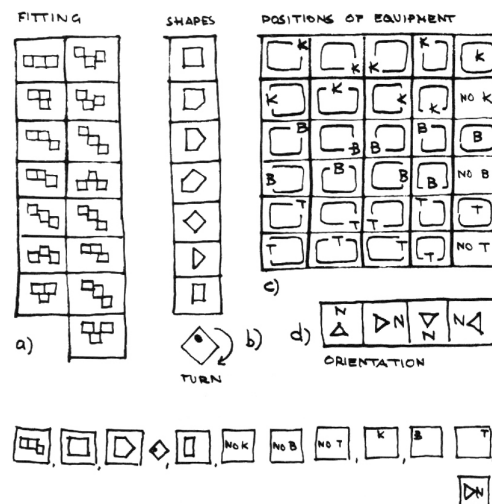
fig. 116.   Yona Friedman, *Flatwriter* (1967)
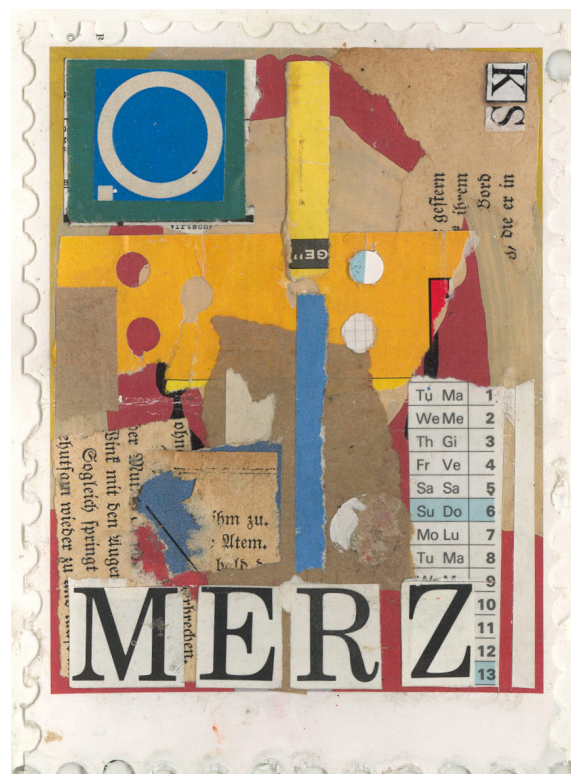
fig. 117.   Kurt Schwitters, *Das Merzbild* (1918-19)

Friedman (through his office) explains the principle as:

"The 'Merz Principle' is described by Friedman as a random agglomeration of things that form a whole. The 'Merz Principle' applies to the whole nature of existence. He regards reality as a process or processes, not as a sum of isolated facts. He finds that otherwise perfect mathematical models are unable to describe these processes and that a more fitting presentation of reality would be a sequential description."[240]

fig. 118.   Kurt Schwitters, *Merzbau* (1933)
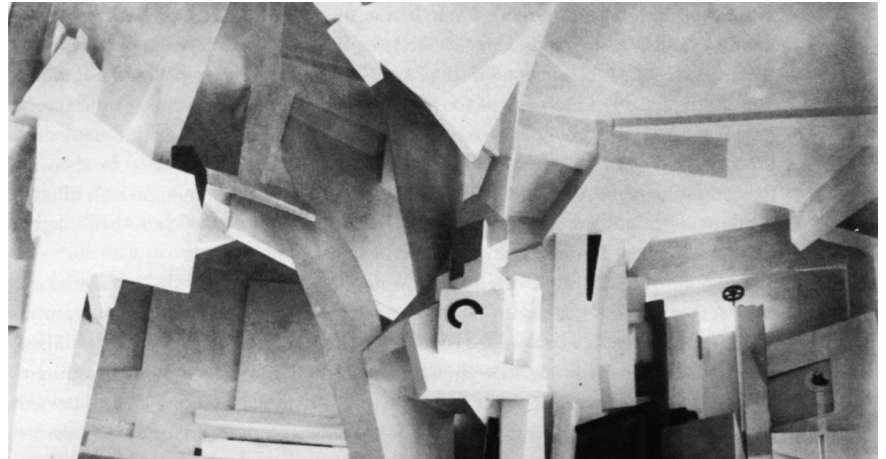
fig. 119.   Marcel Duchamp, *Exposition International du Surréalisme* (1938)

For Friedman creative thinking and even intelligence, is not only about mathematical understanding, instead he describes it as being able to come up with explanations, solutions and ideas for this "*complicated order*" of the world.

For this thesis there a two more points which are important in relation to his Merz Principle. On one hand he understands that an idea or a creative process cannot be isolated, instead it has to be in relation to other factors and let itself be influenced by them.

Secondly to Friedman, planners, have the impossible task "to satisfy the complicated order of behaviour". He argues that it is impossible to establish patterns[241] which could be applied from one person to another.[242]

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240   Friedman, "Merz Principle".
241   In a way contradicting his idea of the flatwriter.
242   Friedman, "Merz Principle".

In contrast, what we usually term as Megastructures were in general over-determined either in form or in its structuring order, like for example this proposal published in Domus by Alan Boutwell. This project for example spans the USA with a defined elongated shape imposing itself over the landscape completely ignoring its topography. Furthermore, Megastructures were too concerned or too involved with the understanding of large network transportation and grand planning for efficiency rather than for the human scale or human participation.

Ville Spatiale, together with other examples, however, were proposing the opposite of rigid systems. Friedman often argued that his work didn't belong to the Megastructures, on the contrary, his structures were closer to the idea of infrastructures in the semiotic meaning or actions which accommodate weaker, more undetermined or the unexpected.
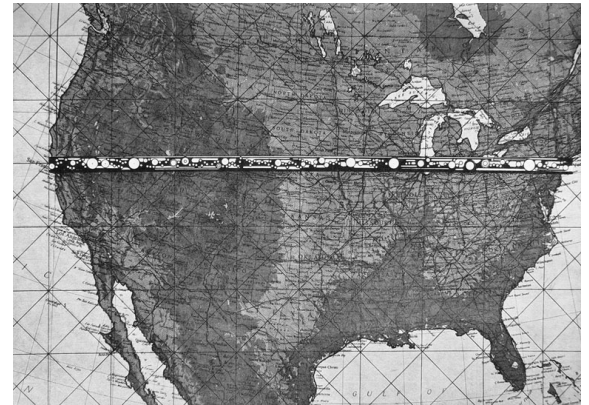
fig. 120.   Alan Boutwell/ Mike Mitchell,
Continuous city for 1.000.000 human beings (1969)

fig. 121.
fig. 122. Peter Celsing, *Kulturhuset* (1966-1971)

05. *indeterminacy as a project*

Events that occur in real time are always exposed to indeterminacy. Under this premise in 1961 Cedric Price[243] began the work on the project *Fun Palace* for the theatrical director Joan Littlewood. The request was to create a space that could serve for music, dance, drama and any other type of art. But not just a space in traditional terms but an interactive space where fun as a way for creative processes could emerge. Both Littlewood and Price imagined a space bursting with all sorts of events.

Fun Palace, as a project was no utopian exercise such as Archigram's proposals, nor was it completed such as other buildings, as the *Pompidou Centre* by Renzo Piano (1971-77) or Peter Celsing's *Kulturhuset* (1966-1974).
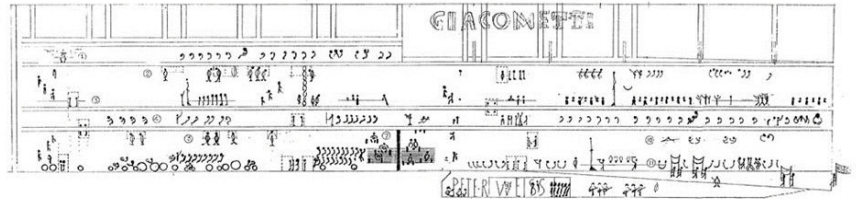
Tävlingsförslaget, fasad mot Sergels Torg.

Nonetheless *Fun Palace* was a thoroughly designed project, ready to be built if it had not been stuck in planning approvals for 10 years, at which point Price saw the project as obsolete.

Cedric Price often commented that the best solution to a spatial problem was not necessarily a building. In keeping with that idea the project consisted of a shed or a large space designed full of gantry cranes, mobile partitions and platforms, catwalks, 'travelators', escalators, vapour screens and all sorts of suspension systems that would accommodate for any theatre or artistic expression.

"Its form and structure, resembling a large shipyard in which enclosures such as theatres, cinemas, restaurants, workshops, rally areas, can be assembled, moved, re-arranged and scrapped continuously. Its mechanically operated environment controls are such that it can be sited in a hard dirty industrial area unsuited to more conventional types of amenities buildings."[244]

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[243] Cedric Price often called himself an anti-architect
[244] Cedric Price cited in Ariane Lourie Harrison, *Architectural Theories of the Environment: Posthuman Territory* (Routledge, 2013), p. 14.

fig. 123.   Cedric Price, *Fun Palace* (1962)
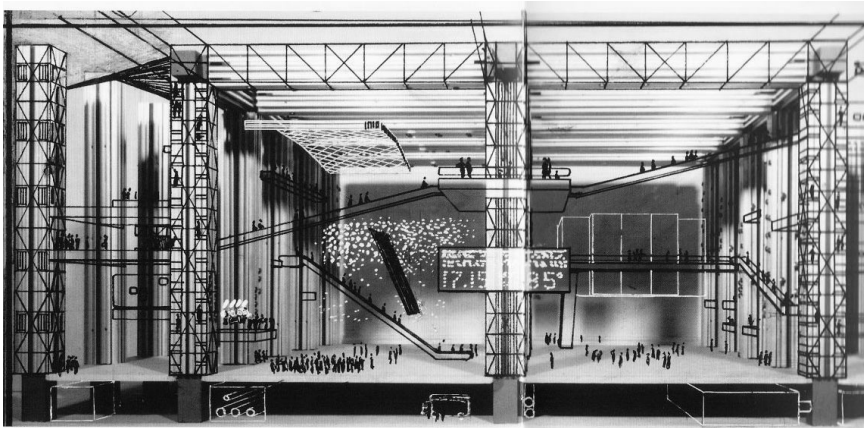
fig. 124.   Cedric Price, *Fun Palace* (1962)

Varied and continuously changing activities would determine the shape of the space. Thus people and their activities would make a constantly changing configuration dependent on them.

Fun Palace belonged to the realm of the unstable, but at the same time it was an extremely controlled place, from the air conditioning to the 'spatial qualities' the event spaces could be configured, adapted and arranged. Indeterminacy required anticipation and for that it was important to design the building as system of that would allow for constant transformation but it also required the technology that would allow for these continuously changing environments. At this point he involved very experienced people that were asked to create programs that would react, anticipate and control the space. The indeterminacy came from the program and pattern recognition but it was nowhere near what Friedman[245] called the "complicated order".

Cybernetic studies were so elaborate that users would loose control. Calculations would gather information and predict the necessities of the users, but choices would no longer be in the users hands predictably therefore losing its indeterminacy and becoming more rigid.

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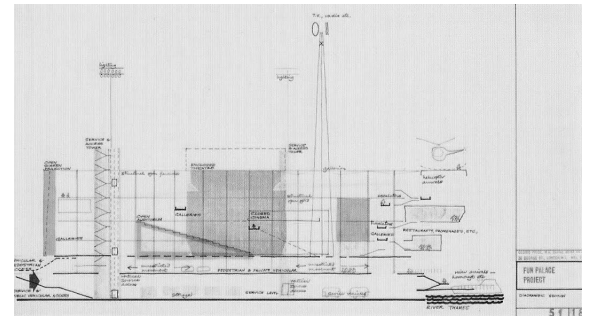
[245] Friedman participated in the project at some point in 1962 but his involvement is unclear.

Organisational Plan as Programme
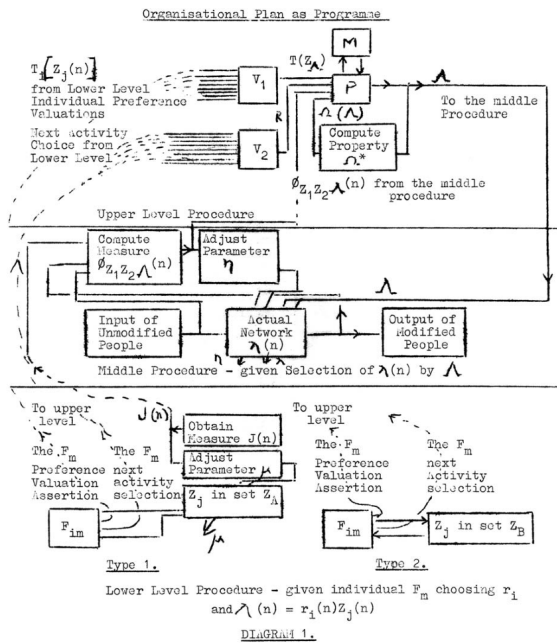
fig. 125. Gordon Pask, *Cybernetic diagram of the Fun Palace program* (around 1964)

There is no question however that this project not only marked a turning point in architecture in general but specifically it also had a great impact on the theoretical approach to design.

Stanley Mathews points out in "*The Fun Palace as Virtual Architecture: Cedric Price and the Practices of Indeterminacy*"[246] that Cedric Price claimed that *Fun Palace* was being developed when the Archigram group initially met.

"*Despite Price's insistent disavowal of influence or inspiration for the Fun Palace, projects like Constant's ''New Babylon'' and Trocchi's ''Project Sigma'' and ''Invisible Insurrection of A Million Minds'' almost certainly helped to clarify the aims of the Fun Palace to both Price and Littlewood..*"[247]

Price appears to have been a seismographer of his time understanding what was happening and influencing others.

What is also conclusive of this subchapter is that scale matters when talking about indeterminacy. In Friedman´s *Ville Spatiale* complexity is greater and therefore allows for more indeterminacy. Whereas smaller projects with fewer behavioural inputs have less chance of offering more possibilities. In both cases when using big data or relying on machines to calculate options, indeterminacy , however, was reduced[248].

fig. 126. Cedric Price, *Fun Palace* (1962)

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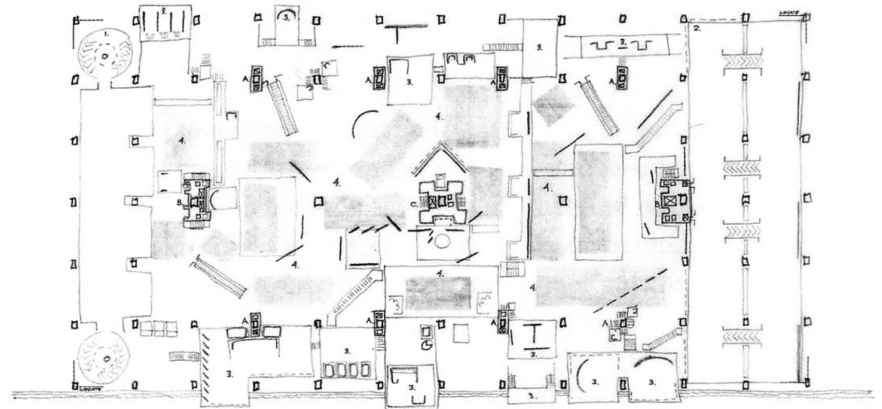
[246] Stanley Mathews, "The Fun Palace as Virtual Architecture," Journal of Architectural Education 59, no. 3 (2006).

[247] Ibid., p.47.

[248] Nowadays this is completely different. Programs have become comlex and theoretically could come up with infinate options to a single question. Basically what is called Artificial Inteligence that tries to simulate indetermined behaviour of humans. It is related to the idea of Weak Ontology in computational science.

06] *non-plan, non-design, no-center, non-place, etc.*

12] *Séparation inframince entre le bruit de la détonation d'un fusil (très proche) et l'apparition de la marque de la balle sur la cible.*
(distance maximum 3 à 4 mètres. — Tir de foire)

Infra thin separation between the detonation noise of a gun (very close) and the apparition of the bullet hole in the target.
(maximum distance 3 to 4 meters. — Shooting gallery at a fair)

This chapter is not attempting to be a glossary of terms starting with non-... Instead, it attempts to show or expose a common trend in thinking. In a broader sense, this new trend established a negation towards the traditional understanding of discipline, its large systems and hard planning. It demands a much more humble approach and reading of the existing, the sites and the cities.

Anticipating this new understanding, Roland Barthes, in literature, questioned the form of writing in his book *The Death of the Author* (1967) and fourteen years earlier in *Writing Degree Zero* (1953).

Barthes feels that there is a certain estrangement between the author and the reader in literature. He argues that it is due to two reasons, on the one hand the language and on the other the imposing figure of the author. Language, he argues is owing to the burden of symbolism or conventions in literature. Consequently writings have lost their original clarity, in favour of formality. Barthes proposes a new way of writing free of conventions:

"[...] writing at the zero degree is basically in the indicative mood, or if you like, amodal. . . This new neutral writing takes its place in the midst of all those ejaculations and judgments, without becoming involved in any of them; it consists precisely in their absence. [...] This transparent form of speech, [...], achieves a style of absence which is almost an ideal absence of style; [...] thus thought remains wholly responsible, without being overlaid by a secondary commitment of form to a History not of its own."[249]

On the other hand he argues that the author´s 'presence' has the effect of clouding the reader's judgements.

"Once the Author is gone, the claim to 'decipher' a text becomes quite useless. To give an Author to a text is to impose upon that text a stop clause, to furnish it with a final signification, to close the writing." [250]

He announces an attitude that can be found in many humanistic disciplines during the sixties and the seventies. Through his criticism and renewed understanding of writing, Barthes proposes a profound reassessment on the forms, styles and dogmas. From his proposition, we will assess what happens to the discipline of architecture and planning and observe in which way these reinforce this thesis'. It will also attempt to

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[249] Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. Annette Lavers, Le degré zéro de l'écriture (1953) 1st ed. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), pp. 76-77.
[250] "The Death of the Author," *Manteia* (1967): p. 5.

illustrate the weak paradigms that are prevalent in the sixties and seventies and how these determine this renewed way of understanding the discipline of architecture.

The theme that drives through this whole chapter is a certain critical attention to the traditional role of the architect and artists in relation to the environment, the discipline itself and social changes. These three parameters will be elaborated along two subchapters each.

anarchitecture/ anti-architecture and the un-house

Here we will attempt to analyse through, the work of Gordon Matta-Clark and the writings of Reyner Banham, the necessity of traditional architecture and at the same time a redefinition for architecture by the Anarchitecture Group.

non-plan/ non-design

We will question the role of the architect, designer and the planner through the writings and visions of the Non–Planners and Diana Agrest's essay *Non-Design*.

non-site/ no-centre, anti-urbanism, anticity, non-place, etc.

Lastly the intention is to assess how far the role of the architect actually is determining our cities and architecture. It will principally study the work of Robert Smithson and texts by Rem Koolhaas, in parallel.

What all these movements have in common is their opposition to the previous way of doing things. But in some, this negation applies to the way in which the discipline worked, while others went further, negating even the architecture itself. The first two subchapters therefore deal with the notion of disappearance of the architecture, whereas subchapters three and four deal with the need for a change in discipline and the last two sub chapters deal with the notion of entropy.

01.   anarchitecture

In the context of this thesis it was a perfect surprise to come across the word *Anarchitecture*. So much so, it seemed worthwhile visiting Gordon Matta-Clarks archives in Montreal to follow up on the lead. The interest grew upon discovering that just a month earlier Mark Wigley had been re-visiting exactly the same papers for his on-going research on *Anarchitecture*. However, just as Mark Wigley's research, it proved to become an arduous search for an elusive meaning of a word, *Anarchitecture*[251].

"The investigation has to remain open to the unexpected. Indeed, the very purpose of the investigation is to open up the work. Yet all of this detective work can never do more than refine the silhouette of Anarchitecture, almost as a kind of cutting in the by-now-too-solid image of Matta-Clark that has been assembled by so many eager hands. In other words, the purpose of this project is to carve out a clearly defined area of doubt within the increasingly "certain" reputation of Matta-Clark, an area of doubt that could perhaps expose unexpected angles and re-energize a scholarly debate about other aspects of his work." [252]

Wigley's research did find and expose many interesting substantial facts, opening up many possible paths for interpretations on Matta-Clarks' theorem. However, the many findings and information about his work, as Wigley exposes, cannot bind the word *Anarchitecture* to a single meaning.

What we know factually about *Anarchitecture* is, that it was some kind of project Gordon Matta Clark shared with fellow artists. It never materialized in a concrete piece beyond one exhibition (1974) in 112 Greene Street and several meetings and discussions, of which there is scant, scattered and inconclusive material that could clarify a possible theoretical framework for *Anarchitecture*.

Anarchitecture also became the name for a group of artists, which was composed by Laurie Anderson, Richard Nonas, Tina Girouard, Carol Goodden, Suzanne Harris, Jene Highstein, Bernard Kirschenbaun, Richard Landry and Matta Clark himself. Tina Girouard herself describes their interest and approach in the project:

"Each person had his own area of interest. I was interested in the idea of psychological scale in architecture […] the idea of the crossroads interested Richard [Nonas] and Jene [Highstein] – where streets met, what hallways do. Their interest in entranceways of buildings influenced me – wanting to stop people who were just passing through. Dicky [Landry] and Suzie [Harris] dealt

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251 Mark Wigley, "Anarchitectures: The Forensics of Explanation," *Log*, no. 15 (2009): p. 132.
252 Ibid.

with the acoustics of space. Suzie was teaching sensory awareness, and both of them would try to diagnose the basic sound that any room makes."[253]

fig. 128.   Gordon Matta-Clark, *FOOD* (c,1971-73)

Most of the initiatives seem to have been originated in *FOOD* (1971), pointing to this collective intention of Matta-Clark and his piers. *FOOD* was a performance[254] and a restaurant opened by Matta-Clark, Carol Goodden and Tina Girouard. The main purpose originally was to create a place for artists to meet and interact and some of the artists that participated in *FOOD* also participated in the exhibition, later on. The poster for the Anarchitecture exhibition showed one of the tablecloths of the restaurant with the word Anarchitecture printed on it.

However, if any of Matta-Clark's solo pieces could have a relationship to the collective Anarchitecture and be of interest to this point of the thesis, it would be with *Fake Estates* (1970-73). It could be seen as a concurrent parallel investigation to the idea of Anarchitecture.

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[253] Tina Girouard cited in Stephen Walker, "The Field and the Table: Rosalind Krauss's 'Expanded Field' and the 'Anarchitecture' Group," *Arq: architectural research quarterly 15*, no. 4 (2011): p. 347.

[254] Several authors have considered this project a performance piece in itself, Matta-Clark also made a Documentary about the restaurant.
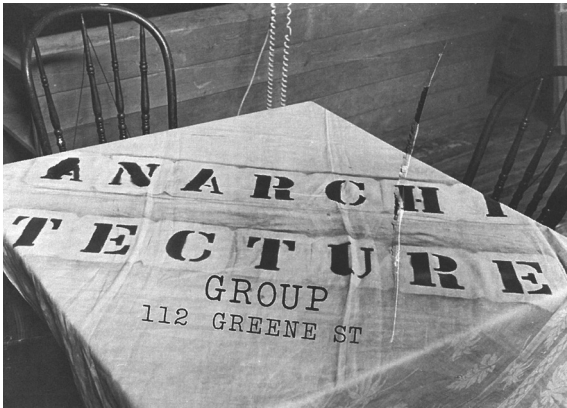
fig. 129. Anarchitecture, *invitation to the Anarchitecture exhibition* (1974)

Fake Estates was the collection of 15 useless slivers of land bought by the artist from the New York State. Most of these slivers became leftovers as a result of either the planning changes for the Expressway. Planning with a rigid grid system of 100x25 foot lot sizes or the result of many property transactions that reconfigured the plots leaving several unusable and sometimes even inaccessible patches of land. Whilst interviewed by the New York Times, Matta Clark comments:

"Another piece I bought I understand from the catalogue I can´t even get to. There is no access to it, which is fine with me. That´s an interesting quality: something that can be owned but not experienced. That´s an experience itself"[255]

These unutilized lots, some times even not usable spaces, unified or combined, form some kind of structure, or as Matta-Clark describes become, an experience in themselves. Even though he never put them together in any form of visible configuration, such as a map, they formed a conceptual or theoretical system.

The State, in its aim to collect as much tax as possible, allowed for these un-buildable lots to be sold in auctions. The artist bought them for between 25-75 apiece. The lots eventually reverted to the State in return for his unpaid tax bills after his death.

fig. 130. Hans Haake, *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971* (1971)

Another concurrent piece, *Shapolsky is at Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971* (1971), by the German born artist Hans Haacke also reflects on the concept of property, by documenting through 146 properties. In this case however, it is a critique to the established monopoly by a few landlords that

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[255] Dan Carlinsky, "Sliver' Buyers Have a Field Day at City Sales," New York Times Real Estate Section 14/10/1973 1973.

owned most of the properties in the slums of Harlem and the Lower East Side. Haacke was interested in the hidden connections of these slumlords. This exhibition was cancelled six weeks into its opening, with many people speculating on the reason for its cancellation.

Back to *Fake Estates*, it seems reasonable to image that this work was part of a personal investigation parallel to the meetings, however most probably the micro plots were bought with the intent of bringing them into the group´s discussions and works[256]. Still, this never materialized in any exhibition or any other form of work neither by the Anarchitecture Group nor by himself during his last years before his death in 1978. Carol Goodden explains:

"The slivers were connected to Anarchitecture, in that all of Gordon's thinking and what he did with space, light, form and objects were not only sculptures but part of the raison d'être on Anarchitecture, which was a nebulous, germinating thing at the time. Gordon´s acquisitions of the slivers, to my memory, happened completely separately from Anarchitecture and then he bought into the idea of the discussions."[257]

There are many contradicting opinions on the use for the slivers of land. Yet Betsy Sussler, one of his collaborators, offers an interesting hindsight by explaining that it was not about the finality of the slivers or the artwork, but about the concept and the process.

"What was Gordon going to do with the Fake Estates? He was videotaping them to figure that out. For the moment, it was enough that he´d just bought these ridiculous little fragments of space, of time and space, but it would have gone elsewhere somehow. It was a process, and it hadn´t worked itself out yet. Look, Gordon filmed the making of his work, but I'm not sure he thought of it as a performance or as documentation for exhibition. I think he just thought of it as process, and at some point the process would be over and when it was, what it was would reveal itself. It was in the line of Bruce Nauman and Bill Wegman and Joan Jonas. One did that."[258]

In the archive's notes what constantly appeared was a continuous playing with words which he used to reconstruct known sentences by the architectural establishment to show his opposition to their dogmas. Such as, "a machine for not living"[259].

fig. 131. Gordon Matta-Clark, Anarchitecture, *Fake Estates* (1973)

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[256] In a fax to the Anarchitecture group he writes: "Fake Estates property slivers with some projected ideas for them"
[257] Gordon Matta-Clark et al., *Odd Lots: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's "Fake Estates"* (Cabinet Books, in conjuction with the Queens Museum of Art and White Columns, 2005), p. 45.
[258] Ibid., p. 40.
[259] CCA Archive Notes by Gordon Matta-Clark.

Anarchitecture itself comes from the juxtaposition of 'anarchy' and 'architecture'. Another member of the Anarchitecture Group, Richard Nonas, summarizes that the basic idea for Anarchitecture was a form of constructing a criticism.

"Architecture did not start out being the main point for any of us, even for Gordon. But we soon realized [...] that architecture could be used to symbolize all the hard-shelled cultural reality we meant to push against, and not just building or 'architecture' itself. That was the context in which Gordon came up with the term Anarchitecture. And that, perhaps, suggests the meaning we all gave it."[260]

From the scattered information about the exhibition pieces, the artists, seemed to approach Anarchitecture from a new, fresh angle. In one of the pieces, for example, the words 'endless city', 'space travel', "a direct and non productive response to form following function" etc. appear. Hence, showing non-connected ideas and possible interpretations to what Anarchitecture could be. It looks like early steps into their investigations without a developed theory, even after three years of meetings.

"I am trying to suggest that the question raised in the ongoing research on Anarchitecture is one that deepens as the amount of evidence increases. It is almost as if the slowly but systematically expanding evidence comes toward us in a very particular rhythm to distract us from our question - as if a typical scholarly response to the evidence might even halt our inquiry. At one level, it is simple. At the heart of the mystery is an undocumented exhibition reported to have been staged in a particular place and time by a particular group of friends who all have unclear and different memories of what was exhibited and what occurred in the discussions that spawned it."[261]

fig. 132.   Gordon Matta-Clark, *Aerograme to the Anarchitecture Group* (1973)
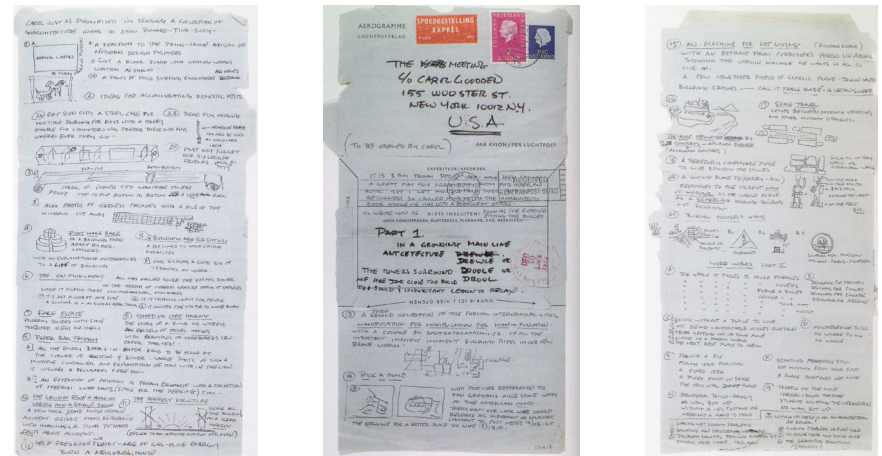
260 Matta-Clark et al., *Odd Lots: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's "Fake Estates"*, p. 48.
261 Stephen Walker, "The Field and the Table: Rosalind Krauss's 'Expanded Field' and the 'Anarchitecture' Group," p. 352.

Matta Clarks' frustration most probably grew over the years, culminating with his statement for the exhibition *Idea as a Model* (1976). The exhibition took place at the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies, which was under the presidency of Peter Eisenman and curated by Andrew MacNair. His work was to sit next to Peter Eisenman and Michael Graves and other established architects with their projects for visions for the future of architecture. Asked to portray his own vision, in this collective exhibition, Matta-Clark originally proposed to do a piece where he would cut one of the seminar rooms into squares. He later changed his mind performing *Window Blow-Out* (1976). The night before the opening, he blew out the windows of the exhibition space with Dennis Oppenheim's air riffle and used the window frames to hang the pictures that showed new housing projects vandalized in the South Bronx. The windows were duly replaced in time for the opening, his work though, was no longer part of the exhibition.

fig. 133. Gordon Matta Clarck, *Window Blow-Out* (1976)

In this attempt to find a meaning to Matta-Clark´s *Anarchitecture*, one gets closer and closer to his godfather´s, Duchamp, concept of *Infrathinness*: This notion that one cannot reach the full meaning of something, but being able to grasp a feeling or an unexplainable understanding.

Anarchitecture most probably is not about Mark Wigley's forensic research, or the apparently unfinished work of *Fake Estates*, but *Anarchitecture* probably just stands for the intangibility of that which is essential. The closest description to *Anarchitecture*, might in fact be, one found in Matta-Clarks art cards or notes:

"Anarchitecture is about making space without building it."[262]

And it´s truly in this lack of concise definition in which the beauty of the word lays as well as the meaning of *Anarchitecture*.

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[262] Wigley, "Anarchitectures: The Forensics of Explanation," p. 128.

02.   anti-architecture[263] / the un-house

The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment (1969) is the work of the engineer, architectural critic and writer Reyner Banham. In his book he denounces the failings of architectural practice and its abandonment of mechanical thermal conditioning, leaving it in the hands of engineers. The author makes his point by exemplifying the lack of risk-taking of the architectural community which only introduce technology once it has been well established and proven in other fields.

"In their role as creators of actual physical environments, architects have to be both cautious and practical. They have to see something in use, sometimes for as much as a generation, before they feel the confidence to extrapolate new and radical uses for it, knowing that their clients will never forgive nor forget if anything goes wrong... So technological potential continuously runs ahead of architectural performance... Almost four decades separate the first industrial uses of air-conditioning from its confident employment in the kind of architecture that is designed by famous architects..."[264]

For Banham, architecture needed to become an "*environmental management*" tool. On the one hand, through efficiency and on the other hand through achieving "*minimum*" architecture for habitation. This idea is linked to the architecture of disappearance, which is an important concept developed in an earlier chapter of this thesis. However, for this part of the thesis, it is interesting to see how, in Banham´s view, architecture and form had become obsolete, and hence were bound for disappearance.

He argues that le Corbusier´s ideal of "*the house is a machine for living*", was still largely subordinate to form and that "*form follows function*" never really happened.

Banham aligned himself with the theoretical but mostly practical work of Buckminster Fuller. Banham, during a conference states:

''With the ever increasing scientific development, the environment will be completely controlled and the concept of the house will be eliminated—we are working towards the invisible house—what will you do with architecture then?''[265]
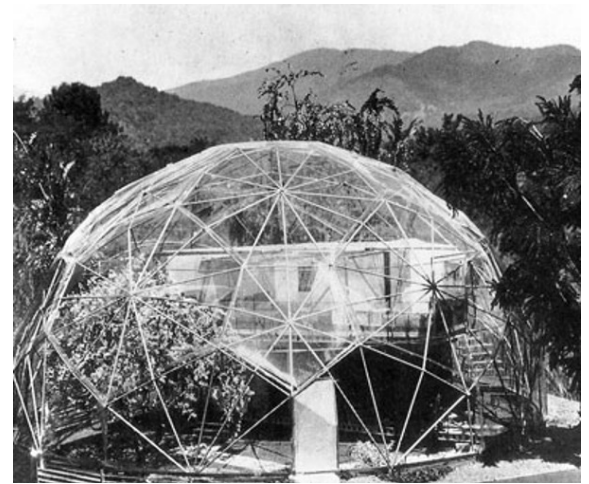
fig. 134.   Buckminster Fuller, *Standard of Living Package* (1948)

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[263] Borrowing the term used by Jared Langevin, "Reyner Banham: In Search of an Imageable, Invisible Architecture," *Architectural Theory Review* (2011): p. 3.

[264] Reyner Banham, *Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment*, (1969) 2 ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 28.

[265] Langevin, "Reyner Banham: In Search of an Imageable, Invisible Architecture," p. 8.

fig. 135.   Buckminster Fuller, *Standard of Living Package* (1948)
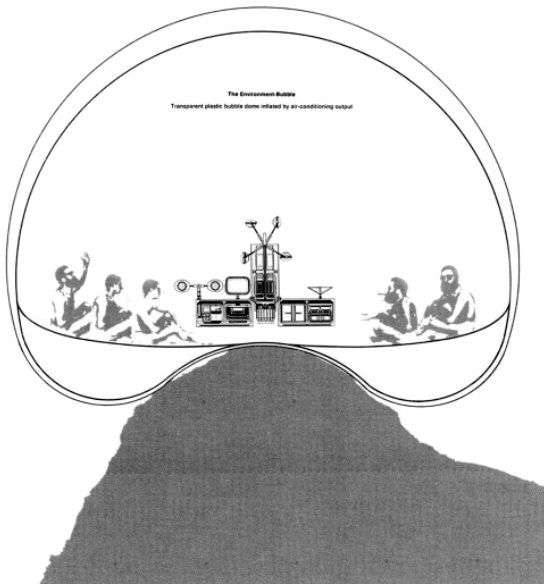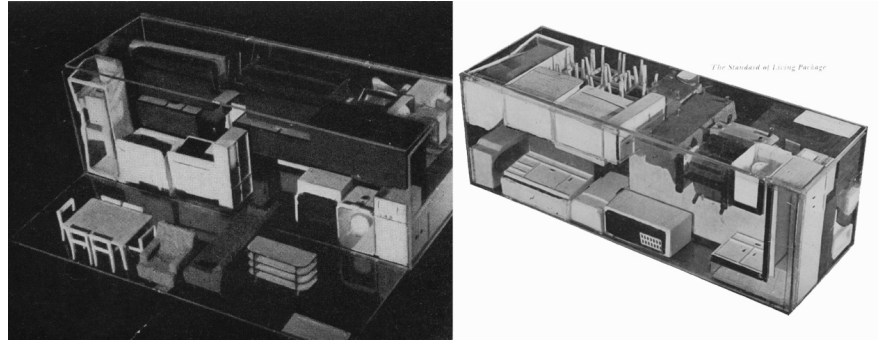
fig. 136.   François Dellagret, *The Environment Bubble* (1965)

Jared Langevin discovers this connection with Banham's *Non-House*[266]. He describes how Banham borrowed Fullers *Standard of Living Package* (1948) to address the minimum necessary equipment. Banham's air capsule would also include the necessary technological needs such as lighting[267]. With the help of the designer François Dallegret he represented his concepts in two drawings. One of what a *Non-House* would be, *The Environment Bubble* (1965) and another *Anatomy of a Dwelling* (1965) showing how with so many installations to create the ideal climate the house would actually disappear.

Banham's influence is twofold, one on each side of the continent. In Britain he belonged to the *Independent Group*, and was influenced by other members such as Richard Hamilton and his exhibition *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* (1956). But also, by Peter and Alison Smithson and their ideas about the *House of the Future* (1955) exhibited at *People of Today and Tomorrow* exhibition by the Daily Mail in West London or Cedric Price's *Fun Palace*. Banham wrote about in 1961[268].

For the Smithsons the future house would incorporate all the necessary technology including, for example, the fact that one would no longer need a blanket to sleep with in a well acclimatized home.

At the same time Banham was a great influence on Archigram and vice versa. He supported their work greatly by giving voice to the group. Banham's and Archigram's

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266   Ibid.
267   Ibid.
268   Ibid., p.10.

common interests show especially in Archigram's subsequent work *Cushicle* (1964) and the *Suitaloon* (1967).

For Banham the role of the architect was neither of an artistic nor of an aesthetics role, but rather one closer to engineering; to provide the necessary structures for habitation and man-made climate.

Banham argued that architects would become obsolete, in the sense that, through technology one would, no longer, need huge buildings. Instead architects could scale down the "buildings" to the minimum, helped by the management of temperature and ventilation. Therefore the use of thermodynamics, inertia and mass for thermal regulation would no longer be needed [269]. The architecture wouldn't require large physical presence, but instead, could become invisible and with that, the architect or at least his aesthetic expression would also become invisible.

Later on, Banham, continues his questioning of the role of the architect in the *Uncity*[270] in *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (1971) and in *Non-plan* (1969).
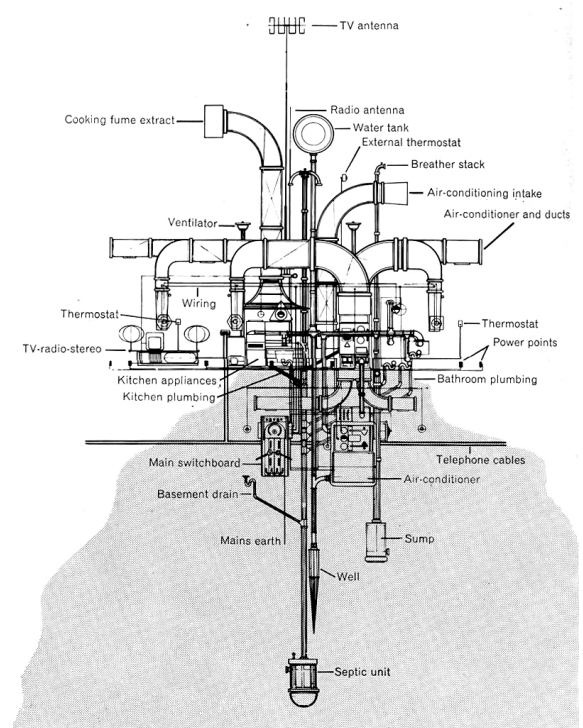
fig. 137. François Dellagret and Reyner Banham, *Anatomy of a Dwelling.* (1965)

fig. 138. Peter and Alison Smithson, *The House of the Future* (1956)

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[269] Ibid., p. 14.
[270] Term used by Robert M. Rubin, "Unveiling the Unhouse," *Art in America*, no. March (2015).

fig. 139.   Front Cover of New Society 338 (1969)

03.   non-plan

The Non-Planners encapsulate a situation of change that many, such as the members of the Team X Group, Constant Nieuwenhuys and Yona Friedman anticipated as new models of transformative urbanism, taking account of the context as a way to fortify social structures. Context in all senses, from physical to social.

In particular, Lewis Mumford, argued in *Megalopolis as Anticity* (1962) that the suburbia had become the anticity. He concluded that it was only through participative decision taking in planning, that cities could maintain their identities. He was clearly a precursor to the idea of *Non-plan* where the planners' role is delegated to a mediating role.

Some of these concepts were also detectable in Folkstone, at the IDEA (International Dialogue of Experimental Architecture) congress (1966). Archigram, Reyner Banham, Yona Friedman, Anthony Gwilliam and James Meller, Hans Hollein, Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, Cedric Price, Ionel Schein, Arthur Quarmby, and Jos Weber participated in the event.

These artists, architects and writers were trying to escape "*the designed order*" characteristic of "*state-based planning*" used as a way to establish control, of the early decades during the war and during the reconstruction of nations[271]. Anthony Fontenot, finds a very suggestive link to Friedrich von Hayek´s *The Road to Serfdom* (1944).:

"Hayek contrasted the centralized and "planned order" of socialist states with what he called the "spontaneous order" of free-market economies, which he described as the unplanned coordination that results when individual citizens are allowed to pursue self-interest and free trade with minimal coercion."[272]

On the other side of the Atlantic, some of the same principles were also being put forward by other thinkers, such as Jane Jacob, who in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), saw the need to respond to societies request to be able to autogéré or self-manage their urban spaces[273].

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[271] Anthony Fontenot, "Notes toward a History of non-planning: On Design, the Market, and the State.," *Places Journal*, no. January (2015).

[272] Ibid.

[273] Hughes Jonathan and Sadler Simon, *Non-plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* (London: Routledge Ltd, 2013), p.163.

"Non-plan ignited the imaginations of young architects and critics; the argument resonated with what had become, by this point, the demonization of state-based urban planning by groups on both the left and right."[274]

Thus, the Non-Planners were at the end, not just the four authors, Reyner Banham, Paul Barker, Cedric Price and Peter Hall: an *Non-plan: Experiment in Freedom* published in *New Society* in 1969. In its place, these authors had become the voices of a collective vision and understanding.

A Non-Planner had become anybody that questioned the disappearance of urban planning, as it was, for its dogmatic rigidity, and proposed new bottom-up approaches to planning, where the role of the architect as planner would become weaker and less present in the process. Paul Barker in *Thinking the Unthinkable* (1969) stated:

"I am unconvinced that our planned towns and cities have delivered the best we could hope for. Nor do I think that what now passes for wisdom will necessarily turn out to be any wiser than the misplaced confidence of previous generations."[275]

Non-planners did not define planning as a form or structure. For example, they did not question the open or closeness of systems, or nomadism. Instead, they proposed a simple idea:

"Non-plan was essentially a very humble idea: that it is very difficult to decide what is best for other people"[276]

Also for the planners the concept was "…*the idea of the city as a non-plan, an open text whose meanings are not determined by the planner*…"[277]

Relating it to the participatory process, *Non-plan* was to give voice to the people who could not manifest themselves through the existing channels available at that time (TV, newspapers…). They, however, proposed a medium for people to express their needs through this new unconventional channel of urban design. Architecture had

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[274] Fontenot, "Notes toward a History of non-planning: On Design, the Market, and the State.."
[275] Jonathan and Simon, *Non-plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, p. 7.
[276] Yona Friedman, "Interview with Yona Friedman," ed. Marta Malé - Alemany and Willy Müller (IAAC Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia, 2011).
[277] Paul Barker in Jonathan and Simon, *Non-plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, p. 6.

become a medium of communication. It is however true, that they often "*tended to equate personal freedom with free-market capitalism*"[278], however the authors were a mixed group of political inclinations.

In any case, neither did they share the anarchical views of many of the groups at that time; specially the anti-capitalist, non-hierarchical or anti-architectural views of many of their concurrent groups. In fact to some extent, they could be viewed as if they remained rather conservative in relationship to other movements like the Squatters.[279] In contrast to these groups the Non-Planners, believed that the private initiative would bring in spontaneity and architectural diversity.[280] Their oversimplification was in some way a direct reaction to their opposition to control by the state. The planner would no longer impose planning, but exert the people's views. Here envisaged are two ways in which to approach non-planning:

 "...*those which consider the possibility of 'non-planning' within the context of existing social and economic infrastructures and those which confront existing structures as limiting conditions which must be transgressed*"[281]

A bottom up approach, was required in both cases, which relied on social participation, knowledge and sensibility about the existing structures (even if they were to be transgressed).

Non-plan was therefore contextual. It addressed real sociological issues and each *Non-plan* required a fresh start and assessment of the site. Therefore each area would become an experiment.

The proposals detailed in the article, *Non-plan* showed how well, the authors had analysed each of the sites and their knowledge about economic, social, demographic and geographic issues. The key idea was to study the conditions and opportunities of these sites individually. Not to extrapolate ideas but to test solutions in that particular site, until they proved to fit the users. Therefore it was a purely experimental approach, ad-hoc. Instantaneity and experimentation was one of the core strategies of the Non-Planners. Mumford also shared that thought. He considered that participative

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278 Fontenot, "Notes toward a History of non-planning: On Design, the Market, and the State.."
279 Jonathan and Simon, *Non-plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, p. 36.
280 Ibid., p.34.
281 Paul Barker in ibid., p. 6.

planning could offer the necessary "*freedom and spontaneity*"[282]. He also talked of a way of achieving the creative city much in the discourse of the Situationists.

In brief, Non-Planners suggested that through experimentation on real sites, underlying qualities, new solutions or concepts could be discovered otherwise hidden behind dogmatic approaches.

In regards to *Non-plan* it is interesting to look at the work of Cedric Price who together with Banham appear to be the most propositional of the authors of the Non-Planners: Banham in theoretical texts and Price in his projects.

The same year in which the International Dialogue of Experimental Architecture (IDEA) gathering in Folkstone organized by Archigram took place, Price was working on *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1966). The experience gained with the *Potteries Thinkbelt* project seems to have helped consolidate the ideas three years later in *Non-plan: an Experiment in Freedom*.

Even though the *Potteries Thinkbelt* at large is a very indetermined project, it comes across as very determined and rigid, nearly in opposition to non-planning. Nonetheless, behind the rigid railway plans and transport infrastructures lies the idea of opening possibilities for continuous free development. This structure is maintained in the proposal to provide flexibility to avoid traditional zoning and allow people to produce, study and live freely around the area.
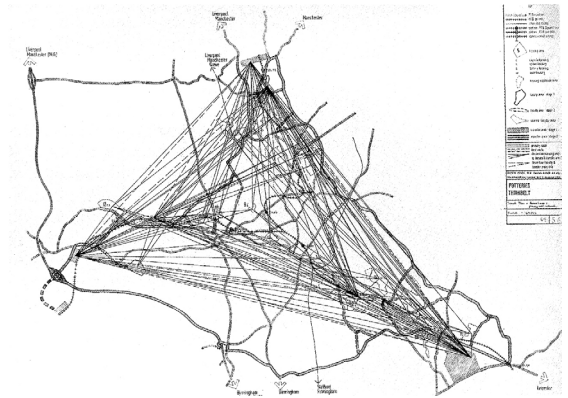
fig. 140. Cedric Price, *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1966)

fig. 141. Cedric Price, *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1966)

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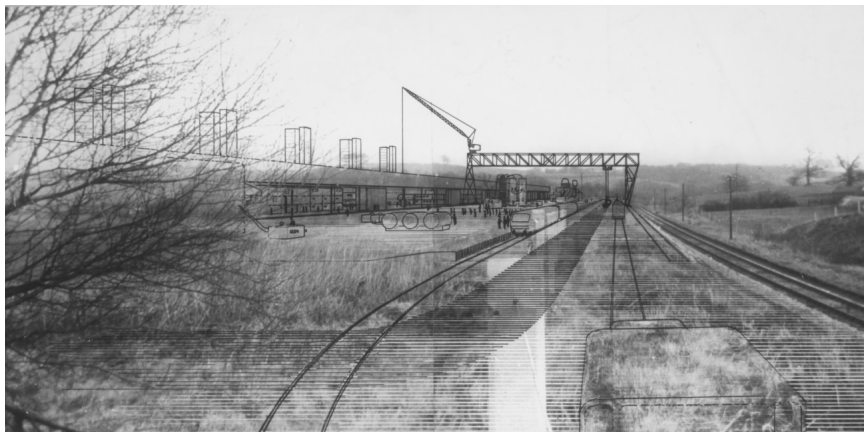
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[282] Lewis Mumford cited in Shuxue Li, *Lewis Mumford: Critic of Culture and Civilization* (Peter Lang, 2009).

The un-built project proposed a regeneration of a 100 square mile triangular shaped, disused region dedicated to a then declining ceramics industry. The area covered the region from Pitts Hill, Madeley and Meir to the East and at its centre Stoke and Newcastle-Under-Lyme, and it was to house campuses for higher education and student residences by re-utilizing the extended network of disused railway structures that originally connected the pits to the potteries. However, it was also a way of connecting the traditionally well-off student force of 20.000 to the real industrial world and to establish a two way learning process.

The most important part of the plan was the mobility structure designed to incorporate the learning spaces. In this way the community and students would no longer be disconnected or isolated, instead, merging the academic with the real life in neutral spaces.

Pier Vittorio Aurelio describes education as a triggering factor for production. He states that Price's project makes an attempt to improve society's production capabilities[283]. Furthermore, the project was a critique, but also a proposal for the educational crisis in Britain was facing what led to the *Robbins Report* in 1963. The report and its conclusions, were accepted by the government in full, and triggered an important national debate about higher education.
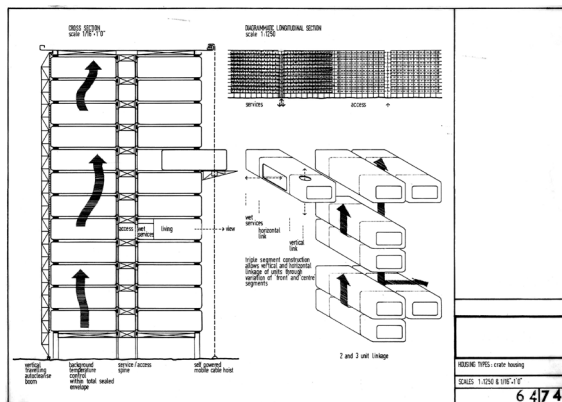
fig. 142. Cedric Price, *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1966)

Price knew the area well and could detail the project very precisely. His drawings even though intentionally diagrammatic had enough complexity to demonstrate a thorough study of the project. Nonetheless, Price wanted to give the project a degree of 'indeterminacy'[284] and allow for self-organization by its inhabitants, therefore integrating the possibility for spontaneity and constant development. Price wanted an open ended configuration that could, at any point, be reconfigured, rendered obsolete or dismantled. The only fixed structuring elements were, in fact, the train lines. Housing campuses and in general building units were not determined and could be incorporated as needed in the proposal.

"PTb (Potteries Thinkbelt) should not be understood as a "rehabilitation project", nor of course as a project conceived exclusively from the patronising morality of preventing a catastrophe or the disappearance of a rich tradition. It is about taking advantage of the changes in order to

283 Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Labor and Architecture / Revisiting Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt," (Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT lecture readings, 2011).
284 Jonathan and Simon, *non-plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, p. 90.

generate a different industry, another community, another way of life, which can recycle what is still useful after ruthlessly throwing away what is not. There is no client, program or budget; it is about an invented brief, a personal adventure, which reveals Price's great ability to describe a potentially rich situation from an apparently infertile reality. Architecture then becomes a critical instrument capable of re-describing the world and uncovering other opportunities where it all seems to have come to an end."[285]

Two important issues that transcend both in *Potteries Thinkbelt* and in '*Non-plan*' is on the one hand context as a guide to utilize the existing and having a deeper understanding of social coherence in regards to planning. On the other hand setting the ground for participatory architecture. Both these notions are still extremely valid nowadays and exemplify a delicate approach to site and the social fabric of places.

Rem Koolhaas puts these ideas into a timeline; he argues that traditional planning, (usually done in an office removed from the site) hardly took into account the social fabric of places treating areas or sites as tabula rasa. This is precisely what Non-Planners opposed to proposing a more sensitive approach.

"The myth of the tabula rasa has had a very interesting life in architecture. It was proposed in the 1920s more as a poetic than as a literal notion. Then in the post-war world it flipped over, becoming the most serious crime that an architect could ever commit. It was at first a form of propaganda used by architects to make their case more vivid and, presumably, also to advance their careers, but then it became the propaganda of the non-architects against architects."[286]

What is often misinterpreted in the concept of *Non-plan* is the thought that the planner was dispensable. What they considered dispensable was the idea of one 'grand proposal' directly out of the planner's office. Nearly in opposition to Megastructures or the rigid planning from the First Modernity. Instead they proposed a constant revision and communication process with communities through extensive knowledge on the ground. Sadly, as Koolhaas states in the quote above, the non-planning idea was misunderstood at large.

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[285] Juan Herreros, "About Cedric Price´S Potteries Thinkbelt, Forty Years of Heterodoxy" (London Metropolitan University, 16/10/2015 2015).

[286] Maarten Van Den Driessche, "The Situational Theory of Architectural Typology " in *Politics of Designing* (Copenhagen royal academy of fine arts, the school of architecture 2008), p. 2.

04.   non-design

It is this freeing oneself from the normative that marks the change in bi-decade of the sixties and seventies, between the first and the second modernity, and can be seen in much of the work done by architects and groups, such as, Archigram or the Italian Radicals. These architects and their proposals introduce a reformulation of the approach that wants to start from the beginning, from 'degree zero' and rethinking from outside the discipline.

Diana Agrest, *Design versus Non-Design* (1974), joins this debate and makes a critique about a reductionist and formalistic understanding of architectural design understood from the paradigms of the first modernity. For her, that design leaves no room for addressing the real "*cultural problematic of architecture*". Her emphasis in her article focused particularly in the dichotomy between those terms "*Design*" and "*Non-Design*". She explains the differences and argues that Design is a "*closed system*"[287] that needs to open up socially, culturally and politically.

She separates two principles. On the one hand Design, which she considers to be a "*social practice*" in this "*closed system*" constructed by norms and rules by which the architectural discipline or "*institution*" conforms to.

"Design might be considered a social practice that functions by a set of socially sanctioned rules and norms – whether implicit or explicit – and therefore is constituted as an institution. Its institutional character is manifested in the normative writings and written texts of architecture, which fix its meaning and, therefore, its reading."[288]

She views design as an exercise of taking "*cultural context*" and normalizing it within the "*codes*" of Architecture or Urban Design. She considered that even post CIAM architects, such as Alison and Peter Smithson, were not engaging enough in freeing architecture from its normative impositions and only staying at the discursive level, hence not truly "*formulating a critique with their design practice*"[289].

On the other hand, *Non-Design* is the relationship between other systems such as painting, literature, philosophy, and social developments etc., which shape the

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287 Diana Agrest cited in "Architecture Theory since 1968," in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Michael K. Hays (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998).

288 Diana Agrest, "Design versus Non-Design" Paper presented at the First International Congress of Semiotic Studies, Milan, July 1974; published in Oppositions 6 (Fall 1976)
Marc Augé, Non-Places : *Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London New York: Verso, 1995).

289 "Architecture Theory since 1968," p. 207.

built and urban landscape. That is to say, the external factors which contaminate design in one-way or another, but not through metaphorical or symbolic gestures, but through the "*relating of architecture to the city in such a way that the former acquires the "life" of the latter*". [290]

"*In the world of Non-Design, that no-man's-land of the symbolic, the scene of social struggle, an internal analysis of single systems is revealed as inadequate and impossible to apply. Here there is no unique producer, no subject, nor is there an established rhetorical system within a defined institutional framework. Instead there is a complex system of intertextual relationships.*"[291]

Non-Design could therefore never be a product oriented process, but instead, be an adaptable proposition that was constantly adjusting to the reality of its settings; processual rather that finalistic.

Fundamental to approaching *Non-Design* was also, renouncing to a specific language that historically had belonged to the discipline, and instead started a dialogue and negotiation through a renewed way of addressing social context. Even though the diagram by Charles Eames shows a more developed thought of the process of design identifying the overlapping needs of the designer, the client, and "*society as a whole*", it falls short of what Agrest is suggesting. Even though, Charles and Ray Eames, were a great example in the process of negotiation and creative dialogue with their client, it should go further for Agrest than simply identifying needs. She wanted design to become 'impregnated' by the social and cultural context.

It is difficult to show examples of Agrest's *Non-Design*, maybe she refers to most of the utopian projects around that time. Maybe even *Non-Design* was also a defence for those projects. In any case, she accepts criticism and theoretical thinking as a way to achieve *Non-Design*, just as the Situationists in *Unitary Urbanism* proposed.

"*Diana Agrest illustrated that neither the innovation nor the critical thinking are to be found in the architectural discipline (Design) itself, but rather seem to originate outside the discipline (Non-Design).*" [292]
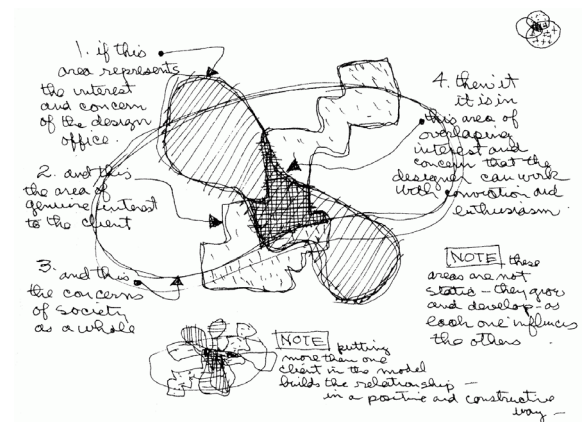
fig. 143.   Charles Eames, *Design Diagram* (1969)

290 Diana Agrest, "Design versus Non-Design" Paper presented at the First International Congress of Semiotic Studies, Milan, July 1974; published in Oppositions 6 (Fall 1976)
      Van Den Driessche, "The Situational Theory of Architectural Typology ".
291 Ibid.
      "Architecture Theory since 1968," p.207.
292 Ibid.

In performance art however this was much easier and through actions one could easily engage with the 'social' and the 'cultural'. One example of engagement was, of course, politicization. From early Fluxus' work, the conceptual pieces such as Chris Burden's *Shoot* (1971), through to activism in the eighties and even nowadays, politicization has always been one of the important fields of investigation of performance art.

In *Shoot* for example, Burden criticizes the continuous violence exposed through the media and the news, specifically in relationship to the Vietnam War. He lets himself be shot with an air-riffle in the arm by one of his friends.

For design, this form of engagement to the social-cultural and the political was much more difficult to express.
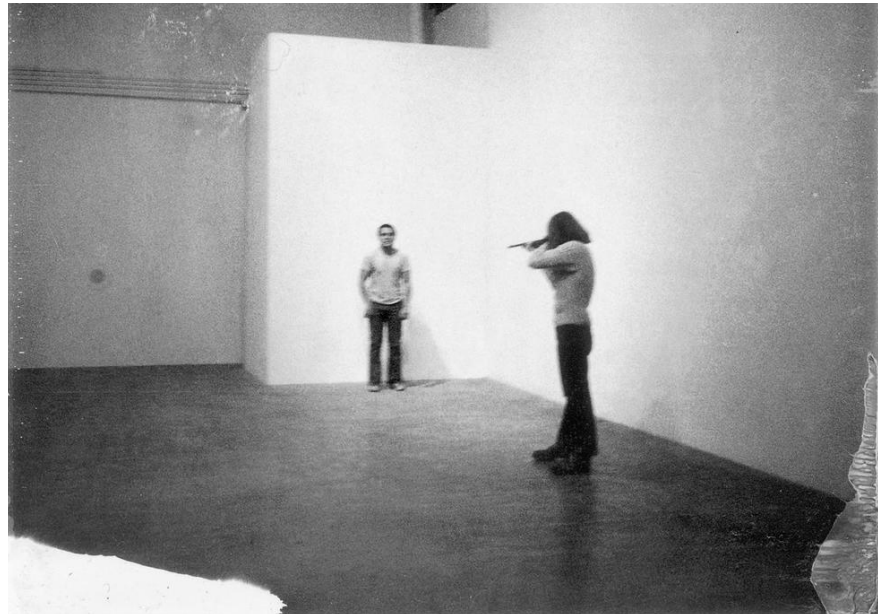
fig. 144.   Chris Burden, *Shoot* (1971)

05.   non-sites

The work of Robert Smithson just as many of Matta Clark's works often ended up as a photograph hung off a wall in an important gallery such as the Tate, even when the actions or the pieces were site specific. However, in the case of some of Smithsons' work, this connection between the place where the action took place and the 'piece in the museum' was intentionally shown.

This is the case of *Non-Sites* (1968)[293], where Robert Smithson dislocated materials from selected sites into the gallery space of museums. The chosen sites interested him for many different reasons, for their historic value, stratifications, context, amongst others. The materials removed from the site were then reorganized into geometric containers as a re-composition and exhibited in museums. The basic underlying idea was the concept of destruction and reconstruction. Which, without doubt, contains his notion about entropy which we will discuss later on. Parallel to this idea, of entropy, there are two other important ideas which the artist was interested in.

On the one hand, time was important, to Robert Smithson, because it inferred the idea of uncertainty. In his works, Smithson, could never be certain if his "*sites*" would remain the same during the duration of the exhibition of the "*Non-Sites*". Just as in mapping the abstract, in this case the *Non-Sites*, become more static than the real or natural, the "*sites*" which continue the process of natural transformation.

"The Non-Site (an indoor earthwork) is a three dimensional logical picture that is abstract, yet it represents an actual site […]. It is by this three dimensional metaphor that one site can represent another which does not resemble it–thus The Non-Site"[294]

Furthermore, Smithson continues:

"Pure science, like pure art tends to view abstraction as independent of nature, there's no accounting for change or the temporality of the mundane world. Abstraction rules in a void, pretending to be free of time."[295]

His pieces, *Non-Sites*, allowed for juxtaposing the historic 'sites' versus the decontextualized newly arranged '*Non-Sites*'.
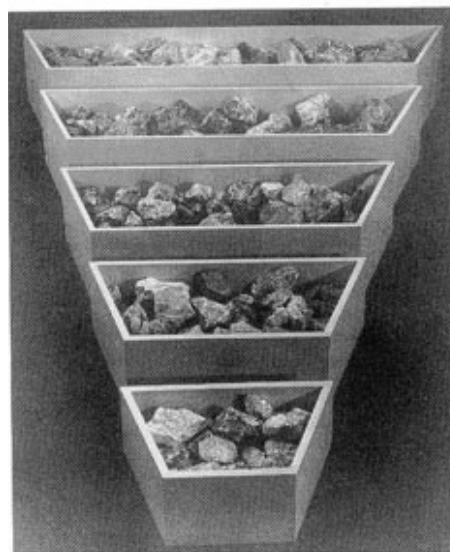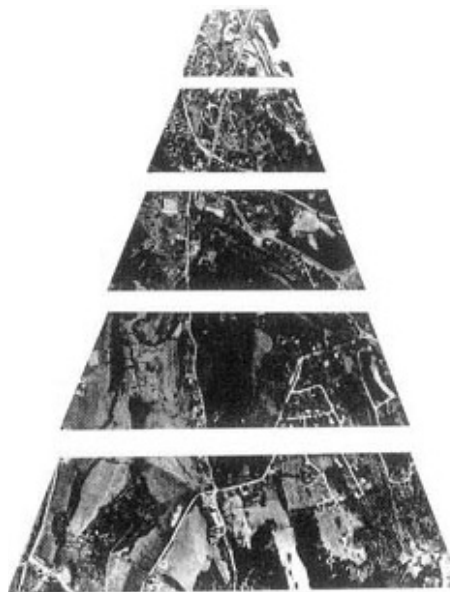
fig. 145.   Robert Smithson, *Non-Site* (1968)

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293 Robert Smithson is mostly known for his land-art but he used many mediums to express conceptual art. In this case the action of displacing will be considered a performance.

294 Robert Smithson and Jack D. Flam, *Robert Smithson, the Collected Writings*, 2 ed. (University of California Press, 1996), p. 364.

295 Robert Smithson interview with Alison Sky ibid., p. 301.

"Time as decay or biological evolution is eliminated by many of these artists; this displacement allows the eye to see time as an infinity of surfaces or structures, or both combined, without the burden of what Roland Barthes calls the "undifferentiated mass of organic sensation."[296]

On the other hand, *Non-Sites* derived from an interest in mapping, in abstract mapping. At the times of his first *Non-Site Pine Barrens in southern New Jersey*, Smithson, was working with maps and aerial photography for an architectural company. He recalls the site as being in equilibrium and having a sense of tranquillity. The site had in the centre a hexagonal Airfield, which reminded him of crystalline structures.

"A crystal can be mapped out, and in fact I think it was crystallography which led me to map-making. Initially I went to the Pine Barrens to set up a system of outdoor pavements but in the process I become interested in the abstract aspects of mapping. [...] So I decided to use the Pine Barrens site as a piece of paper and draw a crystalline structure over the landmass rather than on a 20 x 30 sheet of paper: in this way I was applying my conceptual thinking directly to the disruption of the site over an area of several miles. So you might say that my Non-Site was a three dimensional map of the site."[297]

Preceding to the series *Non-Sites*, Smithson also worked on a series of vanishing point concepts that includes sculptures and three dimensional drawings.

"If the earth is considered to be a planispherical grid map, all rectangular coordinates converge at the fixed points of the poles. At the poles all visual sense of place or site is abolished. Around such fixed points radiate latitude lines; such lines may be extended into infinite magnitudes and these magnitudes may be compressed or contracted into three-dimensional artifices (the way the planet earth may be contracted into a global map). I call these three dimensional finite compressions infra perspectives, since they don't relate to natural visual conditions or room interiors, environments, places, sites, etc. The terrains are artificial and abstract."[298]

Non-Sites was therefore not only related to the translocation of material, but also abstraction and mapping.

At the same time as there was a tendency in minimizing interference in architecture and planning, as we saw with the Non-Planners and for example Yona Friedman's work, in performance art, particularly, there was a growing interest in expressing that through subtle actions far-reaching or profound changes could happen.

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[296] *Entropy and the New Monuments* (1966), Ann Reynolds, *Robert Smithson: Learning from New Jersey and Elsewhere* (MIT Press, 2004), p. 131.

[297] Robert Smithson in discussions with Heizer and Oppenheim organized by Liza Bear and Willoughby Sharp, Smithson and Flam, *Robert Smithson, the Collected Writings*, p. 244.

[298] Robert Smithson cited in Reynolds, *Robert Smithson: Learning from New Jersey and Elsewhere*, p.130.
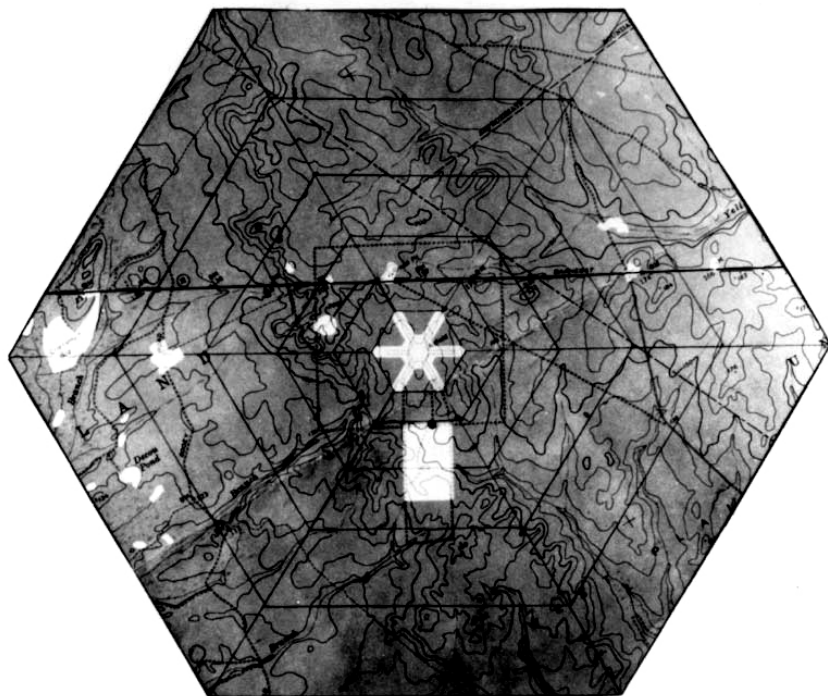
A NONSITE (an indoor earthwork)

31 sub-divisions based on a hexagonal "airfield" in the Woodmansie Quadrangle - New Jersey (Topograpnic) map. Each sub-dividion of the Nonsite contains sand from the site shown on the map. Tours between the Nonsite and the site are possible. The red dot on the map is the place where the sand was collected.

fig. 146. Robert Smithson, *Non-Site* (1968)

06. no-center, anti-urbanism, anticity, non-place, etc.

Another idea which started appearing in the second half of the century, dealt with the identity of places. This thesis argues that it has to do with the concept of entropy. It seems that the artist Robert Smithson first uses entropy as a concept in art or architecture. This subsection will try to show how this physics principle generated the concept of the cities loss of identity.

To defend this theory, we can take Robert Smithson *Monuments of Passaic* (1967), for example. In this action the artist narrates his journey from Manhattan to Passaic with texts and photographs. This piece anticipates and serves to demonstrate a collective interest in the notion of the loss of distinctiveness or particularity of places. Even though some of these writings discussed in relationship to Smithson´s work, chronologically appeared much later; take Marc Augé's book *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1995) or Rem Koolhaas' *Generic City* (1995) and earlier in *Delirious New York* (1978) the idea of non-specificity in architecture appeared at least in the sixties.

Monuments of Passaic describes the common city scattered along American Highways. He particularly describes the city´s centre, or more accurately, the "no-center" of his hometown in New Jersey.

"Passaic loomed like dull adjective. Each "store" in it was an adjective unto the next, a chain of adjectives disguised as stores. I began to run out of film, and I was getting hungry. Actually, Passaic center was no center–it was instead a typical abyss or an ordinary void.
 […]
There was nothing interesting or even strange about that flat monument, yet it echoed a kind of cliché idea of infinity; perhaps the "secrets of the universe" are just as pedestrian—not to say dreary.
Everything about the site remained wrapped in blandness and littered with shiny cars—one after another they extended into a sunny nebulosity. The indifferent backs of the cars flashed and reflected the stale afternoon sun. I took a few listless, entropic snapshots of that lustrous monument. If the future is "out of date" and "old fashioned," then I had been in the future.
[…]
Has Passaic replaced Rome as The Eternal City? If certain cities of the world were placed end to end in a straight line according to size, starting with Rome, where would Passaic be in that impossible progression? Each city would be a three-dimensional mirror that would reflect the next city into existence. The limits of eternity seem to contain such nefarious ideas."[299]

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[299] Smithson and Flam, *Robert Smithson, the Collected Writings*, p. 72-74.

These anodyne centres, Smithson describes, scattered along the American highways, each have the same configurations: a large square with shops around them and a parking lot occupying the whole square. The city centres are engulfed by the cars therefore no longer serving as 'the plaza'. These cities are characteristic of what Smithson calls the "*entropic*" process in urbanism.

In this thesis' interpretation of Smithson's concept, entropy, is explained by conceiving metaphorically the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Any system not self-contained (which is theoretically impossible), would start an irreversible process of transformation in its interaction with any other system.

Therefore, the less of a closed system or the less of entity something is, the more exposed it is to loss of energy and 'decay'. A monument, for example would decay faster for its lack of importance, which for Smithson is the case of *Passaic*. This is also true in general, architecture would decay faster for its lack of substance or historic value. Even landscape would decay. The idea of entropy can also be found in the action *Non-Site* we saw earlier. If one was to return the stones taken to their original site one could never recompose the site's natural state, it is changed forever. It has been fragmented.

Smithson speaks of architecture as "*a lot of visible things that are bland and empty such as the modern commercial buildings, new Colonial stores, lobbies, most houses, […].*"[300] For him architecture had started an irreversible process of transformation. For Koolhaas this irreversible transformation in cities happens as voids are filled in the city with new projects.

"*Sometimes an old, singular city […] turns generic. […] The reverse never happens...*"[301]

Or

"*The Generic Cityscape is usually an amalgam of overly ordered sections – dating from near the beginning of its development, when "the power" was still undiluted*"[302]

fig. 147. Robert Smithson, *Monuments of Passaic* (1976)

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[300] Using Donald Judd´s wording In Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt, *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations* (New York University Press, 1979), pp. 11-12.
[301] Rem Koolhaas et al., *S, M, L, XI* (Monacelli Press, 1995), p. 1250.
[302] Ibid., p. 1253.

In this urban context, José Antonio Tallón Iglesias, describes Koolhaas´ "*anti-urbanism*", as the image of a city that is in continuous transformation through the necessity of the constant filling in of urban voids. Buildings are torn down and those voids quickly filled on the principle of 'tabula rasa'.[303]

"The concept of tabula rasa appears in the work of Rem Koolhaas as a common territory on which he lays the foundations of a camouflaged anti-urbanism."[304]

Both Smithson and Koolhaas focus of the concept of voids in the city.

"On these "sites" (actually what is the opposite of site? They are like holes bored through the concept of the city)"[305]. [306]

Passaic seems full of "holes" compared to New York City, which is tightly packed and solid, and those holes in a sense are the monumental vacancies that define without trying, the memory traces of an abandoned set of futures."[307]
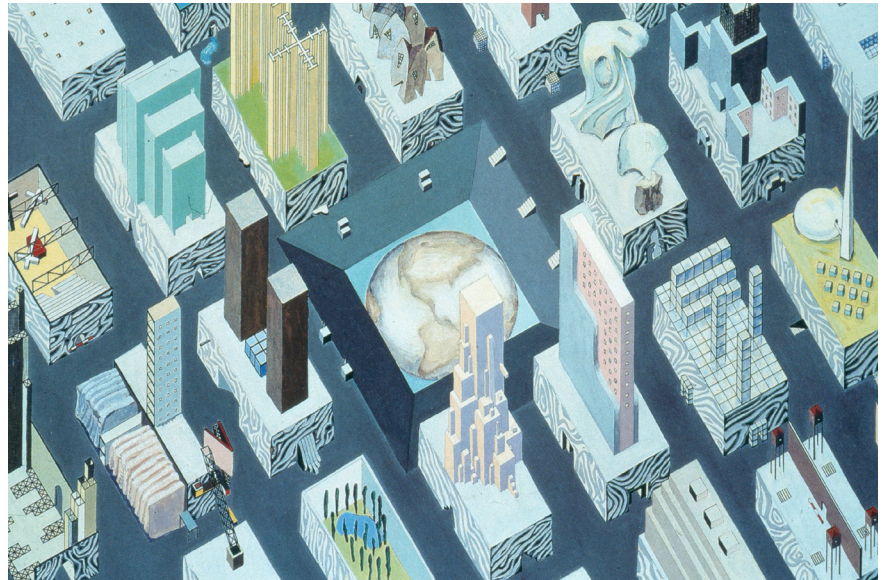
fig. 148.   Rem Koolhaas, *The City of the Captive Globe* (1972)

[303] José Antonio Tallón Iglesias, "Tesis Doctoral: Gordon Matta-Clark a Través De Rem Koolhaas" (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2015), p. 172.
[304] Ibid., p. 150.
[305] Koolhaas et al., S, M, L, XI, p. 1254.
[306] The immediate response would probably be Non-Site which is a concept and art pieces by Robert Smithson
[307] Robert Smithson's A tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey in Smithson and Holt, *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*. p. 55

Koolhaas describes in *Delirious New York* (1978) how Manhattan, because of its grid system, forms independent blocks and work as independent 'islands'. These isolated blocks can, therefore, have their own structure, cultural idiosyncrasies, formal expression…etc. Each isolated block has its own system, and little by little the city could become a representation of the whole planet, where each block with its heterogeneous buildings no longer adheres to the city's historic identity, thus forming the generic city. This thesis argues, that this process is an entropic process where energy is slowly dissipated and therefore also the entity of the city itself. This loss of energy slowly dissolves creating the generic.

Eight years earlier, Smithson and Gordon Matta-Clark proposed projects of islands that invert the reality between the built and the 'natural' Manhattan. Inverted as in this case the islands became the 'natural' sites.

This loose relationship to the writing of Koolhaas, relate to Smithson's drawing *Floating Island to Travel Around Manhattan Island* (1970)[308] and Matta-Clarks' *Floating Island* (1970). There is only one drawing of each of the projects. The photograph is of Smithson´s project post-humously built. It seems to reflect a new way of imagining cities composed of independent fragments. Another project inspired by cities also formed by isolated entities could be Kiyonori Kikutake´s *Marine City* (1960).

Another measure for entropy is the difference in time, that is, between what has changed between past and future. This way time can be considered another variable of entropy. Therefore, the more time passes, the more disordered pieces become. Smithson refers to the work done by fellow artists as "forgetting the future" becoming more ephemeral or transient.

"They are not built for the ages, but rather against the ages. They are involved in a systematic reduction of time down to fractions of seconds, rather than in representing the long spaces of centuries. Both past and future are placed into an objective present. This kind of time has little or no space; it is stationary and without movement, it is going nowhere, it is anti-Newtonian, as well as being instant, and is against the wheels of the time-clock."[309]
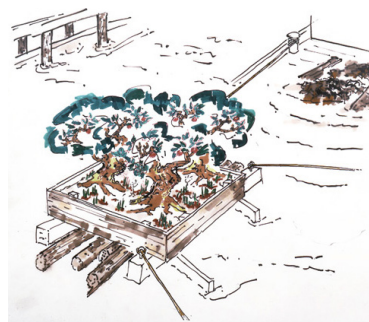
fig. 149. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Floating Island* (1970)

fig. 150. Robert Smithson, *Floating Island to Travel around Manhattan Island* (1970)

fig. 151. Robert Smithson, *Floating Island to Travel around Manhattan Island* (posthumously built 2005)

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[308] It might be interesting to mention, at this point, a piece by Rosemarie Castoro´s *How to make an atoll out of Manhattan Island* (1969) that also reflects on this idea of isolated blocks. It is explained in another section of the thesis, nonetheless it is interesting to note how there are continuously reoccurring themes.

[309] Smithson and Holt, *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, p. 10.
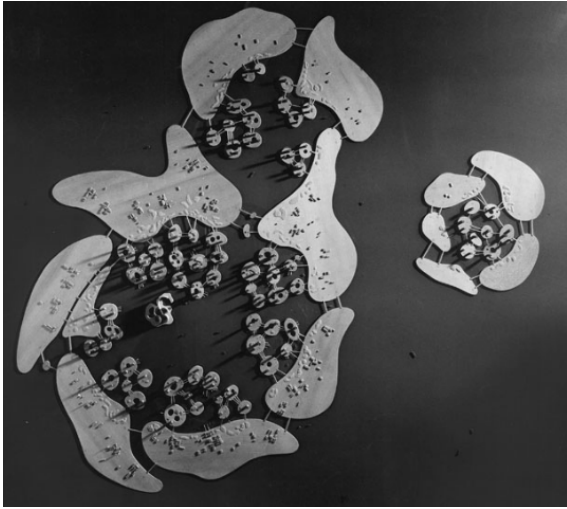
fig. 152. Kiyonori Kikutake, *Marine City* (1960)

This stands also true for architecture. Architects in the sixties no longer thought about permanence instead accepted an ultimate level of dispersion, "*ad-hocness*", temporality, etc..

Furthermore Koolhaas and Smithson anticipate or share the view of an unmanageable situation tending towards a chaos, where "*planning makes no difference*"[310]. Entropy has then taken its irreversible course.

"There's this need to try to transcend one's condition. I'm not a transcendentalist, so I just see things going towards a… well it's very hard to predict anything; anyway all predictions tend to be wrong. I mean even planning. I mean planning and chance almost seem to be the same thing."[311]

Marc Augé in his book *Non-lieux* (1992)[312] also seems to agree with identifying the loss of identity in architecture. He refers specifically to places that through their generalness become indistinct and interchangeable. He makes, however, an interesting point to this thesis by explaining that users cannot connect to these places.

Melvin Webber further develops the concept of entropy[313] in *The Urban Place and the Non-Place Urban Realm* in 1965 much earlier than the others and even before Smithson. He imagines a renewed urbanism that was no longer based on locality and propinquity but in communities that would become "*worldwide networks*"[314]. He put the emphasis on communication rather than urbanism.

"Specialised professionals, particularly, now maintain webs of intimate contact with other professionals, wherever they may be. . . . Spatial distribution is not the crucial determinant of membership in these professional societies, but interaction is. Communities compromise people with common interests who communicate with each other'. Not only do these specialised professionals play a central role in the processing of issues - they are also an important source of policy initiatives. Thus, the development of 'professional concern' can be an important stimulus to policy change."[315]

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[310] Lieven De Cauter, The Flight forward of Rem Koolhaas in Ghent Urban Studies Team, *The Urban Condition: Space, Community, and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis* (010 Publishers, 1999). P. 252

[311] Robert Smithson in Entropy made Visible, interviewed by Alison Sky (1973) Smithson and Holt, *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, p. 189.

[312] Translated as Non-Places: Introduction to the Anthropology of Supermodernity

[313] Without using the word entropy.

[314] Donald Appleyard, "Place and Nonplace, the New Search for Roots," in *The Land Use Policy Debate in the United States*, ed. Judith I. de Neufville (New York: Springer US, 1981).

[315] Melvin Webber cited in: Jeremy Richardson, *Policy Styles in Western Europe (Routledge Revivals)* (Taylor & Francis, 2013), p. 94.

What would be the next step after the generic city? The scattering which we are living now might just be following that entropic process.

"You have a closed system which eventually deteriorates and starts to break apart and there's no way that you can really piece it back together again. Another example might be the shattering of Marcel Duchamp Glass, and his attempt to put all the pieces back together again attempting to overcome entropy."

What are the consequences? Paul Virilio has a profound understanding of the significance of a *Non-Place*:

"I feel we're entering into a society without rights, a 'non-rights' society, because we're entering a society of the Non-Place, and because the political man was connected to the discrimination of a place. The loss of a place is, alas, generally the loss of rights."[316]

Borrowing Smithson's term "*De-architecturing*" does not merely describe the views of the Non–Planners, Non-Designers, etc. in favour of weaker interventions. They described an irreversible situation that was taking place, instead it seemed closer to a recognition of an irreversible transformation of cities.
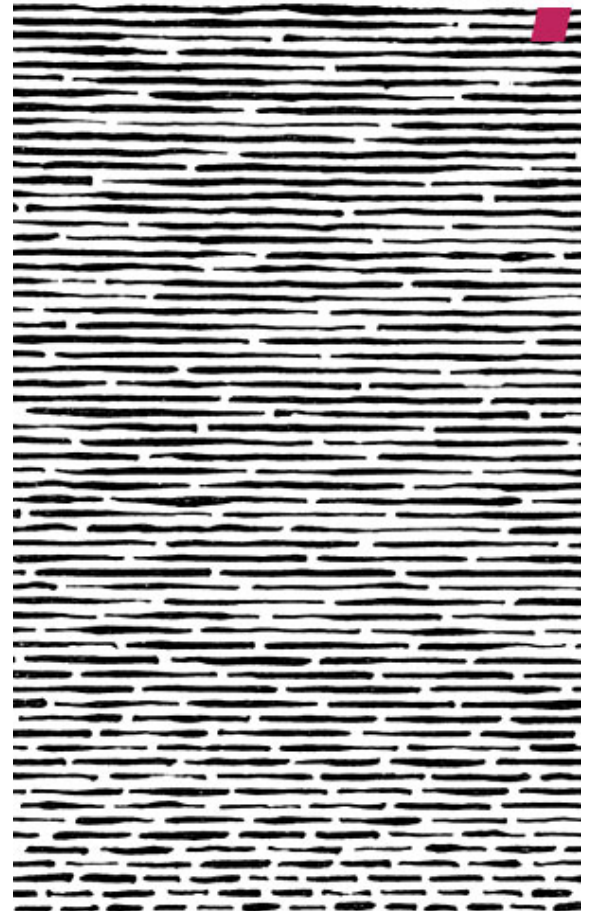
fig. 153.   Melvin Webber, *The Urban Place and the Non-Place Realm* (1965)

[316] Paul Virilio interviewed by Andreas Ruby in 1996 *Virilio Life: Selected Interviews*, ed. John Armitage (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), p. 59.

07] *conclusions*

10] *L'échange entre ce qu'on / offre aux regards [toute la / mise en oeuvre pour offrir / aux regards (tous les domaines)] / et le regard glacial du / public (qui aperçoit et / oublie immédiatement) / Très souvent / cet échange a la valeur / d'une séparation infra mince / (voulant dire que plus / une chose est admirée / et regardée moins il y a sépa. / inf.m*

The exchange between what one / offers to the gaze [all the / staging to offer / to the gaze (all domains)] / and the icy gaze of the public (who percieves / and forgets immediately) Very often / this exchange has the value / of an infra-thin separation / (meaning that the more / one thing is admired / and looked at the less there is dis. / inf.t *(infra-thin distance)*

The contingent answers to the questions formulated at the beginning of this thesis, should try to stay coherent with the research itself. It could not be otherwise. The answers should not be strong or dogmatic, but always partial and open. This means, (using the same terminology from this thesis) that these answers necessarily need to be non-linear, indeterminate, fragmented, juxtaposed, contingent or 'processual'.

The answers are presented as a constellation of emergencies that may be useful in explaining the *je ne sais quoi* of the delicate, the subtle, the fragile or the seemingly weak.

This thesis tries to extract three main ideas which were central and present in all questions posed along this research, discontinuity, indeterminacy and entropy.

The conclusions want to remain as contingent and tangential readings of the *infrathin*. Not only because, as Duchamp asserts, this term can only be explained by giving examples, but also because it is only through a tangential interpretation, that it is possible to really grasp the *infrathin* – that is, the intangible and ephemeral of thought – beyond purely formal interpretations.
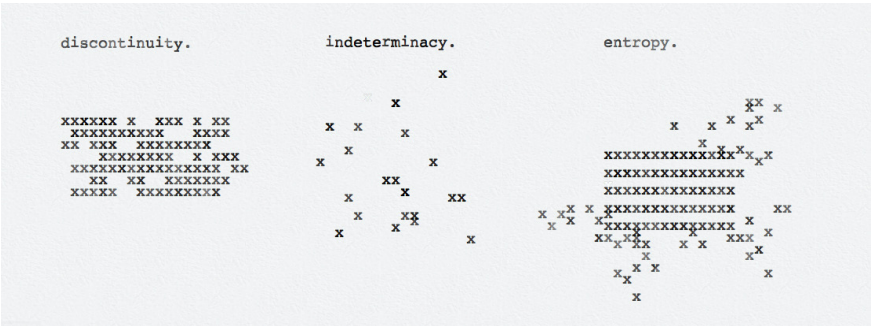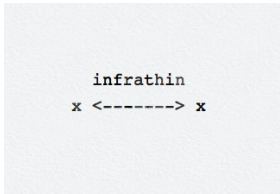
01. *discontinuity*

The discontinuity, in the framework of this thesis tries to be a nonlinear narration of Duchamp's concept of the *infrathin*. It can also be related to the automatic writings of DADA and Surrealism, that is to say, the juxtaposition of two ideas separated by a minimum distance triggers, a new understanding through the recognition (sensorial in Duchamp's case) of sequential information, even in those cases where there is no logical continuity between ideas.

Discontinuities can appear like an invisible map of events, tensions between bodies or fragmented discourses. This situation provokes the understanding of the in-between or the space amid these discontinuities. Much like a thread that ties the pages of this thesis, whose presence is made visible only by its surfacing stitches, but whose tension and efficacy rests in the hidden relationship between them.

Events, occurrences or happenings are the point of confluence or convergence between paths or movements, lines of thought – if conceptual – or even in the gap between two objects. The infimum distances that occur between these points can only be imagined linked by invisible threads or re-compositions in our minds.

It is in this space in-between, that we find the erratic and the spontaneous, and above all, the unexpected strength of interrelations.

It is through these discontinuities that one can have a wider, more open and interesting map of a place. The intermediate distance cracks, interstices, thresholds, boundaries and limits hide the seemingly weak or the invisible, yet the intense and powerful persist.

02. *indeterminacy*

Indeterminacy is a direct consequence of complexity. The more complex the system, the more variety of options arise, thus increasing indeterminacy.

Indeterminacy is also a consequence of the opening of systems. In a closed system everything has its specific and pre-assigned place, and, to some extent, is ordered and determined. As a system interacts with others, a new form of instability begins, multiplying, therefore, configurations, relationships, options, etc.

This unstable environment produces responses, such as, ephemeral architecture, nomadism, process-oriented work, 'do it yourself' and all kinds of open proposals and performative or experimental actions. To move well and lead in this field of indetermination the architect, the artist and the thinker want to situate themselves within the context of contingency, non-linearity, flexibility, adaptability, transformation, complexity and fragmentation. The uncertain and indeterminate is adopted, and the static and closed is rejected. Pursuing the capability to respond to the changing environment with urgency and immediacy.

What this entails, for the different creative fields, is the need to reevaluate and question the disciplines and the work processes. The artists and architects mentioned in this thesis, proposed to address new ways of confronting their work, some even denying the established roles of discipline. Nevertheless, all of them rejected everything that was static, favouring the indeterminate and the unstable.

03. *entropy*

Generically entropy can be defined as the process of energy loss of a system when coming into contact with other systems. The tendency to disappear, as explained in this thesis, can be observed as part of this entropic process. When systems are opened they necessarily have to interact with other systems. In this irreversible process of fragmentation and weakening of the structures of the urban environment, the processes become more important than the final products. Disappearance as the final stage of the entropic process can be sought or desired by artists, architects and thinkers in specific projects. In these cases, ideas become most important, 'the social' or concepts that leave no apparent trace or have no specific forms, already tend to disappear. Thereby impresence becomes more important than presence.

The invisible force of the *infrathin* remains and retains. It helps thinkers, architects and artists in their pursuit of a certain degree of incorporeal presence. This invisible network that links and gives meaning, often explains and serves to preserve the identity or cultural unity of a place.

The concept of entropy also concerns the dissolution of borders and boundaries. As systems open up to other systems, new relationships are created that draw new boundaries, tensions, or negotiations.

The most interesting significance of entropy is, however, its evolution towards non-order, or instability, towards a weak amalgamation or fragmentation. It can be imagined as an additive state of linked and changing particles in contrast to a stable geometric and interwoven warp. Something like the visual simile between a "felt" and a "woven fabric", in Deleuze and Guattari's description.

From the perspective of entropy, at the urban level, the fragmented city is also the generic city. The fragmentation and disorder of urban 'particles', leads to the dissolution of urban identity (which acts as a cohesive force) and therefore, implicitly leads to the generic city.

These three observed principles share a fragile but contingent structure and strong action. They constitute the invisible (or hardly visible) forces that cut across places (in all their categories: spaces, structures, cities, environments...) altering their use, their forms and the behaviours of their inhabitants. A good project (artistic, urban architectural...) will be able to perceive these invisible forces and preserve, develop or increase them; it will be the project that best interweaves the threads or tensions existing in a place.

A powerful action does not need to be large, strong or determined. Instead it can be fragile, fragmented or undetermined. It can even be invisible or germinate from the crack of a rock.

Alpen-Edelweiss · *Leontopodium alpinum* Cass·

04.   *future fields of research*

The sporadic event of this research finishes here, but only temporarily, it pretends to be just a part of a larger process that will probably continue with further investigations and hopefully has opened new fields of interest and exploration to other authors.

It's with sadness, however, that some extremely interesting themes, architects, artists, and thinkers that appeared and were studied for this research were not included, to be consistent to the scope and rigor of the research thread. Now that this investigation is finished it would be at least interesting to list some of these, for a possible contingent investigation later on.

Christopher Alexander, Nicholas Negroponte and MIT's Architecture Machine Group or other 'anti-architects' that saw the future in devising computational systems or pattern recognition that could successfully design without the need of architects and planners. Only Cedric Price was included in this thesis for his connections with Yona Friedman, Archigram and Banham, but there is a specific line of research that opens up from what seems to be the origin and biggest challenge of AI.

Many other performers that had plenty to offer to the discourse of weak actions, just to mention a few, Pina Bausch, Simon Forti, Merce Cunningham but were less related to the context of the city. However would be extremely relevant to the context of spatial research, participatory actions or under the topic of dance or performativity.

Any of the chapters could be interesting to complete further and there are some unanswered propositions suggested in this thesis, for example are events in architecture corporeal? Are Smithson's monuments to be imagined as events? And plenty more small questions that rizomatically open up other fields of research.

Lastly, to the author, the concept of entropy in architecture or territory at planetary scale is a piece of research this author would like to take time to research further and develop independently, because of its relevance to the project and contemporary urbanism.

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09] *illustrations*

introduction
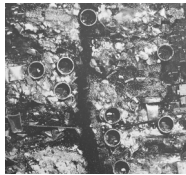
fig. 01.
fig. 02. Arata Isozaki, *Incubation Process/Joint Core System* (1962)

fig. 03. Arata Isozaki, *Incubation Process/Joint Core System* (1962)
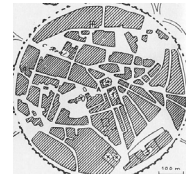
fig. 04. Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Morphologie City Metaphors* (1976)

fig. 05. Situationists and the beach, *Beneath the Paving Stones* (May 1968) (texts collected by Dark Star)

fig. 06. *Sous les Pavés, la Plage*, slogan by bernard cousin (May 1968)

fig. 07. Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Untitled* (1992)

fig. 08. Fluxus, George Maciunas, *Manifesto* (1963)
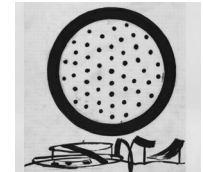
fig. 09. Joseph Beuys, *Fluxus-Name List* (1963)

fig. 10. Ben Vautier interpreting George Maciunas. Flux Festival, Fluxhall, New York (1964)

fig. 11. Allan Kaprow, *Happenings* (1963)

fig. 12. Allan Kaprow, *Happenings* (1963)
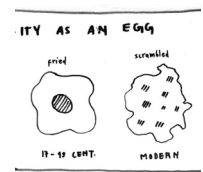
fig. 13. Cedric Price, *The City as an Egg.*
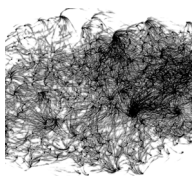
fig. 14. Jo Wood, *Experiments in Bicycle Flow Animation* (2012). Map image generated by the first fice million bicycle trips of the public system in London.
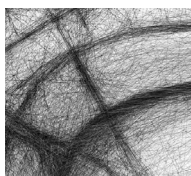
fig. 15. Eric Fisher, *Geotaggers* (2015) Travel lines in London generated by the action of uploading photos to internet 6b: ditto zoom.
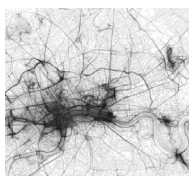
fig. 16. Eric Fisher, *Geotaggers* (2015) Travel lines in London generated by the action of uploading photos to internet 6b: ditto zoom.
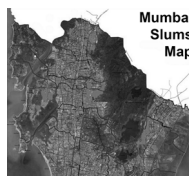
fig. 17. PK Das, *Mapping Another Mumbai* (2014) Informal building map, slums in Mumbai.

la dérive the drift

fig. 18. Vito Acconci, *Following Piece* (1969) performance part of the event: Streetworks IV. Photo by Betsy Jackson.

fig. 19. Guy Debord, *The Naked City* (1957) Illustration de l'hypothèse des plaques tournantes en psychogeographique (sic)

fig. 20. Vito Acconci, *Security Zone* (1971) Photo: Harry Shunk and János Kender

fig. 21. Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, *Ground Plan of New Babylon over The Hague* (1964) Collage, watercolor and graphic foil

fig. 22. Luud Schimmelpennink, *Witkar* (1974) Irene Vorrink (transport minister) and alderman Brautigam in a Witkar in Amsterdam, 21 March 1974

fig. 23. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Soussol de Paris* (1977)

fig. 24. Eduardo Paolozzi, *This is Tomorrow Exhibition* (1956)
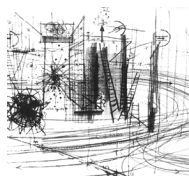
fig. 25. Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, Litho no. 9 uit de map *New Babylon* (1963)
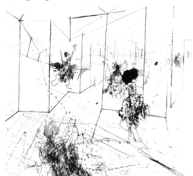
fig. 26. Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, *Spiegelsaal* (1972)
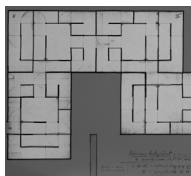
fig. 27. Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, *Deurenlabyrinth* (Door Labyrinth for New Babylon) (1974) exhibition in Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag.

fig. 28. Rosemarie Castoro, *Streetworks III*. (April 18, 1969) City Block around 13, 14th Street, 5th & 6th Avenues, 5 to 6PM 'Atoll', 1969, Offset print documenting

fig. 29. Trisha Brown, *The Rehearsal* (1971) Whitney Museum. 16mm film video, color, silent; 8:30 minutes. Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

fig. 30. Trisha Brown, *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970) Photo: Carol Goodden
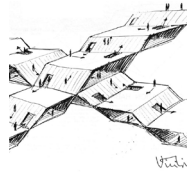
fig. 31. Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, *The function of the oblique* (1966)

fig. 32. Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, *French pavilion at venice bienale* (1970)
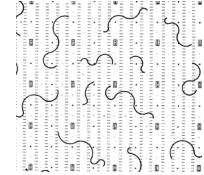
fig. 33. Archizoom Associati, *Non Stop City* (1970)
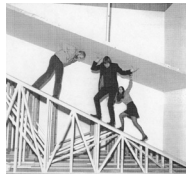
fig. 34. Robert Morris, *Robert Morris* (1971) Exhibited at the Tate Gallery, 28 April – 7 May 1971 Tate Archive Photographic Collection
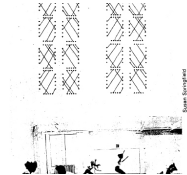
fig. 35. Lucinda Childs, *Congeries on Edges for 20 Obliques* (1975)
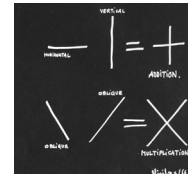
fig. 36. Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, *The function of the oblique*. (1966)
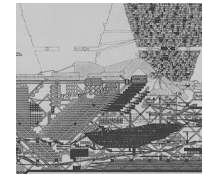
fig. 37. Peter Cook, Archigram, *Plug in City* (1962-64)

fig. 38. George Candilis, Alexis Josic, Shadrach Woods, *Freie Universität Berlin* (1973)
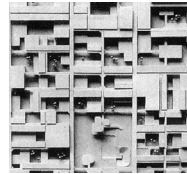
fig. 39. George Candilis, Alexis Josic, Shadrach Woods. *Freie Universität Berlin* (1963). Scale model of competition (detail).
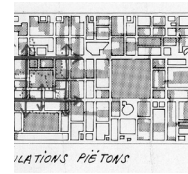
fig. 40. George Candilis, Alexis Josic, Shadrach Woods. *Freie Universität Berlin* (1963). Competition Source: Architecture d'Aujourd'hui n. 137

fig. 41. Anna Halprin, *Ritual Group Drawing* (1968) California. Experiments in Environment Workshop. Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

fig. 42. Lawrence Halprin, *Forecourt Fountain* (1970)
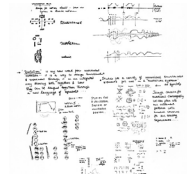
fig. 43. Lawrence Halprin, *Motation drawing* (1970)

fig. 44. Lawrence Halprin, *Forecourt Fountain* (1970) Courtesy Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania)
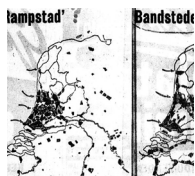
fig. 45.   Van den Broek and Bakema, *Rampstad / Bandsteden*

fig. 46.   Jean-Michel Sanejouand, *Le Nouvel Ville* (1969-1972)

fig. 47.   Kenzo Tange, *Tokaido Megalopolis* (1964)
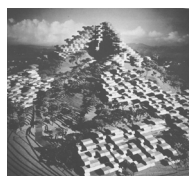
fig. 48.   Moshe Safdie, *Habitat Puerto Rico* (1968)

fig. 49.   Moshe Safdie, *Habitat 67* (1967) photo: Evelyn Alonso Rohner.

fig. 50.   Justus Dahinden, *Trigon Structure* (1965)

fig. 51.   Justus Dahinden, *Trigon Structure* (1965)
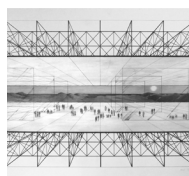
fig. 52.   Archizoom Associati, *Non-Stop City* (1970) Veduta di città. Grafite and pastell. 70x100 cm. Firenze, private collection
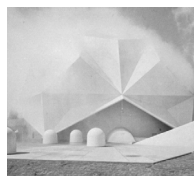
fig. 53.   Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T) and Fujiko Nakaya, *Pepsi Pavillion* (1970) Exterior view during the day, Osaka, Japan. Postcard. Photo: Shunk-Kender.

fig. 54.   Gianni Pettena, *Ice House II* (1972) Mineapolis. Fonds regional de lárt Contemporaine du Centre (FRAC), Orleans, France

fig. 55.   Oppenheim Parallel Stress, New York State (1970). Black and white photographs on paper and ink paper mounted onto board (2286 x 1524 mm)

fig. 56.   Bruce Nauman, Sequence composed by the author of *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner About the Perimeter of a Square* (1967-68) © Bruce Nauman.

fig. 57.   Bruce Nauman, *Walk with Contrapossto* (1968) Black-and-white videotape, sound 60 min.

fig. 58.   Bruce Nauman, *Double Steel Cage Piece*, (1974) © ARS, NY and DACS.

fig. 59.   Dan Graham, *Performer/ Audience/Mirror* (1975)

fig. 60.   Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece* (1964) © Lennon Photo Archive.

fig. 61.   Marina
Abramović and
Frank Uwe Laysie-
pen (Ulay), *Impon-
derabilia* (1977)
Stills from 16mm film
transferred to video.
52:16 min. approx.
36 x 36 in.
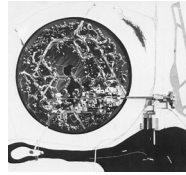
fig. 62.   Frei Otto,
Ewald Bubner and
Kenzo Tange, *Artic
Town* (1971)

fig. 63.   Adrian Pip-
er, *Catalysis III* (1970)
© Generali Founda-
tion Collection-Per-
manent Loan to the
Museum der Mod-
erne Salzburg.
Photo: Rosemary
Mayer
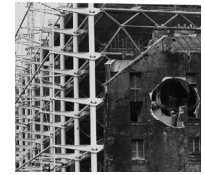
fig. 64.   Gordon
Matta-
Clark,*Connical
Intersect* (1975)

fig. 65.   Hans
Hollein, *Mobiles Büro*
(1969)

fig. 66.   Ron Herron,
Archigram, *Walking
City in New York*
(1964)
800x350

fig. 67.   Jean-Louis
Chaneac ,*La Bulle
Pirate [The Pirates
Bubble]* (1971)
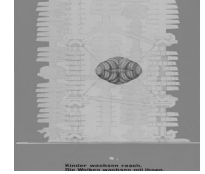
fig. 68.   Angela
Hareiter,
*Kinderwolken
[Children Clouds]*
(1966-67)
Collage on
Cardboard under
Plexiglas 56 x 81.9.
© François Lauginie
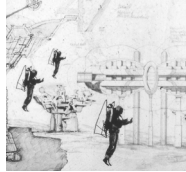
fig. 69.   Haus
Rucker Co.,
*Environment -
Tranformer* (1968)

fig. 70.   Colette
Lumier, *"A View
of the Lips, Street
Piece I"* (circa 1973)
and *"The Ear, Street
Piece I #8"* (1973).

fig. 71.   Gordon
Matta-Clark, *Bingo*
(1974)

fragility, desobjectalisation, and disappearance
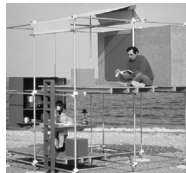
fig. 72.   Ken Isaacs,
Beach Matrix (1967)
Installation view
in Westport,
Connesticut.
© Ken Isaacs.

fig. 73.   Kristian
Gullichsen and
Juhani Pallasmaa,
Moduli 225 (1969)
Finland.
photo: Simo Rista,
Patrick Degommier.

fig. 74.   Robert
Barry, *Inert Gas
Series* (1969)

fig. 75.   Michael
Web, *Suitaloon
Archigram* (1967)
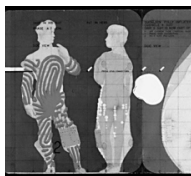
fig. 76.   Michael Web, *Suitaloon Archigram* (1967)
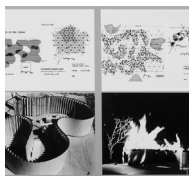
fig. 77.   Guy Rottier, *Village de vacances en carton à Brûler après usage* (1969)
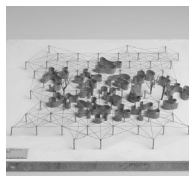
fig. 78.   Guy Rottier, Cité de vacances à brûler après usage. Plan d'ensemble (1969)

fig. 79.   Fenando Higueras, *La Ciudad de las Gaviotas* (1972)

fig. 80.   Fenando Higueras, *La Ciudad de las Gaviotas* (1972)
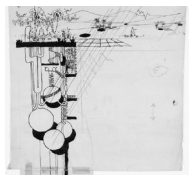
fig. 81.   Yves Klein, Cité climatisée-*"Accés à l'eden technique"* (1961)
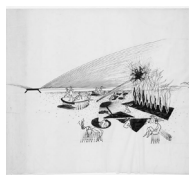
fig. 82.   Yves Klein, Cité climatisée-*"Accés à l'eden technique"* (1961)

fig. 83.   Archigram, *The Instant City* (1968)

fig. 84.   Archigram, *The Instant City* (1968)

fig. 85.   Ant Farm , *Clean Air Pod* (1970) Performance of Andy Shapiro and Kelly Gloger at University of California, Berkeley. © Ant Farm. photo: Chip Lord

fig. 86.   Haus Rucker Co., *Giant Billiard* (1970) Magazine spread documenting the interactive installation in Vienna. © Ortner & Ornter Baukunst and WORK Gallery.

fig. 87.   Gordon Matta-Clark, *Bingo* (1974)

fig. 88.   Trisha Brown, *Locus* (1975) Graphite on Paper 52,7x41cm.

fig. 89.   Lucinda Childs, Judson Dance Theatre, *Street Dance* (1964) © Lucinda Childs. photo: Sydney Philips
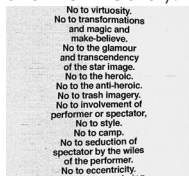
fig. 90.   Yvonne Rainer, *No Manifesto* (1965)
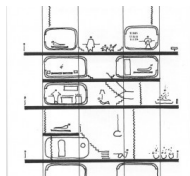
fig. 91.   Nicholas Habraken, *Supports' theory* (1961) © Habraken's archive

fig. 92. Ron Herron, Archigram, *Free Time: Trailer Cage*, (1967)
© Ron Herron Archives
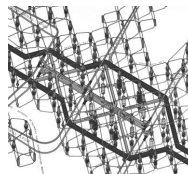
fig. 93. Archigram, *Computer City Project* (1964) Axonometric, photoprint from ink drawing.
© Archigram archives. Photo: Dennis Crompton

fig. 94. Vito Acconci, *Seedbed* (1971) Performance, Sonnabend Gallery.

fig. 95. Juan Navarro Baldeweg, *Casa de la lluvia* (1979) Drawing with pencil on white paper 30 x 40 cm.
© Juan Navarro Baldeweg.

fig. 96. Juan Navarro Baldeweg, *Casa de la lluvia* (1979)
© Juan Navarro Baldeweg.

indeterminacy
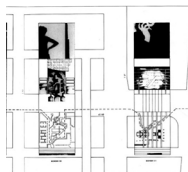
fig. 97. Bernad Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts* (1976-1981)
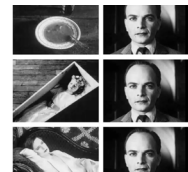
fig. 98. Lev Kuleshov, *The kuleshov effect* (between 1910 and 1920)
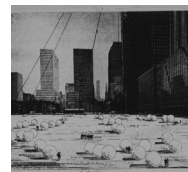
fig. 99. Ugo La Pietra, *Immersion 'Homme-œuf-sphère'* (1968) Photomontage coll.FRAC Centre, Orléans
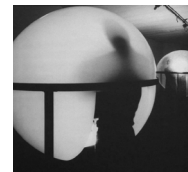
fig. 100. Ugo La Pietra, *Immersion 'Globe lumineux et sonore'* (1969)

fig. 101. Ugo La Pietra, *Immersion 'Casques sonores'* (1968)
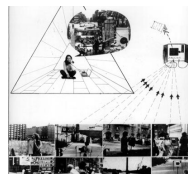
fig. 102. Ugo La Pietra, *Maison télématique: la cellule d'habitation La cicérone électronique* (1971-1972) Informations sonores de la maison à la ville et inversement.

fig. 103. Ugo La Pietra, *La Grande Occasion* (1972) Film, 35 mm (Triennale de Milan 1973)
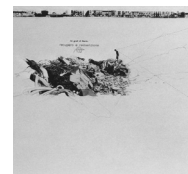
fig. 104. Ugo La Pietra, *Les Degrés de liberté 'Récupération et réinvention'* (1969-1975)

fig. 105. Allan Kaprow, *Yard* (1967) at the Pasadena Art Museum. © Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Photo: Julian Wasser.

fig. 106. Trisha Brown, *Roof Piece* (May 11, 1971) Rooftops between 53 Wooster Street and 381 Lafayette Street. © Babette Mangolte 1973

fig. 107. John Weeks, *Northwick Park Hospital and Clinical Research Centre* (1970)

fig. 108. John Weeks, *Northwick Park Hospital and Clinical Research Centre* (1970)
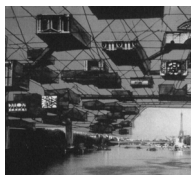
fig. 109. Yona Friedman, *Ville Spatiale Above the River Seine*(1960)
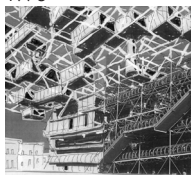
fig. 110. Yona Friedman, *Ville Spatiale Extension to the George Pompidou Center* (2008)
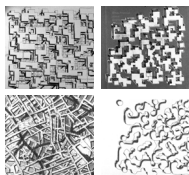
fig. 111.
fig. 112.
fig. 113.
fig. 114. Yona Friedman, *Ville Spatiale* Floor Plans (1960-2005)
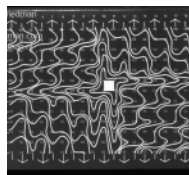
fig. 115. Yona Friedman, *effort diagram* (1963) Courtesy of Marianne Homiridis
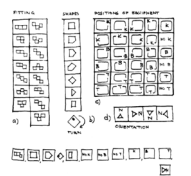
fig. 116. Yona Friedman, *Flatwriter* (1967)

fig. 117. Kurt Schwitters, *Das Merzbild* (1918-19)

fig. 118. Kurt Schwitters, *Merzbau* (1933)

fig. 119. Marcel Duchamp, *Exposition International du Surréalisme* (1938)
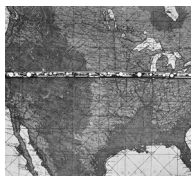
fig. 120. Alan Boutwell/ Mike Mitchell, *Continuous city for 1.000.000 human beings* (1969) Section.

fig. 121. Peter Celsing, *Kulturhuset* (1966-1971)
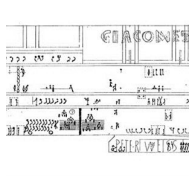
fig. 122. Peter Celsing, *Kulturhuset* (1966-1971)
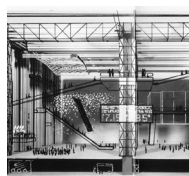
fig. 123. Cedric Price, *Fun Palace* (1962), floor plan, Cedric Price Archives, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal.

non-plan, non-design, no-center, non-place, etc.
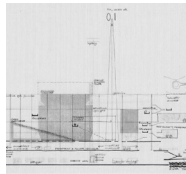
fig. 124. Cedric Price, *Fun Palace* (1962) Floor plan, Cedric Price Archives, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal.
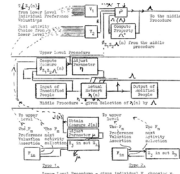
fig. 125. Gordon Pask, *Cybernetic diagram of the Fun Palace program* (1964). Cedric Price Archives, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal.
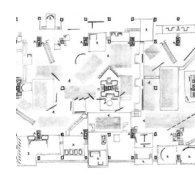
fig. 126. Cedric Price, *Fun Palace* (1962) Initial sketch for floor plan, Cedric Price Archives, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal.

fig. 127. Anarchi-tecture, *image from the Anarchitecture exhibition* (1974)

fig. 128. Gordon Matta-Clark, *FOOD* (c,1971-73)

fig. 129. Anarchi-tecture, *invitation to Anarchitecture exhibition* (1974)

fig. 130. Hans Haake, *Shapolsky et al Manhattan Real Estate Holdings a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971* (1971)

fig. 131. Gordon Matta-Clark, Anarchitecture, *Fake Estates* (1973)
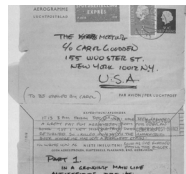
fig. 132. Gordon Matta-Clark, Pro-jects for Anarchitec-ture (1973) Aerograme to the Anarchitecture Group adressed to Carol Gooden, CCA Archive

fig. 133. Gordon Matta Clarck, *Window Blow-Out* (1976)

fig. 134. Buckminster Fuller, *Standard of Living Package* (1948)
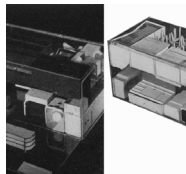
fig. 135. Buckminster Fuller, *Standard of Living Package* (1948)
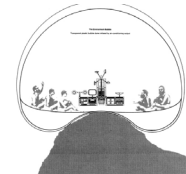
fig. 136. François Dellagret, *The Environment Bubble* (1965) Illustration for Reyner Banham´s book 'A Home Is Not a House'
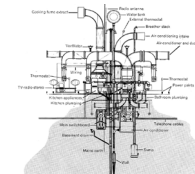
fig. 137. François Dellagret, *Anatomy of a Dwelling* (1965) Illustration for Reyner Banham´s book 'A Home Is Not a House'

fig. 138. Peter and Alison Smithson, *The House of the Future* (1956) Daily Mail Ideal Home Show

fig. 139. Front Cover of New Society 338 (1969) Weekly magazine featuring Non Plan: an Experiment in Freedom.

fig. 140. Cedric Price, *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1966) Diagram of connections.

fig. 141. Cedric Price, *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1966) Collage showing the perspective view of Madeley transfer area and battery housing block.
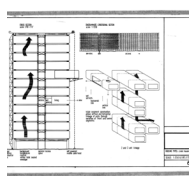
fig. 142. Cedric Price, *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1966) Possible Housing Units.
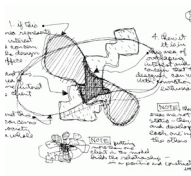
fig. 143. Charles Eames, *Design Diagram* (1969)

fig. 144. Chris Burden, *Shoot* (1971) F Space, Santa Ana, CA. November 19, 1971. At 7:45 p.m. © Chris Burden. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery.
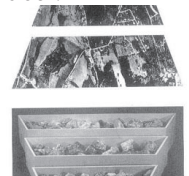
fig. 145. Robert Smithson, *Non-Site* (1968) Franklin, New Jersey. Top: aerial photograph of the site. Bottom: wood containers for the stones.
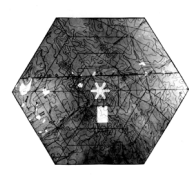
fig. 146. Robert Smithson, *Non-Site* (1968) (an indoor earthwork)

fig. 147. Robert Smithson, *Golden Coach Diner, Passaic* (1976) New Jersey.
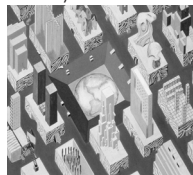
fig. 148. Rem Koolhaas, *The City of the Captive Globe* (1972)
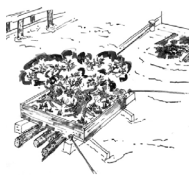
fig. 149. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Floating Islands* (1970) black ink and colored markers on paper 14x16 7/8 inches, 35,5x43cm

fig. 150. Robert Smithson, *Floating Island to Travel around Manhattan Island* (1970)

fig. 151. Robert Smithson, *Floating Island to Travel around Manhattan Island* (1970) Posthumously built 2005

fig. 152. Kiyonori Kikutake, Concept model of *Marine City* (1960) Photo: Tomio Koyami Gallery
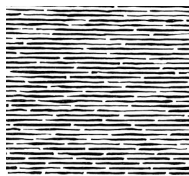
fig. 153. Melvin Webber, The Urban Place and the Non-Place Realm (1965) Diagram.

other figures
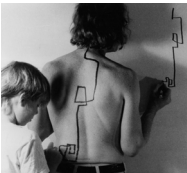
Dennis Oppenheim, *Two Stage Transfer Drawing* (1971)
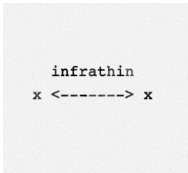
Diagram by the author
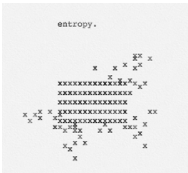
Diagram by the author

Botanical Print, Edelweiss, Leontopodium Alpinum, Flower Lithograph, Flora Illustration, 1950's Botany Print, Alpine Flowers

John Baldessari, *Cigar Smoke to Match Clouds That are the Same* (1972-73)

Interview Peter Cook (1st of December 2014)

10] *index*

Evelyn Alonso: *At some point in the sixties and the seventies the most avant-garde groups of architects and artists were suggesting non-architecture, non-plan, non-art. What in your opinion is the theoretical hypothesis and origin of these ideas?*

Peter Cook: I think it was probably a product of the spirit of the post Second World War, which was that after all people actually had to be very disciplined in order to survive, but even for those of us who would not have been in the war. I was only a tiny child in the war, but people felt the constraint. There was financial constraint and shortage of food and people had to be disciplined, they had to be in armies and so on. And then there was a tremendous release, and I think it wasn't just a release but also, there was this sort of shadow of modernism hanging over you... and you said okay, yes, yes, yes, yes. We have been told about modernism, we have been taught about modernism and let´s break out, let´s deliberately melt things. And I think it is probably as simple as that. I would put it, as having to do with that.

E: *What do you think Archigram's specific role was within that setting?*

P: Oh well you will have to go into more detail there because in a sense, Archigram was a coalition of two sets of people. The oldest of the oldest set was ten years older than the youngest of the youngest set. And I think that is significant and some of the older ones had been in the national service, in the army, and we the younger ones, we hadn´t been in the war, we hadn´t been in the army. We were considered children, you know, who had escaped all of that. I think Archigram was a coalition also of people, some of whom are more consciously intellectual than others, others were not at all consciously intellectual. I have to go into these details to give you some background. Three of us had been to architecture schools that were part of art

schools which is a looser tradition than those that had been to architecture schools which were part of the universities or former colleges. And therefore we were really part of the British art scene of the fifties which is very important if you take up the fields such as music, graphics, film making.... a lot of people came out of the art school scene. And I think we felt we were part of that. And even schools like the AA, people would say looked more like an art school than an architecture school. And I think one still carries a lot of that. It's not about anarchy, it's more the mandate to feel free to think freely. I think everything has become very sort of dogmatic in a curious way and correct, but I'm still an old guy and I still carry the feeling that there should be freedom to think individually and out of the box and almost deliberately do things that aren't correct in order to see what happens.

E: *How do you see what you were doing in terms of performance art, I mean, in terms of making statements?*

P: Marginally, I think that for a funny reason, very early on we got involved in presentations and because we were interested in how things looked and how they sounded, and how they manifested themselves. We were into performance art without really being performance artists, you know. But just a word back on the question of the art connection. I was in a sense shocked when I finally became a professor at an art academy in Germany, that many of the artists who I thought of as being free in their own ways of upraising were very narrow minded when it came to their view of architecture. They thought of architecture would be proper makers of buildings, and buildings would be very foursquare and correct. That was their position. You are an architect, you stay within the box, don´t play with art, don´t dabble in our term, don't come out of the box. So, I´m not so respectful of artists. I think that what we do is a form of art, but I´m not respectful of artists. I find many of them extremely narrow minded.

E: *There was quite a few of architects around that time also working within art Coop Himmelb(L)au for example*

P: Yes, sure, that is another whole conversation. We were all part of the same, these are the connections between the different groups, which were strong. We were more aware of each other than you'd think. Particularly with certain ones, particularly with Austria, particularly with Japan, partially with Italy.

E: *Getting back to the role of architecture. One of the nice quotes that I read of Archigram, "when it's raining in Oxford Street the architecture is no more important than the rain". I really like that you tell me a bit of how you got to that quote, the way you wanted to...*

P: Too much account is taken of monumental formalism and that actually the experience of life is the experience of whether it is raining or not, you know, it's a very simple point really.

E: *Yes, I guess it really touched me because I've lived in London, so I could really feel that moment when I read that quote. I was looking your work through your publications, I had the feeling that you started very strong and later your architecture started getting diluted.*

P: Yes, quite consciously. Yes, I think so, but I think you have to have an instinct for structure before you can loosen it. It's quite disastrous if you try and make something and it all hangs out. I think you have to know. I have quite a classical education. Before I was at the AA, I was at a very small school which was the last place in England doing almost a nick of the beaux arts curriculum. I mean, we had to learn to draw all the fireboard of architecture by using proportions. We had to measure churches, we had to go through Victorian books of grammar of ornament. Considering that, and then I broke away from it.

E: *What made you move in that direction?*

P: I think when you looked into certain selected pieces or architectural history. I had a great admiration for the people who broke out of situations. Particularly, people around Bruno Taut, the Brunish people, you know, the Germans of the twentieth I think, fascinated me particularly. In fact German architecture has continued to fascinate me. In fact, my first money I ever got from the AA was to just go and study German architecture in the end of the 1950s. I was fascinated by what the Germans were doing in contrast to what the English were doing. I thought the stuff going on in Germany was much more interesting.

E: *In what way do you think you needed something else, something worth fighting against other than than through publishing in magazines.*

P: I think again it was to do with having been inspired by the fact that previous groups of people had, kind of, blazed a trail and tried to break open. I think we had a great affinity with them. One or two were more aware of culture than others I mean, if you think again about Archigrams was that it was a coalition of ten – five people, ten years age differences. No two had been to the same architecture school. No two had the same taste in music, or girlfriends or food necessarily. I´m not even sure that we even voted for the same political parties. We never actually discussed it funnily enough. We were sort of left wing but I would think not necessarily entirely. That was what made us different from most other countries. I was always very consciously apolitical, I was rhetorically apolitical. I thought that politics got in the way most of the time and I had a rather distaste for the French, posturing, as a matter of fact. I always said that it is all very well to be a Marxist if you've got a Mercedes parked around the corner.

E: *Yes, that´s true most French architects and artists were politically attached to Marxism. Did you at any point question the changes you were proposing trough architecture or what would come out of it?*

P: I think I'm not sure whether I did, but that was always being drawn to our attention. There was plenty of people always saying that, you know... "you are the lucky capitalist" or " you are a consumerist" or you know " you are not bothering enough about this or bothering enough about that" there were always plenty of people out there who would immediately jump on you. Therefore one said fuck you, we are going to do it anyway. I think had they not, one might have had more confidence, so in a funny way, it made one more cussed. Do you follow me?

E: *There parallelisms which can be drawn between Instant City and how we live our cities at this nowadays, completely connected and randomness of events been instantly in that?*

P: Yes there are, I think there are. It is quite a wise question. I mean, it's quite an interesting question I have never been asked that exactly. I think it is an interesting conceptual question. In a sense you can reach a state that is similar to the state that was being implied by the project. The actual physicality isn´t the same, but that the freedom of the operations or the mandates, or the layering can be similar but the artefacts are not the same artefacts. I´m sure that must have happened in history many times... somebody says, you know: If we do this that will happen. I mean this is a broader issue I´ve always been fascinated by case and effect and funny things that cross your mind after a while. We are sitting here in America and the American speak English and we speak, I don´t know 98% the same language. It is only at that point that I realize that the English are more European in their thinking

E: *I think that's pretty much what happened in down town New York in the fifties and sixties, when Duchamp moved to New York, Gordon Matta Clark, and others. They had brought some of their ways of from Europe. It probably influenced the art world as well.?*
On another topic: How, how do you interpret weak architecture?

P: I have never used that term, I´ve never thought of, you flawed me when you said weak architecture because I think if you talk about disembodied architecture, melted architecture, transposable architecture or architecture that metamorphosis or insubstantial architecture. I don´t see it as weak, the word weak implies that it is flabby in its thinking... so, it's the use of the word weak. Weak is a very difficult word in English because it's a pejorative… so if you say weak architecture, you mean...

E: *Weak could be ephemeral, it could be light, it could be non-invasive, it could be blurring.*

P: I think it's the word weak which gets in the way for me. It is a difficult word to use. Is that the title of your thesis?

E: *My title of the thesis is "Infrathin actions". "Infrathin"... from Duchamp. it which means very thin, infra as in small or thin.*

P: I see... it's a fragile conception

E: *I think fragile is probably more accurate in English*

P: Fragile is more the term, because you can say a girl for example, she is fragile, it is almost a loving thing to say. Fragile is an element of fascination about fragility, weak is going to collapse, but with fragile it might collapse or might not, it's a more interesting word.

E: *Yes, it does touch on non-intrusiveness and I want to incorporate that.*

P: the intrusiveness

E: *the non-intrusiveness*

P: I like fragile myself.

[a large number of pages of this interview have been left out because they were not relevant to this thesis]

annex 2]   *mail art*

From visiting the archives and throughout this research the author came across mail art1 either as communication between artists or as secondary pieces that complemented many of the performance pieces. It seemed interesting to do this parallel investigation with some of these artists in relationship to contemporary thinking. 25 Postcards were sent out asking the question; what is fragile about the contemporary city? It had 10 responses so far. It is an ongoing investigation.

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1   Mail art is a movement based on the principle of sending small scale works through the postal service. Mail art began in the 1960s when artists sent postcards inscribed with poems or drawings through the post [...]. Its origins can be found in Marcel Duchamp and Kurt Schwitters and the Italian futurists. But it was the New York artist Ray Johnson who, in the mid 1950s, posted small collages, prints of abstract drawings and poems to art world notables giving rise to what eventually became known as the New York Correspondence School. TATE (2016). "Glossary of Terms." Online resources. 2016, from http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/m/mail-art
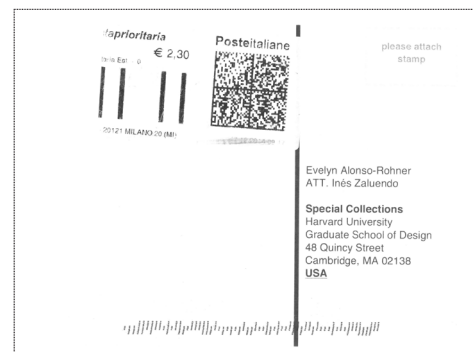
WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

1) L'EQUILIBRIO DELLE PERSONE : TROPPO RUMORE , TROPPA FOLLA TROPPO TRAFFICO, TROPPO SMOG TROPPO..... POCHI LUOGHI DI DECOMPRESSIONE

2) IL VERDE USATO PER RISOLVERE MALAMENTE LUOGHI E ARCHITETTURE. DIMENTICANDO CHE UN TEMPO IL VERDE (BOSCO, GIARDINO...) ERA IL LUOGO DELLA CONCETTUALITA' (vedi LABIRINTO) e DELLA SPIRITUALITA'.

3) I RAPPORTI INTERPERSONALI DOVUTI ALLA TROPPO RAPIDA MODIFICAZIONE DELLE PRESENZE DI DIVERSE ETNIE DOVUTE ALLE IMMIGRAZIONI.
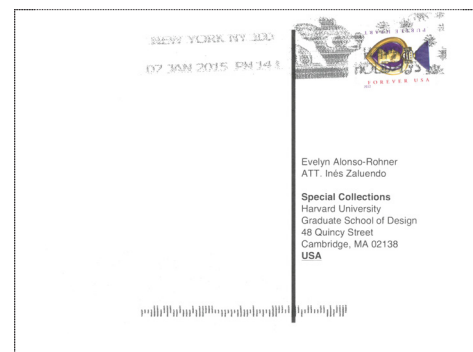
Milano 2014   ugo lapietra

Ugo La Pietra
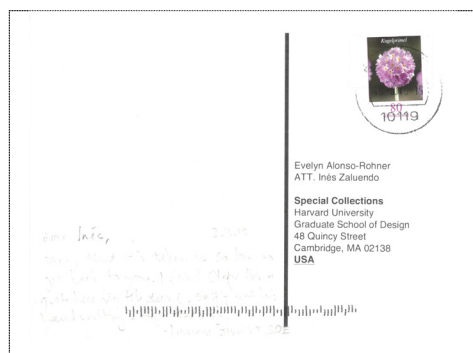
WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

THE LIFE OF FREEDOM

Most probably Meretidh Monk

236

Evelyn Alonso-Rohner
ATT. Inés Zaluendo

Special Collections
Harvard University
Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA

Philippe Rahm

WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

air

and light

Philippe Rahm, 2015

Evelyn Alonso-Rohner
ATT. Inés Zaluendo

Special Collections
Harvard University
Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA

Olafur Eliasson (William Stewart handwrote it on Olafur Eliassons request)

WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

The hospitality inherent in the public of 'public space'

December 16, 2014

Evelyn Alonso-Rohner
Special Collections
Harvard University
Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Evelyn,

On behalf of Trisha Brown, I would like to thank you for your letter, and for your consideration of Trisha's words.

As you may have heard, Trisha Brown announced in January of 2013 that she would be stepping down as Artistic Director of the Company. After choreographing her last two works for the Company, Ms. Brown named longtime company members, Diane Madden and Carolyn Lucas as Associate Artistic Directors. While Ms. Brown holds a strong, enduring legacy tied to New York, she is no longer based in Manhattan. Ms. Madden and Ms. Lucas take on valuable roles as the primary artistic leaders of Trisha Brown Dance Company (TBDC) and may be approached with all requests and invitations at this time.

In keeping with Trisha's adventurous spirit, this change also brings a shift in TBDC's focus towards new endeavors: to expand and deepen educational initiatives, to develop an extensive living archive, and to present Trisha's dances in a variety of spaces – indoors, outdoors, proscenium and alternative. To honor her legacy, the Company will continue to perform its legendary pieces in new and exciting venues, as well as teach Trisha's movement principles and philosophy to dancers around the world.

On behalf of Trisha and the Trisha Brown Dance Company, we thank you for your continued appreciation and support of Trisha Brown Dance Company and hope to see you at our future performances and events!
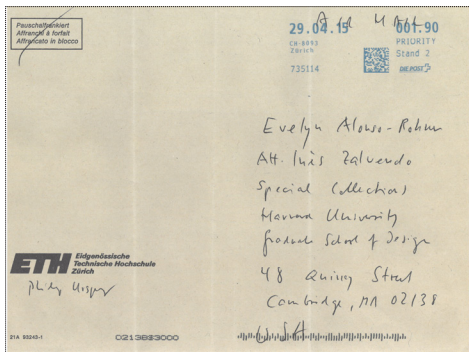
With best wishes,

Martita Abril
NYC Education and Operations Associate
Trisha Brown Dance Company

Ps. email me if you have any questions @
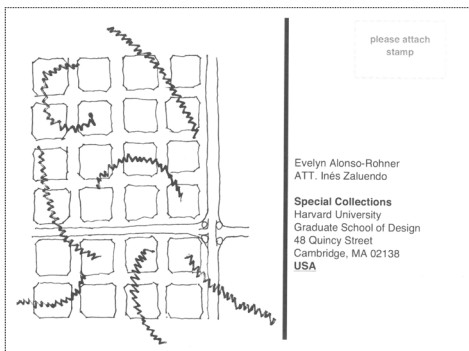*m.abril@trishabrowncompany.org*

Trisha Brown

WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

The shortcuts.

Philip Ursprung

Philip Ursprung

Evelyn Alonso-Rohner
ATT. Inés Zaluendo

Special Collections
Harvard University
Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA

WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

WHAT'S FRAGIL BECOMES
VIRAL
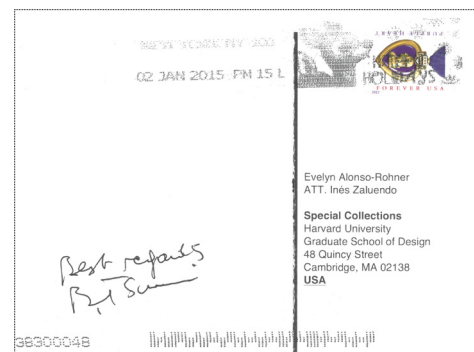IN THE CONTEMPORARY
CITY !

José Antonio Sosa Díaz-Saavedra

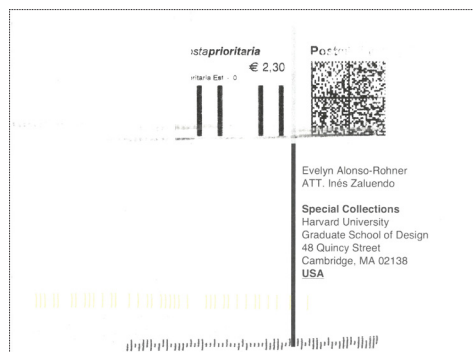WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

The have-nots.

Evelyn Alonso-Rohner
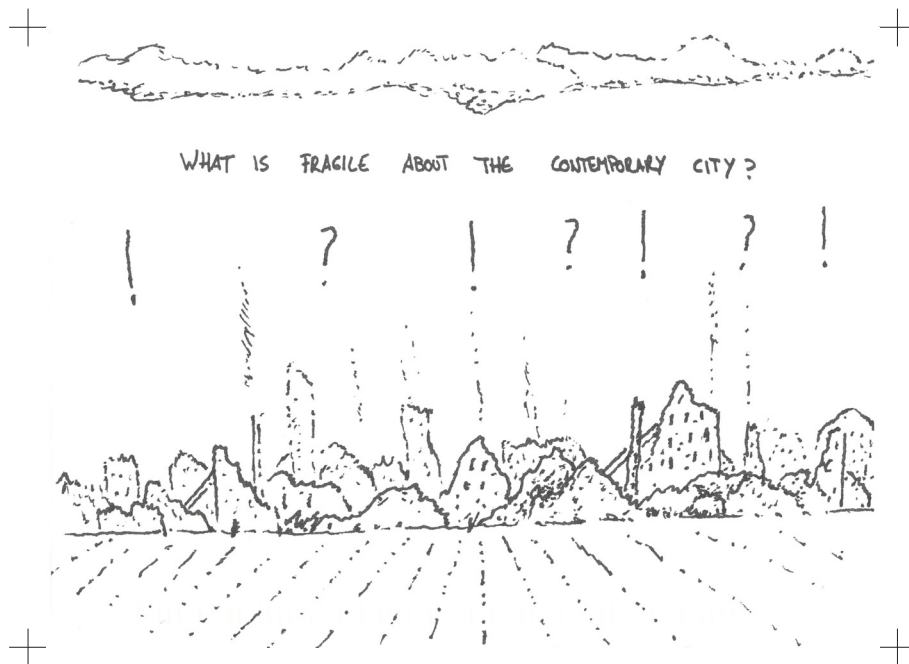ATT. Inés Zaluendo
Special Collections
Harvard University
Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy St.
Cambridge. MA 02138

Haacke
463 West St.
NYC 10014

Hans Haacke

WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

Evelyn Alonso-Rohner
ATT. Inés Zaluendo

Special Collections
Harvard University
Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA

Best regards
B. Tsc

Bernard Tschumi

Andrea Branzi

WHAT IS FRAGILE ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY CITY?

annex 3] *research through projects*

International competetions
Barranquilla / Miami Beach Bienale (2009)(Gold Medal)
+Laura Gonzalez (artist)

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW : THE NEW CARTOGRAPHY FOR BARRANQUILLA
Due to technological progress, our visual experience of places has changed radically over the last decade. Aeroplanes and satellites have brought new visual landscapes and new perspectives to be experienced from a plane window or a computer screen.

Google Earth has become the best example of these new experiences combining satellite imaging and symbolic maps to gives us both a data-rich and realistic cartographic experience of any area on the globe. But these new maps are not yet able to project information in real time; they do not register the passage of a car, the flight of a bird, or the walk of a passer-by across the area. This means they fail to describe the life of places. Yet, together with their own geographic properties, this activity is also what defines the unique personality of spaces.

It is easy to imagine that technology will evolve to express this dynamic characteristic of spaces. When this happens, Barranquilla will have a gate which symbolically represents this constant flux of life across the Pumarejo bridge, the icon of its cultural and urban development.

Our project aims to promote Barranquilla as a regional commercial, industrial and cultural hub in this new, emerging virtual global cartography, by highlighting (literally) the transit across the Pumarejo bridge and its immediate vicinity.

Our proposal signals the entry into Barranquilla by distributing a number modules across the Pumarejo bridge area, each with their unique height, color and size. The modules are inspired by the symbolic shape representing bridges in conventional maps. These modules are equipped with lights and sensors which will register the passage of people, cars or boats by lightening up or dimming down as they come closer or leave their vicinity. At a bird´s eye view, this colorful intervention will dynamically delineate, together with the Pumarejo bridge, the entry into Barranquilla, as a passers-by, or flaneurs, as Baudelaire would say, transit across the area in search of a new views of the city.

This new border will form a park where social activities can take place. The modules on the riverbank will serve as a pier for boats connecting the areas across the Magdalena river. The overall lighting intervention will project Barranquilla on the world map, including the new virtual cartography, as the scintillating, unique and pioneering city it has been in the aviation field.

A VISTA DE PÁJARO : UNA NUEVA CARTOGRAFÍA PARA BARRANQUILLA
A BIRD'S EYE VIEW : THE NEW CARTOGRAPHY FOR BARRANQUILLA
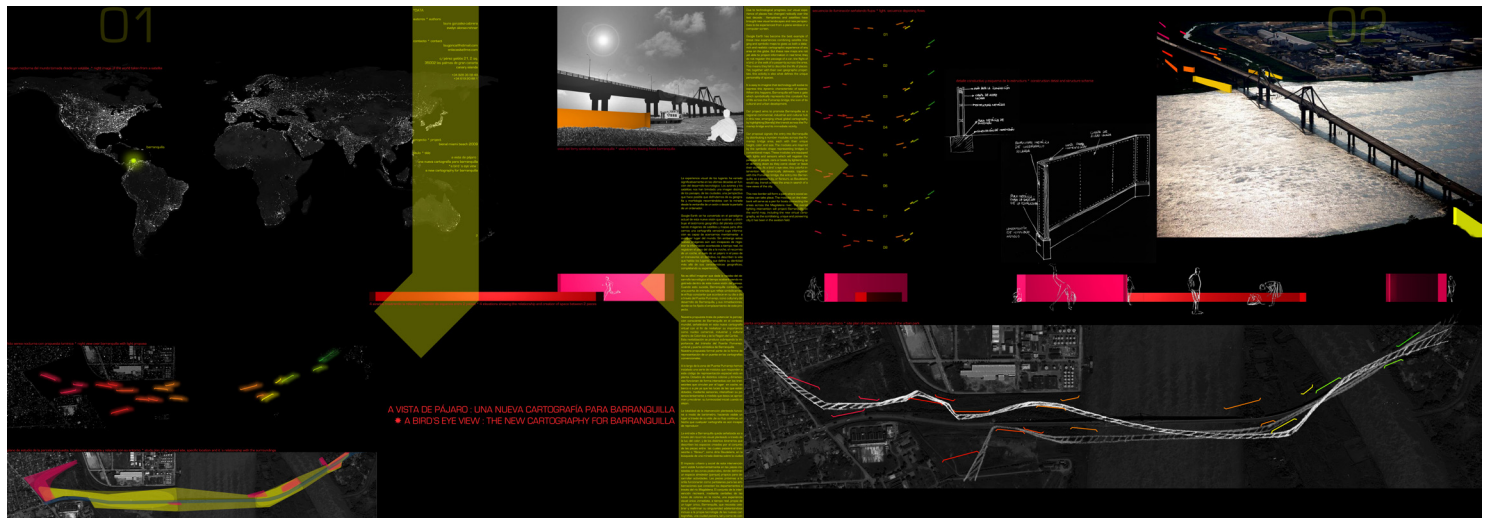
Fleetwood (2010) (finalist)
+Laura Gonzalez (artist)

FLEETWOOD INTERFACE is an interactive urban portal born from the desire to engage its community in marking the entrance into its district.

It is a modular wooden canopy, with one side reading "Welcome to Fleetwood", while its roof projects real-time electronic messages generated by the district's inhabitants, visible from above and beneath. The messages, collected from local mobile phones and computers connected to social networking applications like Twitter or Facebook create a space of interaction between Fleetwood's community, its visitors and the rest of the world. The private screen information, projected into the public realm via pixel-like lights inside the canopy's structure also becomes part of the aerial landscape highlighting Fleetwood's location on the global physical and virtual maps.

The objective of this scheme is to record the invisible city from the information generated by its inhabitants, and reveal it in the city we actually experience, where we walk, where we wait for the bus using   FLEETWOOD INTERFACE.

San Ginés (2011) (Second Price)
+Laura Gonzalez (artist)
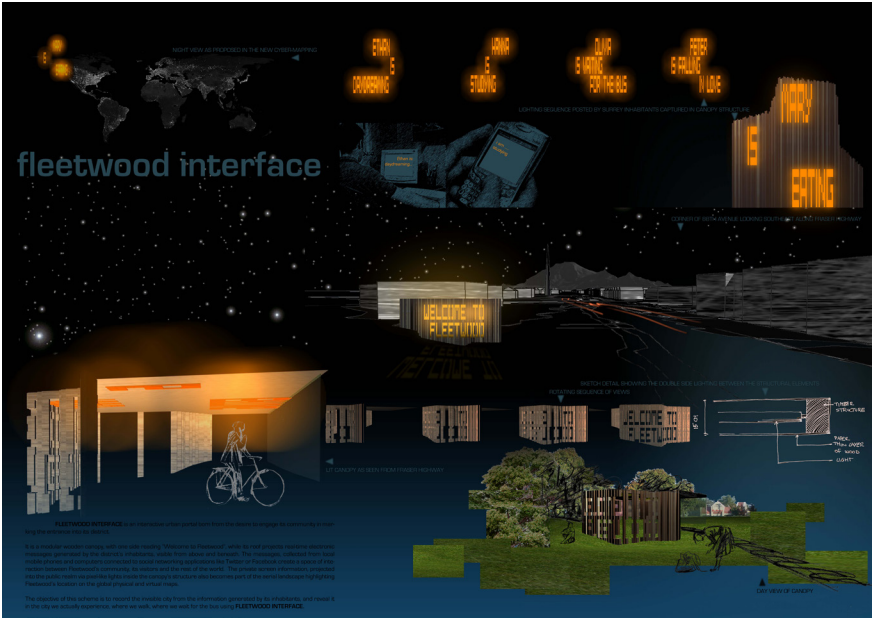
The Charco de San Ginés, is an accumulation of water more abundant than a puddle but not large enough to form a lake. Its medium and affordable scale makes it a unique and beautiful place, too big to cross with water boots and too small to sail with long boats.

The proximity provided by this intermediate scale integrates it within the harmony of the coastal urban landscape and makes it a significant place of the city. However, despite its representative character the actions carried out in it, fail to succeed in providing a social and collective use.

The purpose of this project is to recover the visibility of the Charco de San Ginés, to enhance its conscious perception through the interaction of the citizens in the space. This interaction will visualized by the following actions:

1. The defining symbolic areas of interaction in the areas proposed to intervene by drawing lines on the ground and the placement of sensors that are activated with the presence of movement.
2. The emphasizing the 'containing' quality of the pond representing it symbolically by means of a rectangular monocoque located in it.
3. Stressing the correspondence and relationship between both interventions with the action of the users: every time the sensors detect a movement, it will affect the coloured water contained in the monocoque, interrupting its stillness with waves.

The intervention underlines our ability to modify space with a simple gesture, that of appearing or disappearing. Even if they have opposite meanings, both are actions that can alter the state of something or a place and thus, determine the perception that others have of it even when not present.

Bering Strait / Miami Beach Biennale (2009) (Gold Medal)
+Sara Sarmiento and Manuel Tamayo (architects)

The late 1920's brought a revolution to modern physics: quantum mechanics. This new theory described Nature as a place of inherent uncertainty, populated by statistics, chance and chaos, in sharp contradiction with the clockwork Universe described by earlier classical and relativistic theories.

One of the strangest predictions of this new theory was that two particles can become entangled across space and time. Entanglement occurs when a quantum system is split into its constituent parts. The separated particles then start exhibiting non-local behavior: a change in the quantum state of one particle (eg. its spin) is immediately reflected onto the other, regardless of the distance between them.

Entangled particles appear to "feel" their sister particle across space, and respond to their actions, with an exactly opposite reaction. This intrinsic interconnection at the heart of Nature was long set aside as a mathematical quirk. But in 1982, experiment demonstrated entanglement as objective reality.

This means we live in an inherently interconnected Universe. Human isolation is an illusion. Our apparently independent actions all invite an often unbeknown reaction. We are all bound by some profound, non-local link in a higher dimension. This is the message of quantum entanglement. This message of Peace, encapsulated at the very heart of Nature is our central theme for the Bering Strait project.
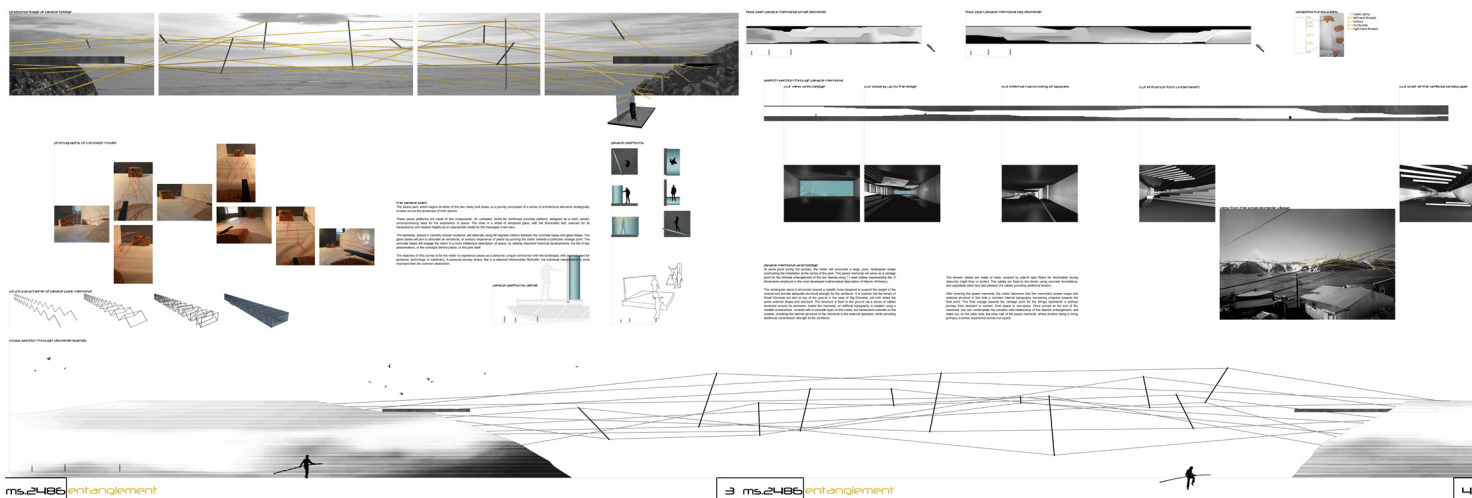
resumen en español

4] *La chaleur d'un siège (qui vient / d'être quitte) est infra-mince*

El calor de un asiento (que acaba / de quedarse vacío) es infra-leve.

01. introducción

"Se trata, para él [el pintor], de separar de la moda lo que puede contener de poético en lo histórico, de extraer lo eterno de lo transitorio. [....] La modernidad es lo transitorio, lo fugitivo, lo contingente, que es la mitad del arte, cuya otra mitad es lo inmutable."[317]

Arata Isozaki, *incubation Process/Joint Core System* (1962)

La fuerza de algunas plantas es siempre sorprendente. El edelweiss, por ejemplo, consigue abrirse paso entre las pequeñas grietas de las rocas. La resiliencia de las plantas deriva de las estrategias más asombrosas: parasitismo y simbiosi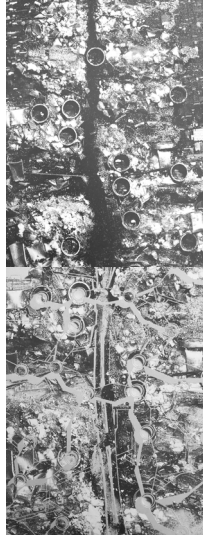s, organización, ligereza de la estructura... y en algunos casos incluso nomadismo. El edelweiss no tiene la robustez de los roquedales sobre los que crece, pero cuenta con energía momentánea para desafiar el ambiente hostil. El edelweiss es apreciado como un acontecimiento independiente por su fragilidad, naturaleza efímera, aislamiento y protección; no por su belleza, existen flores mucho más hermosas en el sentido tradicional; ni por sus conocidas propiedades medicinales. Nada es más satisfactorio que el descubrimiento de un edelweiss en medio del paisaje rocoso precisamente porque se convierte en un acontecimiento en sí mismo.

La ciudad en cierta medida depende de diversos mecanismos para llegar a ser resiliente. Afronta situaciones extremas, desolación, urbanismo inhumano... y todo tipo de presiones externas. Sin embargo, hay algo que la mantiene unida, igual que una estructura de cuerdas, un hilo invisible que la une elásticamente.

Las ciudades – sostenía Arata Isozaki en 1962 – son ideas abstractas. La sustancia de las ciudades no puede ser derruida con la "destrucción de las ciudades, sino con el eclipse de la civilización"[318].

Pese a la evidente complejidad y fragmentación de la ciudad se pueden percibir estructuras, fuerzas o energías que revelan el desvanecimiento de su identidad. Es el inevitable proceso entrópico de una ciudad, sostenido por estructuras frágiles pero enérgicas. Asimismo, la biología y la ciencia nos han enseñado que las cosas complejas son en verdad bastante sencillas y que una cuidadosa observación puede llevarnos a identificar patrones ocultos dentro de un aparente desorden.

La ciudad no es sólo el producto físico y palpable del planeamiento o de las grandes infraestructuras a pesar de la importancia indiscutible de ambos. Muchas de las cualidades que hacen que sean habitables provienen de acciones o dotaciones 'débiles'. Algunas son el resultado espontaneo de la vida de sus ciudadanos y solo dejan un rastro efímero. Otras endurecen o solidifican y se transforman con el tiempo en infraestructuras y espacios que humanizan, enriquecen o hacen más habitable la ciudad.

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[317] Charles-Pierre Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, 1964, 1 ed. (Penguin Books Limited, 2010), pp. 403. The Painter of Modern Life was originally written in 1863.

[318] "*destruction of cities, but by the eclipse of civilization*": Arata Isozaki, Unbuilt. Hankenchikushi, Hankenchikushi (Tokyo: TOTO Shuppan, 2001), p. 23.

Pero en esta cadena de acciones (que intervienen en la vida urbana y transforman la ciudad), las más débiles, las que poseen la cualidad de la 'impresencia', son aquellas que, siendo invisibles y sin cuerpo, transforman radicalmente la vida urbana (de las que internet o las redes sociales serían tan solo una de ellas). Esta última familia de acciones, tan alejada del planeamiento conservador y tradicional, es la que se denomina en la tesis con una palabra cara a Marcel Duchamp: *inframince* (infraleve). Esta constituiría el hilo invisible y el objeto de esta tesis.

Lo infraleve implica el reconocimiento de dos conceptos distintos (objetos, pensamientos, acontecimientos...) incluso cuando se encuentren separados por la discontinuidad o el diferimiento de sus lógicas. Este reconocimiento, aun cuando la unión de los conceptos aparentemente sea irracional o ilógica, se produce por la percepción correlativa de ellos, diluyéndose así la distancia mínima que los separa. De este modo, Marcel Duchamp transforma ideas ininteligibles e intangibles en referencias visuales o sensoriales que dependen únicamente de la memoria. Exponiendo estas ideas abstractas define bellamente el *je ne sais quoi*.

La primera aproximación a estas estructuras infraleves, en el plano metodológico, se hace desde el campo extra-disciplinar de las performances. Con ello se persigue un modo contingente y sesgado de provocar lecturas y análisis que tienen la virtud de estar algo alejadas de lo convencional.

Las performances nacen de la percepción sensible de la cotidianeidad, y por lo tanto son una buena ventana a la que asomarse para descubrir otras formas más contemporáneas de lo urbano. En la mirada atenta, en la percepción del artista (como sismógrafo de los cambios) y el posterior desarrollo de las acciones en la ciudad, podemos descubrir nuevas vías de acción para profundizar en la transformación de lo urbano mediante sistemas 'frágiles' o 'débiles'.

Lo infraleve se entiende así como opuesto a la acción fuerte que se ejerce sobre la estructura urbana. Se intenta, en esta investigación, descubrir, en la mirada sensible del arte o la sociología, estructuras capaces de alterar o de construir espacios urbanos con el menor consumo de energía (de todas las energías, incluida la social y personal).

La arquitectura ya no es un sistema cerrado y no afectado por el cambio. Las ciudades se transforman a velocidad imprevisible. Desde mediados del siglo XX se percibe esta alteración radical de la disciplina y, por consiguiente, de la propia concepción de los proyectos arquitectónicos. Para Richard Sennett la ciudad se queda paralizada si su sistema permanece cerrado[319]. Un sistema abierto, inevitablemente inicia un proceso de entropía, como tratará de demostrar esta tesis.

El inicio de la transformación tiene que ser provocado por un punto de inflexión y la necesidad de abrir el sistema. Es muy probable que sean varios los factores
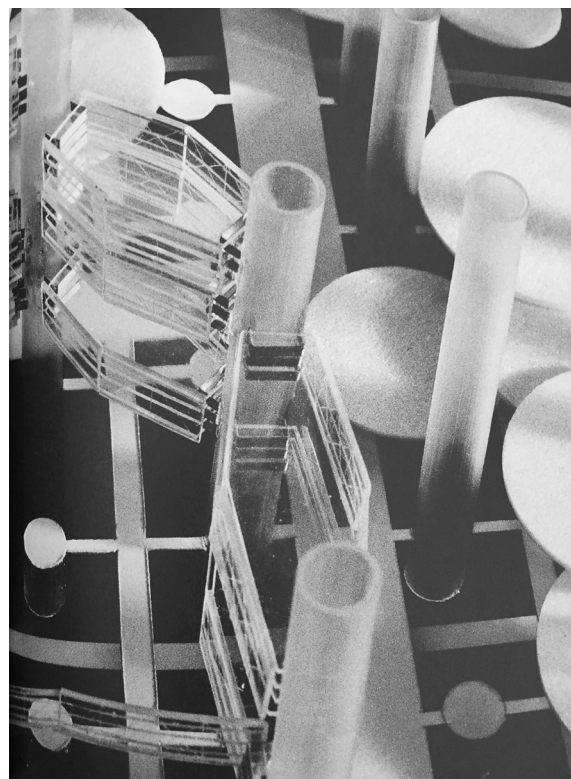
Arata Isozaki, *incubation Process/Joint Core System* (1962)

319 Richard Sennett, "Quant, the Public Realm," http://www.richardsennett.com/site/senn/templates/general2.aspx?pageid=16&cc=gb.

causantes, y estos se expondrán en relación con el rápido crecimiento de las ciudades, la decepción generada por los planes del urbanismo moderno, las nuevas prácticas sociales, la situación económica, el industrialismo de la posguerra y la aparición del arte contextual, por mencionar sólo algunos de los temas.

Poco a poco la ciudad se convierte en un destino transitorio, de configuración no permanente; una serie de coincidencias conforman la ciudad sin una forma específica. La ciudad como proyecto, de repente oscila entre el utopismo y la inmediatez, teniendo más en común con lo futuro que con lo permanente.

Las décadas de los sesenta y setenta sirven para mostrar esta transformación en la que el proceso prima sobre los objetivos finales, la indeterminación sobre la determinación, la inestabilidad sobre la estabilidad, y la fragmentación sobre los enfoques universales u holísticos.

Lo débil tiende a ser discontinuo. Sus efectos no se producen siempre, ni de modo continuo ni previsible. Conforma más bien una red invisible de acontecimientos. Hay cierta ruptura de la secuencia lógica en su proceso. Pero eso no significa que lo 'débil' no posea cierto orden interno. Esos acontecimientos aparecen vinculados por hilos invisibles. Pero lo débil solo puede vivir en un campo suficientemente abierto. En el que no todo quede 'bajo control', porqué ahí no puede producirse. Las derivas y los movimientos no son lineales ni siguen pautas uniformes. En ellas se indaga la pérdida de control, lo errático, lo espontaneo.

La tesis trata de poner de relieve diversas reflexiones a través de las cuales se hacen visibles estructuras frágiles en el medio urbano y artístico, y de este modo, destacar el medio en el que ellas pueden existir.

Una evidencia importante vinculada a la emergencia de lo débil, la explica el proceso de entropía. Entropía, en el sentido utilizado por Robert Smithson, como la irreversible transformación de ciertos cambios urbanos, la contaminación de las estructuras de la ciudad por simple contigüidad, la evolución incontrolada e incontrolable de los ámbitos urbanos más centrales y "protegidos" hacia la suburbia.

Lo débil parece tener cabida hoy en la ciudad, tanto como en el arte y en la arquitectura y forma parte de aquella manera de entender las cosas que nació en los años sesenta. Se acepta y valora el mestizaje, la apertura de ideas o los nuevos modos de usar el espacio, llegando a parecer cotidiana la convivencia con la incertidumbre y la indeterminación más que la imposición de estructuras fuertes y jerárquicas. Esto parece constituir, en el presente, una forma de ser o de situarse antes las cosas, que nos afecta a todos, y parece trasladarse inevitable al modo en que se enfocan los proyectos arquitectónicos, tanto como la ordenación urbana.

Las intuiciones anteriores se convierten en el motor de esta tesis. Su comprobación lleva a indagar en diferentes campos dentro y fuera de la disciplina. Es difícil detectarlos sin esa mirada amplia hacia la frontera difusa de la arquitectura. Será

necesario desplazarse de un lado a otro, desde el campo de los conceptos hasta el de los movimientos artísticos, para desde ellos, entrever cuestiones que pertenecen a la disciplina pero que no se perciben fácilmente desde su interior.

Hablar de interconexiones débiles en la ciudad, suena a creíble solo si uno se sitúa en la periferia del asunto, si olvida lo directamente 'útil' y pragmático. En un medio en que los asuntos cotidianos no bajan de la categoría de 'importantes' o 'fundamentales' (necesidad de infraestructuras, contaminación, segregación, transporte…), lo 'débil' puede parecer secundario o banal. Es complejo, desde el día a día, darse cuenta de hasta qué punto las acciones sociales, los intercambios o la información, construyen la red que determina que ese espacio de las urgencias que llamamos ciudad, se convierta en un espacio habitable. Porque llegada la complejidad a límites orbitales, como sucede hoy, lo 'directo', 'útil' y pragmático – el camino corto hacia las cosas – no es capaz de resolver los nuevos retos. Es en la complejidad natural de los comportamientos y las redes invisibles que se establecen entre los habitantes, en donde descansa - si acaso- la posibilidad de vivir en un medio tan complejo. Y, por lo tanto, la posibilidad de que ese medio urbano permita ser habilitado.

Para poder tomar distancia de la cotidianeidad habitualmente se usan diferentes fórmulas, de las cuales una de ellas es 'rodearla': Acercarse en espiral desde fuera parece una buena opción para observarla y estudiarla. Y el 'desde fuera' en este caso es tanto el pensamiento como la acción artística. Las dos constituyen las bases de enfoque para enfocar los capítulos de la tesis. Por supuesto, sin perder de vista el objetivo final: la arquitectura y la ciudad.

Los diferentes textos que la componen pretenden ser miradas atentas a pensamientos específicos que coinciden en su expresión con realidades urbanas o arquitectónicas. Sin buscarse en ellos relaciones de causa y efecto. No puede hablarse de una cronología lineal entre ellos. No puede decirse que la arquitectura siguió la idea surgida por el pensamiento débil, por ejemplo, cuando algunos arquitectos intrépidos lo expresaron a veces con anterioridad aunque sin nombrarlo. Lo mismo sucede con los artistas performativos que se analizan en algunos capítulos. A veces fueron visionarios, y otras muchas, fantásticos sismógrafos de lo que sucedía en la ciudad. En los capítulos de la tesis se trata de lograr esta aproximación en espiral sin perder de vista el centro de la investigación. En este campo es imposible lo obvio. Basta con entender el recorrido efectuado y la intención última.

02.   recorridos, movimientos y la deriva

El movimiento nos sirve para comprender el espacio. De hecho, nos dice mucho más que la quietud. El movimiento también construye ciudad.

La deriva, tomada de Guy Debord y su *Theory of the Dérive*, a modo de marco Situacionista se investiga desde tres ángulos: su significado en relación con las discontinuidades, en relación con la indeterminación, y desde la forma en que el movimiento estructura tanto la arquitectura como el pensamiento.

Pero esta deriva no es exclusiva de los Situacionistas, también pertenece al siempre evocador flâneur baudeleriano, o a los participantes que experimentan el ángulo oblicuo de Claude Parent. O, incluso, en la forma más lefebvriana de construcción: la producida mediante el "pensamiento y la acción"; incluyendo acciones de todo tipo, hasta el mero caminar o los encuentros más comunes.

La belleza del deambular en el paisaje urbano no suele ser lineal y continua, sino más bien errática y predispuesta a aceptar acontecimientos de todo tipo.

La «práctica cotidiana» de Michel De Certeau, por ejemplo, exige y propone transgredir el uso dogmático de las ciudades. De Certau propone la transgresión a través del conocimiento, que es único y personal. Sólo a través de una mirada personal se puede dar sentido a las discontinuidades de la ciudad. Es la idea de lo 'infra-leve' aplicada a lo urbano.

Desplazarse en la ciudad, tal y como proponen estos pensadores y artistas, ya no tiene lugar de una manera predeterminada y planificada; sino que los vagabundos y los fláneurs configuran los espacios de forma indeterminable.

De repente, el paisaje urbano se convierte en un lugar de desorientación y pérdida. Ya no es posible moverse basándose en los parámetros normales. La ciudad se convierte en un campo de investigación para el arte y la arquitectura y, en particular, para la experimentación a través del movimiento.

03. disolución de límites y contornos

El umbral es particularmente esencial en el contexto de esta tesis, ya que sirve para analizar el 'entremedio' como el lugar donde habitan lo invisible, lo no determinado y lo frágil. El umbral entendido como el espacio donde inevitablemente se producen transformaciones, cambios, tensiones, interacciones o continuidades. Donde el concepto inframince de Duchamp ofrece elucidación. Pero también es el espacio donde las intervenciones y acciones frágiles se dan más fácilmente.

Los dogmatismos tienden a ser no gradientes, polares, booleanos o binarios en oposición a la lógica difusa. La relación con los demás y con el contexto generalmente no admite matices. Los sistemas cerrados o estructuras rígidas no crean espacios de negociación entre ellos. Sin embargo, tan pronto como esto cambia y los sistemas se abren, comienzan a prosperar relaciones totalmente nuevas. Surge una asombrosa constelación de posibilidades y escalas que ocupan este espacio intermedio.

El resultado de esta apertura en la arquitectura y las ciudades a menudo transforma las interacciones sociales, pero también tiene una implicación física producida precisamente por lo social. Las ciudades pueden volverse más fragmentadas, se debilitan límites impenetrables o, en algunos casos, se disuelven; pierden su orden orientado hacia el centro y se convierten en expansiones sin una definición o estructura formal clara. Bajo un aparente desorden se abren al proceso de entropía.

Estos cambios no sólo tienen lugar en la escala aumentada de la ciudad, sino también entre el espacio privado y público o en relación con el contexto.

04. fragilidad, desobjetualización y desaparición

El mundo del arte cambia radicalmente, una vez más, en el momento en que el arte conceptual abre el campo a nuevos y alternativos movimientos artísticos, tales como la performance, el land-art, el arte procesual y muchos otros. En el arte conceptual el objeto artístico ya no se concibe como un producto final, los artistas no trabajan exclusivamente para las galerías tradicionales y el espacio museístico y además, se modifica la sustanciación, la materia con la que construir la obra.

La conceptualización de la obra artística se aplica a cualquier proceso creativo, e implica un cambio profundo de paradigma. De hecho, como esta tesis trata de demostrar, la "desobjetualización" arraiga también en la arquitectura y el urbanismo. Más aún, la llega a ser esencialmente otro síntoma del proceso entrópico.

Otra cuestión sumamente relevante, consecuencia de este cambio de paradigma, es la consideración de la obra artística únicamente como parte de un proceso más amplio. Esta no se presenta separadamente como una pieza independiente, sino que pertenece a un sistema o hilo conductor.

Esta nueva forma de abordar un proyecto, ya sea artístico o arquitectónico, persiguiendo la 'intrazabilidad' y la 'impresencia', provee un territorio para lo efímero, el acontecimiento, lo invisible y lo incorpóreo.

Por último, así como las obras mismas tienden a desaparecer, también la autoría se diluye. Se siguen las premisas de Roland Barthes según las cuales el autor, entendido como un dios supervisor, ha muerto, pero también se deja que sean los lectores, la audiencia o los habitantes quiénes den sentido a las obras. Es más, la obra puede convertirse incluso en un proceso participativo. Esta producción participativa o democrática es de gran interés en nuestros días.

05. *sistema desequilibrante, evento e indeterminación*

La indeterminación se ha convertido en un signo de nuestro tiempo, incluso en una expresión de la creciente complejidad de esta era de la computación. Parte de ella se puede atribuir precisamente a la nueva capacidad de la informática para gestionar órdenes más complejas.

Pero la indeterminación es también una reivindicación contingente de los cambios sociales que se inician a finales de los años cincuenta, explotan en Mayo del 68, y se perciben aún hoy en día. Aquellas demandas sociales ponían el acento principalmente en la libertad. De todo tipo, de movimiento, de usos, de canales de expresión...

En el ámbito de los Situacionistas la indeterminación era esencial para una existencia esporádica y llena de acontecimientos. Es la causa del acontecimiento, del suceso y del accidente, pero también implica la búsqueda de un grado de inestabilidad que pueda llegar a ser co-productor de vida e infinidad de realidades.

Para la arquitectura y el urbanismo conllevan una nueva forma de permitir que los sistemas abiertos proporcionen entornos cambiantes y multipliquen las posibilidades u opciones. Crear nuevas configuraciones que permitan la flexibilidad, la no linealidad, la contingencia, el individualismo y la transformabilidad que necesita una sociedad más compleja y conectada. Estos sistemas pueden desarrollarse mediante proyectos o propuestas muy diferentes, desde el nomadismo hasta los 'armazones'.

06. *non-plan, non-design, no-center, non-place, etc.*

Las diferentes palabras que configuran este título van más allá de la simple negación. Estos términos, en unos casos, revisan o examinan el papel de los enfoques disciplinarios y, en otros, proponen debilitar la arquitectura y el urbanismo en sí. En el primer caso se cuestionan o rechazan los enfoques dogmáticos de la disciplina. Mientras que el debilitamiento de la arquitectura se propone a través de la desaparición o la búsqueda de la arquitectura fuera del entorno construido.

Otro proceso que también trata de ir más allá de la disciplina, es el de la entropía. Una magnitud que, más allá de los principios de la termodinámica, tiene una profunda implicación en la comprensión de la transformación de la arquitectura a través del tiempo y el discurso.

Sólo en los sistemas abiertos se produce entropía. La entropía establece el campo de juego para las discontinuidades y las indeterminaciones a través de la fragmentación y el desorden. Y es precisamente en estos intersticios entre lo fragmentado y lo desordenado donde lo infra-leve se encuentra de un modo categórico. Lo infra-leve da sentido a este aparente desorden y mantiene nuestras ciudades unidas de forma invisible. Como se trató de exponer al principio de este texto, Isozaki expone que la sustancia de una ciudad está constituida de ideas abstractas y, por lo tanto, resistentes a la destrucción. Estas ideas, o lo que a lo largo de esta tesis se denominan infra-leve, son necesarias cuando el proceso entrópico ha fragmentado y desordenado la ciudad y los límites ya no son necesarios.

Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Morphologie City Metaphors* (1976)
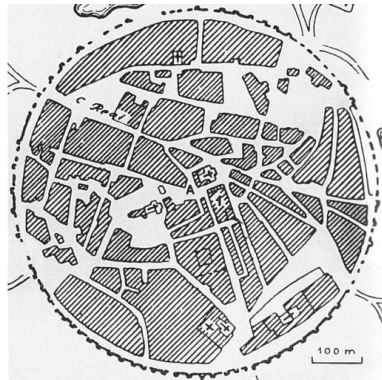
Encirclement

Einkreisung

07. *conclusiones*

Las posibles respuestas a las preguntas formuladas al inicio de esta tesis, tratan, de ser coherentes en su explicación y descripción con la propia materia investigada; no podría ser de otro modo. Dada la investigación de que se trata, no se dan respuestas contundentes y dogmáticas, sino abiertas. Esto lleva a contestarlas (usando las propias palabras de la tesis) de manera informal, no lineal, indeterminada, fragmentada, yuxtapuesta, contingente o procesual.

De este modo, las respuestas se presentan como una constelación de emergencias, que una vez vistas en conjunto, permiten entender algo mejor el je ne sais quoi de lo delicado, lo sutil, lo frágil o lo aparentemente débil.

En estas conclusiones se trata de extraer tres ideas principales que estuvieron presentes en todos los cuestionamientos que se estudiaron a lo largo de la investigación. Las conclusiones se muestran como lecturas discontinuas, contingentes y tangenciales de lo *infraleve*. No sólo porque, como asegura Duchamp, este término solo pueda ser explicado dando ejemplos, sino también porque es únicamente a través de una lectura tangencial, como es posible entender lo *infraleve* - en realidad lo intangible y efímero del pensamiento - más allá de interpretaciones puramente formales.
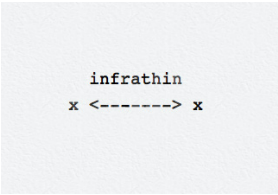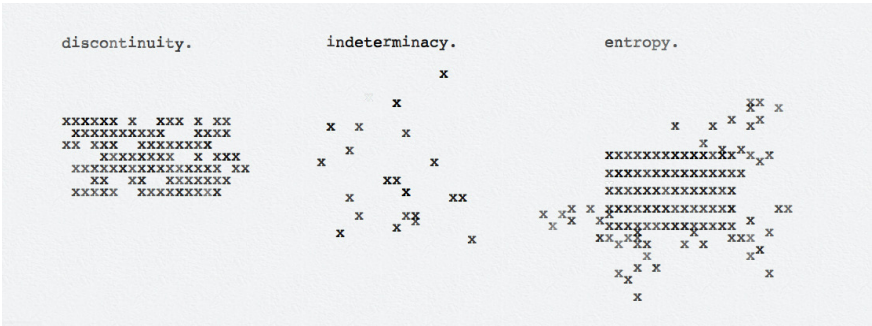
discontinuidad

La discontinuidad, en el marco de esta tesis sería como una narración no lineal capaz de expresar el concepto de Duchamp de lo Infraleve. Se puede explicar, en relación con las escrituras automáticas del DADA y el Surrealismo, cómo la yuxtaposición de dos ideas separadas por una distancia mínima que desencadena, o de la que surge, una nueva comprensión a través del reconocimiento (sensorial) de la información secuencial, incluso en aquellos casos en los que no hay ninguna continuidad lógica.

Las discontinuidades pueden aparecer como un mapa invisible de eventos, o de tensiones entre cuerpos o de discursos fragmentados. Situación que provocaría la percepción o lectura, en el espacio intermedio entre estas discontinuidades, del entendimiento o la comprensión del hecho. Algo así como el hilo que cose el encuadernado de esta tesis, cuya presencia se hace visible solo por sus puntos o pespuntes emergentes, pero cuya tensión y eficacia descansa en la relación oculta entre ellos.

Los sucesos o acontecimientos emergentes serían así el punto de confluencia entre los recorridos o movimientos - o las líneas de pensamiento si se trata de algo conceptual - o incluso la brecha topológica entre dos objetos. Las distancias mínimas que se producen entre estos puntos sólo pueden ser ligadas por hilos invisibles o re-composiciones en nuestras mentes.

Es en este espacio intermedio donde se encuentra lo errático y espontáneo, pero sobre todo la fuerza inesperada de aquello que se interrelaciona.

Es a través de estas discontinuidades como puede reconstruirse un mapa más amplio, más abierto e interesante de un lugar. En las distancias intermedias, los intersticios, los umbrales, las fronteras y en los límites, donde se esconde lo aparentemente débil o lo invisible, que es al mismo tiempo, lo intenso y potente.

indeterminación

La indeterminación es una consecuencia directa de la complejidad. Cuanto más complejo es el sistema, más variedad de opciones surge, aumentando, por tanto, la conveniencia de la indeterminación.

Es también producto de la apertura de los sistemas. En un sistema cerrado todo tiene su lugar específico y pre-asignado y, hasta cierto punto, permanece ordenado y determinado. A medida que un sistema interactúa con otros, se da paso a un nuevo orden de inestabilidad e indeterminación; multiplicando, así, las configuraciones, las relaciones, las opciones, etc.

En este entorno inestable, se producen respuestas tales como la arquitectura efímera, el nomadismo, el trabajo orientado a procesos, lo participativo, y todo tipo de iniciativas abiertas y acciones performativas o experimentales. Moverse bien en este campo de la indeterminación lleva al arquitecto, al artista y al pensador a querer situarse dentro del contexto de la contingencia, de la no linealidad, flexibilidad, adaptabilidad, transformación, complejidad y fragmentación. Se adopta lo incierto e indeterminado, y se aleja lo estático y cerrado. Se procura la capacidad de dar respuesta al entorno cambiante con urgencia e inmediatez.

Lo que esto trae, para los diferentes campos creativos, es la necesidad de reevaluar y cuestionar las disciplinas y los procesos de trabajo. Los artistas y arquitectos mencionados en esta tesis, propusieron abordar nuevas formas de confrontar su trabajo, incluso negando los roles establecidos de la disciplina. Siempre desde el rechazo de lo estático y favoreciendo lo indeterminado e inestable.

entropía

La entropía, de modo genérico, se puede definir como el proceso de pérdida de energía de un sistema al entrar en contacto con otros sistemas. La tendencia a la desaparición, tal como se explica a lo largo de esta tesis, puede ser observada como parte de dicho proceso entrópico. Cuando los sistemas se abren, necesariamente tienen que interactuar con otros sistemas. En este proceso irreversible de fragmentación y debilitamiento de las estructuras de la periferia urbana, los procesos se vuelven más importantes que los resultados finales. La tendencia a la desaparición se convierte en una consecuencia inevitable del proceso entrópico, y también puede ser buscada o deseada por los artistas o los arquitectos en proyectos específicos. Aquí serían más importantes las ideas, "lo social" o los conceptos, que no dejan rastro aparente, que las formas específicas de lo físico, que tienden a la desaparición. Se hace más importante la impresencia que la presencia.

La fuerza invisible de lo infraleve permanece y retiene. Sirve para pensadores, arquitectos y artistas en la búsqueda de cierto grado de presencia incorpórea. Esta red invisible que ata y da sentido, a menudo explica y apoya la conservación de la identidad o la unidad cultural de un lugar.

El concepto de entropía interesa en relación con la disolución de las fronteras; a medida que los sistemas se abren a otros sistemas se crean nuevas relaciones que dibujan nuevos límites, tensiones o negociaciones.

La significación más interesante de la entropía es, sin embargo, su evolución hacia el no-orden, o la inestabilidad; hacia la amalgama débil o la fragmentación. Cabe imaginarla como un estado aditivo, de partículas ligadas y cambiantes frente a una situación estable, de urdimbre geométrica y amarrada. Algo así como la relación tan visual entre un 'fieltro' y un 'tejido', en la expresión de Deleuze y Guattari.

Desde la óptica de la entropía, en el plano urbano, el entendimiento de la ciudad fragmentada es también el de la ciudad genérica. La fragmentación y desorden de las 'partículas' urbanas lleva a la disolución de la identidad (que actúa como cohesionadora) y por lo tanto, conduce a la ciudad genérica.

Estos tres principios observados, comparten una estructura frágil pero de contingente resultado y acción fuerte. Constituyen las fuerzas invisibles (o poco visibles) que atraviesan el lugar (en todas sus categorías: espacios, estructuras, ciudades, ambientes...) alterando sus usos, sus formas y los comportamientos de sus habitantes. Un buen proyecto (artístico, arquitectónico urbano...) será aquel capaz de intuir esas fuerzas invisibles y conservarlas, desarrollarlas o incrementarlas; será el que mejor se entreteje con los hilos o tensiones existentes en un lugar

Esta arquitectura no necesita determinación o formas concretas. A lo largo de este trabajo de investigación se han estudiado ejemplos o casos, tanto arquitectónicos, como performativos, de 'naturaleza débil'. Se trata de los vinculados al nomadismo, la arquitectura efímera, las acciones sociales y participativas, las arquitecturas experimentales, los armazones como espacios contingentes, los eventos y las acciones o, llegando más lejos aún en la negación del orden cerrado de lo existente, los NON de todo tipo, la desaparición de la arquitectura o la no-arquitectura. Estos ejemplos estudiados encuentran un eco fuerte en lo contemporáneo, donde lo abierto, transaccional, líquido, cambiante, o incluso los asentamientos informales en las mega ciudades parece encontrar fácil acomodo a través de la potencia débil de las redes sociales y los nuevos sistemas relacionales, a través también de la construcción de una nueva realidad. No sabemos aún cual, ni si mejor o peor, pero basada en el propio sentir del habitante global. El presente interés por esto no nace sólo de la facilidad informativa y comunicativa surgida a partir de internet, sino en los sesenta, cuando se fijó, quizás por primera vez, el principio de que una acción poderosa no necesita ser grande, fuerte o determinada; puede ser frágil, fragmentada, indeterminada, invisible o incluso, puede germinar de la grieta de una roca.

ALPEN-EDELWEISS · *Leontopodium alpinum* CASS·

John Baldessari, *Cigar Smoke to Match Clouds That are the Same* (1972-73)