2015 ACSA Fall Conference
Abstract Book

Between the *Autonomous* & *Contingent* Object

2015 ACSA FALL CONFERENCE
Between the *Autonomous* & *Contingent* Object

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CONTENTS

THURSDAY

MOTION: "Today's Computational Processes that Aim to Create Fully Optimized Objects Are Just Another Form of Utopianism Doomed to Fail"

MODERATOR: ANNE MUNLY

They favor efficiency and functionality in determining their axiomatic processes, i.e., processes that claim to be self-evidently true. The post-WWII era promoted technology as savior to many environmental problems, and created self-contained, purified environments—from the office park and shopping malls, to social housing blocks and the federal highway system—each of which has produced failures due to its formation through isolated, intrinsic logics. Claiming the truth and infallibility of computational processes is the latest example of such utopian thinking.

S.N.A.F.U. DRAWING: OF MANY LINES, BUT ONE MIND
Chris Cornelius, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

In his book *The Projective Cast*, Robin Evans presents a diagram called "The Arrested Image" in which he graphically presents the relationship between representation and the design object, or that which is represented. Often enough architectural representation, especially that which is administered in the academic studio, exists within Evans' diagram. This paper posits a drawing methodology intended to conflate the "Arrested Image" and use it as a kind of intellectual monkey bars.

Staring at the blank page is intimidating for any designer, especially the architecture student. We often ask them to create analytical materials that might examine site, program or context, but these things can be challenging to synthesize into the design process. I administer a drawing exercise that attempts to ameliorate that challenge. The drawings I ask my students to produce are called S.N.A.F.U. which is a military acronym for Situation Normal All Fucked Up. We usually associate a S.N.A.F.U. with a bad thing or something that impedes progress, I use the term to suggest that we start with something we know and can see or observe, and weave from that a tapestry of visual statements and questions that are meant primarily to aid the designer. You might start with something you can trace; my students start with a Le Corbusier Villa or Louis Kahn house. They begin to understand the house through manual tracing of the floor plan and sections on Mylar. They are then given a series of procedures that build a shape language from the extension and construction lines created in the trace. That shape language is augmented with syntactic imaging. These images may perform like a collage and add suggestion to how we are to understand their graphic examination. Or, the images may be used to reify larger concepts to be addressed in the project. Students are asked to make "notational riffs" to tie into those elements of our profession that are allographic in nature. The result is a drawing that is three to four layers of Mylar that includes the DNA of the formal aspects of the project.

The shape language that is harvested from these drawings is used to generate form. They deploy digital tools (typically Rhino) to loft, extrude, Boolean or other to make forms that ultimately become their projects. The process is intended to be largely topological but in a manner that embeds analytical and synthetic examinations.

The S.N.A.F.U. drawing employs all three legs of Evans' "Arrested Image" because multiple projective methods are deployed. Orthography, perspective and imagination modalities are all present in a tableau that is intended to jump start the project for students. I found this process to be invigorating for students and it aids in the development of a thesis for a project that has creative mileage. Like collage or montage, there is no singular means of translation. Students often refer back to their S.N.A.F.U. drawing to answer design questions long after the form has been created.

THE MATERIAL MODULATION OF OBJECTS
Samuel Bernier-Lavigne, Université Laval

Since the materialist interpretation of Gilles Deleuze's work by Manuel DeLanda, we saw raise the idea of a flat ontology, where all objects obtain an equal ontological status.[1] The influence of such a flattening is important on recent architectural theories, since we are mainly concerned with the formal and material autonomy of designed objects.[2] We can see the effect of this idea in the debate currently taking place between architects that defend "relationism" and those advocating an object-oriented ontology (OOO). The first are interested in the generative processes underlying the object, such as flows, intensities and connections.[3] The most extreme version of it has surfaced in recent years, with the "parametricism" of Patrik Schumacher, where this "radically flat ontology […] however, also a radically relational ontology" raises an issue, as stated by Graham Harman that "entities [here] have no autonomous reality, but gain their reality from those other things with which they interrelate."[4] In contrast, the object-oriented ontology address the object "in itself," and not in relation to us or to their context, in a more "hermetic" manner, so that they could earn an existential autonomy.[5]

Although these two perspectives seem difficult to reconcile, we intend to explore the theoretical potential of their thin intersection. In other words, we are asking if it is possible to design an architectural object that could demonstrate a formal autonomy by a non-relational design, and a material autonomy through a relation to its physical context? To answer this question we need to dig into the philosophy of matter and form, and explore the potentiality of new tools.

First, the French philosopher Gilbert Simondon will develop the concept of modulation, throughout the revision of hylomorphism, an Aristotle doctrine where an active form impose its characteristics on a passive matter. By integrating a third element in the equation, the force, Simondon explains

MOTION: "Today's Computational Processes that Aim to Create Fully Optimized Objects Are Just Another Form of Utopianism Doomed to Fail"

how to elucidate the real material formation of objects.[6] This idea, the modulation of object, is in fact a continuous and variable moulding of a malleable matter into a solid form. It is carried out by an exchange of energy between the two, until the whole system reaches a steady state.[7] We learn from Simondon that the relationship between form and matter is not an active / passive transmission, as explained by the hylomorphism or an autonomous form that acts in isolation on the material, like some version of OOO, nor an absolute relational exchange where entities have very little autonomy, as described by parametricism. It is rather an energetic dialog between two equally active and autonomous components, namely form and matter.

From there, the question is how to develop an active matter? We suggest here to consider topological optimization as a means to digitally generate the material formation.[8] On a theoretical level, this process enables accurate understanding of an objective material behavior, by a continuous feedback between form, force and matter, integrating thereby some constraints from the immediate context.[9] By an active reaction, matter solidifies the lines of forces in space. However, one must understand that these optimization algorithms don't really have formal or manufacturing logic associated with their calculations. In this sense, the hylomorphism is then reversed, where the active matter imposes it law on a passive form.

It seems clear from now on that the designer must have a strong involvement in this process, if we want to develop simultaneously the formal and material autonomy of the object, by joining the design intentions to the results of the topological optimization. Some new digital platforms, like the voxel-based modeling software Monolith, will catalyze these experimentations.[10] By the fact that each voxel has its precise location in the three-dimensional volume that it forms, and by the fact that it may adopt different material properties, this process creates an inseparable bond between form and matter. When you optimize the object, each voxel becomes informed and can react to the structural needs, by modifying its material constitution.[11] This creates a gradual variation of matter, via what we could call a digital modulation. The demonstration is now explicit; it is possible to address the formal and the material autonomy of objects together, while taking into account the design intentions and the structural performances, without one aspect overtaking the other.

NOTES

1   Manuel Delanda, Virtual Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy (New York: Continuum, 2002), p.41 // Levi Bryant, The Democracy of Objects (2011), p.32.

2   In this context, where the objects are now side by side, it still seems necessary to establish a certain denomination, or at least, to specify the terminology in order to develop a coherent discourse. First, we acknowledge a first contrast between the non-material objects and material objects. Among the elements of the latter group, we dissociate the natural objects, those generated by growth and evolution, from the artificial objects created by man. This distinction does not presuppose the idea that these objects are superior or inferior to the natural objects,

or even non-material objects, but rather serves to distinguish the objects on which the discipline of architecture is based.

3   Georges Teyssot and Samuel Bernier-Lavigne, "Forme et information : Chronique de l'architecture numérique," in: Alain Guiheux (ed.), Action Architecture (Paris : Édition de la Villette, 2011), pp.49-87.

4   Patrik Schumacher, "Architecture's Next Ontological Innovation, " in Sarah Ruel-Bergeron (ed.), Not Nature, Tarp–Architectural Manual (New York: Pratt Institute, spring 2012), pp.100-107 // Graham Harman, "Objets et Architecture, Objects and Architecture," in Marie-Ange Brayer and Frédéric Migayrou (eds.), Naturaliser l'architecture naturalizing, Catalogue Archilab (Orléans: Frac Centre, Éditions HYX, 2013), p.235.

5   Quentin Meillassoux, Après la finitude (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006), p.18-19 // Graham Harman, "Objets et Architecture, Objects and Architecture," op.cit. note 4, p.238 // Ian Bogost, Alien Phenomenology or What It's Like to Be a Thing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012) p.14.

6   Gilbert Simondon, L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique (PhD dissertation, 1957; Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964).

7   "Les cours de Gilles Deleuze, Anti Œdipe et Mille Plateaux: Métal, métallurgie, musique, Husserl, Simondon (27/02/1979)," Gilles Deleuze, accessed April 2, 2015, www.webdeleuze.com.

8   Topological optimization is a procedure capable of generating geometries that show an ideal distribution of the matter in the space, according to its structural behaviour. See: Panagiotis Michalatos and Sawako Kaijima, "Intuitive Material Distribution, "in: George Legendre (ed.), Mathematics of Space (London: Wiley, 2011: Architectural Design vol.72, no.4), p.69.)

9   Samuel Bernier-Lavigne, Pour une architecture de l'écume; Force, forme et matière dans la morphogenèse de l'architecture numérique (PhD dissertation, Québec: Université Laval, 2014), p, 61-78.

10 See: http://www.monolith.zone

11 Neri Oxman, Material-based Design Computation (PhD dissertation, Cambridge: MIT, 2010), p.44.

COMBINING STRUCTURAL TOPOLOGY OPTIMIZATION AND BIG AREA ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING-A CASE STUDY

Nik Nikolov, Lehigh University

This research work investigates the use of structural topology optimization (TO) software in architectural and structural design and its applicability to big area additive manufacturing (BAAM). As a case study, the work aims at devising a schematic design and a fabrication workflow for a small pavilion with a topologically optimized 3D-printed structural frame. The project participants include partners from the manufacturing industries and research groups from architecture and multiple engineering and science departments.

Topology optimization (TO) is a computational process by which a surface or a volume of a member under load is modified to maximize its performance (e.g. the

MOTION: "Today's Computational Processes that Aim to Create Fully Optimized Objects Are Just Another Form of Utopianism Doomed to Fail"

stiffness of the member) under load while taking into account the mechanical properties of the material. The ultimate goal of topology optimization is to find the best structural layout, or material distribution of a structure, while fulfilling a set of behavior constraints early in the design stage.

Topology optimization has only recently become accessible to non-programmers. As an architectural design tool it is largely unexplored, in contrast to its wide use in the field of mechanical engineering. It can lead to structural and material efficiencies which have yet to be determined and researched at the scale of buildings. Perhaps of greatest importance is the observation that the topologically optimized shape simultaneously manifests a structural optimum and an emergent aesthetic.

Topologically optimized shapes are fundamentally different from standard structural shapes, which are derived from casting or extrusion methods of fabrication and assume a degree of material redundancy. In comparison, topologically optimized shapes require highly customized means of fabrication and the resulting members are unique and context-specific–they can be lighter, use less material, yet still be as strong. Present mass-customizable fabrication technologies, such as CNC-milling, vacuum forming, and 3d-printing, make the wider use of topologically optimized architectural and structural members economically viable.

With its large build envelope, big area additive manufacturing (BAAM) can finally enter the realm of full-scale, single-build, structural design. This research work will test and identify research questions in the applicability of TO and BAAM technologies in fabricating a 3d-printed small inhabitable structure. We anticipate this work to lay the foundation for continued research in interfacing these novel technologies in view of the increasing number of multi departmental and multidisciplinary "thrusts" at universities nationally and internationally in combining computational design methodologies with big area additive manufacturing (BAAM) technologies.

DESIGN INNOVATION: THOUGHTS ON BICYCLE WHEELS, WINGS AND THREE LARGE TENSEGRITY STRUCTURES
Charles Debelius, Appalachian State University
D. Jason Miller, Appalachian State University

In the spirit of the conference theme Between the Autonomous & Contingent Object, this paper uses the principle of Tensegrity, a condition shared by a broad range of objects at a variety of scales, as a point of departure for reflecting on the nature of autonomous objects. That reflection is informed by a discussion of a series of tensegrity structures of increasing size and complexity: the geodesic dome Buckminster Fuller designed for Expo 67 in Montreal and two progeny: Calgary's Olympic *Saddledome* (completed in 1985), and Atlanta's *Georgia Dome* (completed in 1992).

Buckminster Fuller's investigations (with Kenneth Snelson) of the structural behavior, mathematics, and construction of geodesic structures in the late 1940's at Black Mountain College were essential to the development of Tensegrity, the structural principle that describes the complementary relationship between continuous tension members and discontinuous compression members embodied in tensegrity structures. A comprehensive understanding of Tensegrity enables the design and construction of simple paraboloid and hyperbolic paraboloid structures, systems characterized by a very low weight to span ratio. While the geodesic dome is the image that most often springs to mind when Fuller's name is mentioned, the geodesic dome is simply one expression of the principle of Tensegrity. The significance of Tensegrity is exemplified by the impressive spans of the roof structures at the *Saddledome* and the *Georgia Dome*: each is a lightweight and highly efficient structural system that illustrates the enormous structural potential of the optimal arrangement of compressive and tensile members.

The significance of Tensegrity is not limited to architecture and structural engineering: Tensegrity has been embraced by scholars and theoreticians in fields as diverse as of molecular biology, spine mechanics, and management science. Ultimately, this paper seeks to further illuminate the importance of Fuller's real legacy—the principle of Tensegrity—as framework for understanding some of the primary characteristics of autonomy as well as the assessment and critique of architectural objects.

MOTION: "Under the Invisibility Cloak, Where the Autonomy of Objects Is Irrelevant"

MODERATOR: YUTAKA SHO, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

This panel investigates the alignments between an object and its surroundings, relative to its autonomy and contingency. On one hand, a completely new object may be inserted into a historical or socially autonomous body, like Mystique in the X-Men movie series, who thrives in identity crises. Increasingly architecture is asked to act like Mystique as ecological sustainability requires objects to be reused to meet evolving programmatic needs. In parallel, in pursuit of infinitely flexible and ever-emerging forms, architectural objects may host multiple narratives simultaneously. On the other hand, an object could wear an Invisibility Cloak to camouflage itself within infrastructural, eco or formal systems, in order to infiltrate and short-circuit and, if it does not kill them, regenerate them. Acting at once like a skin over an object and a virus within a system, the Invisible One operates on all platforms. Who would win if Mystique and Harry Potter had a fight?

AUTONOMY AS A MODEL FOR ANONYMITY IN ARCHITECTURE
Joshua M. Taron, University of Calgary, Faculty of Environmental Design

While indeterminacy and emergence have come into the mainstream of architectural discourse, it has done so with a great deal of friction with modern conventions such as certainty, authority, authorship and autonomy—all of which are projected upon the figure of the architect and the discipline of architecture itself. Central to these problems has been a cultural transition from a 20th century model of identity and autonomy toward a 21st century constituted by multiplicities and their fundamental unknowability manifesting in the speculative figure of anonymity. So how exactly might architecture build on this old model in order to define a new project that pursues anonymity when autonomy has been virtually abandoned?

Anonymity is a multivalent thing—at once both a threat to the possibility of imagining new futures while providing an exceptional incubatory space for possibilities to develop. Never something knowable but fundamentally thinkable and material in nature, anonymity is perhaps the most valuable and controversial "natural" resource in the information economies of the Anthropocene. Furthermore, anonymity is posited as a kind of utopian performance objective within ever more efficient and distributed models of power, thus warranting an investigation of sovereignty and the evolving project of its dissolution. Thus, this is an argument that looks to political theory in order to identify both the site and the function of anonymity in architecture. The objective is to trace the contours of this new model in order to frame a set of architectural experiments with processes occurring at certain orders while remaining undetected or ineffective at others while simultaneously sharing the same space.

That challenge for architecture ultimately lies in its ability to divorce the discipline from an absolute adherence to sensation and revisiting the project of its disappearance without it going away. But how does one experiment with a kind of non-confrontational yet subversive mode of production? And is conscious subversion or the shunning of sensation even an ethical proposition within our contemporary cultural logic?

In structural terms, anonymity is nearly indistinguishable from autonomy via the political model of sovereignty. A critique of Carl Schmitt's sovereign decision, the event upon which the production of sovereignty turns, provides us with the initial contours of a model of anonymity. In determining a site for debate, this paper situates itself at the liminal intersection of object and void produced through the sovereign decision as described in Giorgio Agamben's figure of homosacer and the sovereign state of exception.

A revisitation of Hays' reading of Mies' projects of Alexanderplatz and the Barcelona Pavilion frame the void as an architectural instance of the exception where anonymity might operate. It also serves as a first step toward understanding autonomy as complicit with (as opposed to) multiplicity and contingency. This proposition is only made more complex and problematic when considered not as a singular but rather as a distributed condition. While Alexanderplatz does function based on the ambivalent relationship between multiple parts, it pales in comparison with the intensity that architecture must contend with today. Furthermore, the material ambiguity produced in the Barcelona Pavilion undoes one kind of specificity while producing another where anonymity reigns. The claim is that architecture must experiment with the production of conceptual voids and un-or under specified material ambiguity in order to determine when it does or doesn't produce a sensible effect within the populations

In order to extend our reading of the void to contemporary environments, a turn is made back to political theory by revisiting the work of Michel Foucault. What we can see in Foucault is power's migration away from the individual body "making it possible to substitute for force or other violent constraints the gentle efficiency of total surveillance." This provides a clear mandate to avoid the production of registered sensation in behavioral populations. But it also reveals an opportunity for architecture to experiment with the production of liminal or even the unsensable—a radical departure from the sensational and affective obsessions of the past decade or more.

There has emerged a small grouping of projects that have, most likely unintentionally, begun to play with the production of anonymity through both silence (similar to Hays' reading of Alexanderplatz) and material ambiguity

MOTION: "Under the Invisibility Cloak, Where the Autonomy of Objects Is Irrelevant"

(similar Hays' reading of the Barcelona Pavilion). The first example is First Office's Paranormal Panorama project at the MAK Garage Top. Here a series of precise architectural procedures is specified that projects a landscape of Mont Tendre onto a connected series of walls using a range of different white paints. The result is a nearly if not totally unrecognizable by patrons of the space, thereby demonstrating an architectural ability to produce difference recognized at one order while remaining non-existent to another. The second example is found in David Gissen's recent work, *Reading Hollywood in the Smog*. Here Gissen simulates the textual variations of the Hollywood sign made possible through the thickened air of a smoggy Los Angeles. The project speculates on the range of possibilities that might go unnoticed or perhaps misread when viewing the sign from a distance. The conflation of text into the realm of materiality demonstrates the generative capacity of anonymity by unravelling the precision of a pure transmission of information. Both of these examples serve as small but significant investigations into the realm of anonymity. Lastly the paper examines a series of experiments produced through a graduate elective course that I ran during the Winter 2015 term at the University of Calgary's Faculty of Environmental Design.

What these projects all demonstrate is a blurring of distinction between autonomy/contingency precisely because the formal procedures as well as architectural objects themselves produce a boundary or envelope condition that functions within the same algorithmic logic as the logic of sovereignty in the context of Foucault's distributed power. Anonymity is a performance objective par excellence of the problem of networked objects and their ability to integrate into a world that is both radically contingent and radically autonomous. This can be extended as an economic argument of surplus, as an environmental argument of sustainability through liminal footprints, and as a disciplinary one that divorces architectural production from specific sensations, instead investigating methods for sustaining their absence.

NOTES

1   The fairness, appropriateness and/or accuracy of this projection is of course debatable.

2   K.M. Hays, Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form, in *Perspecta* Vol. 21 (1984), MIT Press, pp. 14-29.

3   There are but 6 envelopes immediately facing the void—an admittedly complex but manageable number to say the least.

4   This extends to human populations, material populations, populations of information, etc…

5   M. Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 1975.

6   For more on this problem in particular, please refer to J, Taron, *Anonymity and the Making of a Non-relational Architecture*, ACSA 103 Conference Proceedings, 2015

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BECOMING INVISIBLE: ARCHITECTURES OF CONCEALMENT, DECEPTION AND DECOY
Antonio Furgiuele, ACSA Introductory Member

Within recent years the wide-spread collection and interconnectivity of data on cities, domestic spaces and bodies have significantly changed the discourse of design to address growing concerns amongst individuals and institutions to increase privacy, anonymity, security and potential agency. The ubiquity of data systems' ability to recognize, capture and transfer massive amounts of information about the environment has opened an important arena for designers to rethink the possibilities of invisibility. A changing body of social and technical knowledges of concealment, deception and decoy has begun to assert new possibilities and necessities in the Information Age.

To ground and propel a discourse of invisibility it is critical to reposition architectural camouflage. A premiere site for its development, The Camouflage Laboratory (Pratt Institute, 1940-1943) advanced a series of strategies and tactics to render invisible the US's most valuable and vulnerable wartime architectures.

The Camouflage Lab helped to redirect architectural expertise and mobilize the national imaginary towards methods to confront the ultimate destructive force, aerial bombardment, through positioning architecture as a radically contingent object. The Laboratory became highly visible and influential through countless didactic forms, most importantly in the widely distributed *Industrial Camouflage Manual* (Konrad Wittmann & Pratt Faculty, 1942) and in the materials produced for the exhibition "Camouflage for Civilian Defense" (MoMA,1942). Imbued with necessary agency, industrial camouflage operated on the limits of technologies of recognition to transform architectural knowledge into a crucial and necessary performance, a technics of disappearance.

As our built environment becomes increasingly auto-recognized, captured, trafficked and commodified into immense patterns of information, what types of disciplinary controls and expertise does architecture need to reassert? Now more than ever it is time to position architectural contingency, locate other histories, and materialize invisible architectures.

FROM AUTONOMY TO ANNIHILATION: THE PARADOXICAL POSITION OF AUTONOMOUS ARCHITECTURE
Alireza Karbasioun, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The transformation of art, from an embedded part of the unified divinity of culture to an autonomous production of the disinterested and purposeless but essential entities was carried out in Western culture through the profane process of evacuation of matters from any inherent truth and dismissal of secular rituals as the conveyors of meaning. "The Man without Content" with the power over selection and manipulation of matters according to his will and desire emerged as the autonomous artist. Art became the object of itself and artist turned into a god that destroys himself.

MOTION: "Under the Invisibility Cloak, Where the Autonomy of Objects Is Irrelevant"

In the same way, autonomy became the key apparatus in architectural discourse in which, after the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, the crisis of meaning concatenated the cultural and technological hegemony of capitalist mode of production. In this situation, architecture in order to preserve what is believed to be the identifying and distinctive core of the discipline turned to the concept of autonomy, that is, in and of itself, the process of self-annihilation. Hence the paradoxical position of autonomous architecture: the process of dissolution of what constitutes architecture in order to preserve architecture.

In this presentation, I intend to re-evaluate the function of autonomy in architecture regarding the Nietzschean notion of nihilism and its modalities: passive, incomplete, and completed. Following these three modalities of nihilism I examine three different approaches to autonomy as follow:

According to passive nihilism I study "passive autonomy" as the mystification of external forces which is in the service of predominant ideology of the time. This autonomy is used to depoliticize architecture and has become an instrument to promote ideology. Regarding incomplete nihilism, I examine "rhetorical autonomy" that uses masks to fictionalize the facts in order to find a running room for criticality and to produce a new life style although there is an awareness of the futility of those fictions. While derivations of this proposition could be marked out in the work of the architects for whom narrative, fable and story is a source of inspiration, one of the best places in which this instance could be examined is the works of American architect Douglas Darden whose allegorical projects are a demonstration of the re-codification of socially contaminated ideas into architectural texts without succumbing the autonomy of architecture. Finally along with completed nihilism I test "total autonomy" which uses what has been considered the internality of the discipline to represent the futility of formal and functional strategies in social domain and has no other aim than preservation of the discipline and the intellectuality of the profession. Eisenman's account of architectural autonomy fits in this category

Lastly, I conclude by observing how the nihilistic tradition of the Western philosophy has been perpetuated through the machinery of autonomy as a self-critical and self-annihilating apparatus.

AUTONOMY AND THE CULTURE OF REUSE

Seung Ra, Oklahoma State University & Sarah Ra

The idea that a building's form is contingent on its intended function, or 'form follows function', became a foundational principle of 20th century architecture. In 1896, Louis Sullivan wrote, "form ever follows function, and this is the law. Where function does not change, form does not change."[1] But what happens when a building is no longer needed for its intended purpose? A culture of reuse has emerged to respond to this increasingly common scenario, through the adaptive reuse of entire pieces of architecture to the implementation of non-architectural objects into building forms. So the question is raised: should function follow form now? Michael Hays describes the advantage of autonomous forms for reuse, noting the availability of their parts and processes to be recombined.[2]

This argument for autonomy requires an alternative to the design thinking process. A typical design process which begins with function, develops a rational thought, and ends with function, is purely static and tends to produce a linear and predictable outcome. However, if the design process begins without function in mind, but with figurative inspiration, and traverses a pathway of discovery to arrive at a different place, then an active process is born. This alternative process has inherent motion and generates active forms from a nonlinear path. This methodology of utilizing autonomous forms to influence unique outcomes has the potential to influence a generation of new designers.

Therefore, figurative form is needed to broaden student perspective. Within the boundary of Architecture, tectonic (functional) form lies entirely within the enclosure, while figurative (metaphoric) form opens potential. In reality, buildings are functional places, but they can only be inspirational if they come from a place of true exploration. This concept will be explored through a studio project which investigates the outcome of function following form. Students will be challenged to create a matrix for autonomous form generation and expression, utilizing at least one found form or material in order to 'discover' a new function. Not only will function follow form, but students will be challenged to move beyond a simple reapplication, and to transform their selection into an entirely new object. The pathway in this case will be the matrix.

While the forms generated through the project are admittedly contingent on the items selected for the matrix, they have no relationship to a preconceived function. The students' design process is shifted from a static functional exercise to a pathway of discovering new possibilities; from tectonic contingencies to the autonomy possible in figurative form making. The idea of autonomy may seem contradictory in an increasingly interconnected world, but the infinite flexibility and reinvention of autonomous forms have become a necessity to be engaged.

NOTES

1 Sullivan, Louis H. "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered". *Lippincott's Magazine* (March 1896): 403–409.

2 Hays, K. Michael. "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form". *Perspecta*, Vol. 21 (1984): 14-29.

3 Moussavi. Farshid. *The Function of Form*. ACTAR, Harvard Graduate School of Design (October 10, 2009): 12.

MOTION: "Architecture Is No Object."

MODERATOR: TED BROWN, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

In the seemingly post-critical and post-digital world of architecture, there is a movement afloat to (again) interrogate the discipline of architecture–its representational techniques, its constitution of "elements", the limits of its terminology, and the "principals" of its objects. A productive endeavor, it should not presume that exchanges with other disciplines, discourses, and techniques "negate the project of architecture." In the context of global economies and ecologies, the efficacy of architecture depends on both a certain cross-breeding, and a transposition of its practices and project to other problems of design. Architecture is no longer bound as, nor produces an object.

CAFÉ FARGO

Georg Rafailidis, University at Buffalo, SUNY

The sheer speed of cultural production, economic changes and financial pressures force architecture to focus on its own, "autonomous" discipline. Contingent issues like program and business plans, for example, are so short-lived relative to buildings, that they are ineffective means to defining architectural form. An example of architectures which are highly contingent, driven by program and economy, are the big box store and strip mall typologies in the urban periphery.

These buildings are plagued by premature abandonment and demolition. Their physical capacity to last outlives their program-specific form. They fulfill their original program perfectly and economically, but are not able to offer any program-independent spatial qualities that inspire a host of new potential uses.

These short lived, flickering "real world" contingencies, I would argue, are forcing the discipline to turn toward program-independent, long lasting "autonomous" architectural qualities which form a relationship to inhabitants independently from short-lived specific uses, business plans, or cultural developments. Architects should create long-lasting meaning in the built environment within a global economy that operates through business plans that focus on the short-term.

Therefore I'd like to present a small project which emerged out of this desire to design a space organized around more fundamental long lasting spatial qualities, rather than being tailored to a specific program. The project stands as an example of architecture designed as an autonomous object, one that is responsive–not so much to program–but rather to our instinctive relationship to temperature and seasonal changes.

To form space through energy is an age old principle. For example a bonfire offering warmth and light in the center of a cave or yurt, the utilization of bodily warmth of animals to heat a farm house or the central hearth where one could retreat to in winter.

When we were asked to convert a derelict former convenience store into a café, we focused on defining architectural form through the above approach rather than the specificities of a café. The lure of the space had to be something that would be intriguing and useful if the space were to accommodate an office, a studio, an exhibition space, or any number of other potential uses.

The space of the former corner store, built in 1929, is a monolithic brick addition to the corner of a 3-story brick house built around 1880 located in a residential neighborhood of Buffalo, New York.

Typically, for a hospitality space, a large amount of the construction budget goes into mechanical systems that provide a uniform indoor climate throughout the year. We took the opposite approach and transformed these invisible mechanical services into two experiential architectural elements. These elements emphasize the distinct pleasures of summer and winter and critically question the dictum of a uniform indoor temperature. The pleasures–or the experiential dimension -are independent from any specific use, business plan or program.

We built:

1. extra-large operable windows and skylights that provide natural ventilation and passive cooling, and

2. a large-scale, wood burning Kachelofen (masonry heater) which serves as the radiant heat source for the space.

Hardwick Hall (Derbyshire, 1590-97) stood as a case study for the project. This building features a dynamic inhabitation pattern, where occupation is constantly moving between its large fireplaces in winter and back into large bay windows in summer. Similarly, we unfolded the space of Café Fargo between extra-large operable sliding folding windows at the perimeter wall for summer ventilation and a large-scale Kachelofen at the core of the space. The heater wraps around the interior corner of the older house, where café patrons can huddle against the radiant cement surfaces.

Paradoxically, the increased pressures of contemporary contingencies lead to the need for a more autonomous architectural production. Although these contingencies are important and indisputable triggers for this shift, I would join the "Autonomous Object" camp and present our recently completed project as an example of designing program-independent spaces that prioritize fundamental spatial qualities over contingent contents programs and contents.

MOTION: "Architecture Is No Object."

FRIENDLY CHARACTERS: FROM PROJECTIVE TO NARRATIVE
Joseph Altshuler, Rice University

Architecture is an object. Our disciplinary tools, techniques, and vocabulary provide multitudinous ways to craft an object. But it need not be just an object. Architecture could produce objects with a story, shapes with quirks, and forms with attitude and personality. The efficacy of architecture to exist as a discipline and to act in the world depends its capacity to produce objects that have their own subjectivity. Architecture is equally equipped to be a subject.

To discuss the ramifications of architectural subject-objects with specificity, this paper will look closely at Friendly Characters, a project designed by the author for a civic complex in Houston, Texas that aims to enact a narrative architecture practice. Friendly Characters suggests that objects occupying the built environment might become our friends—fictional companions to human subjects that might prod us to feel, characterize, and envisage the world(s) anew. If critical architecture is invested in what architecture means, and if projective architecture buoys what architecture does, narrative architecture leverages an additional third possibility—that what it means is what it does and that how a building looks is intimately linked to how it operates in the world. In particular, the paper will examine four basic architectural tropes (context, form, program, and tone) through the lens of a narrative practice and speculate upon how a friendly modality and a deployment of characters augment the under-standing of each.

1. *Constructing Context:* Narrative architecture constructs its own context, diffusing the dialectic between disciplinary autonomy and engagement with the contingencies of the "real world." Friendly Characters neither "fit in" to their surroundings nor do they ignore them. They set their own terms, implicate each other in spheres of influence that are greater than their individual performances, and welcome each other and their human companions onto an inclusive new playing field.

2. *Familiar Forms:* Narrative architecture unabashedly crafts forms that "look like" something outside the domain of the discipline. Stopping short of pure literalism or reenactment, such strange but familiar forms invite people to project multiple myths and metaphors upon built matter. Friendly Characters is five small buildings that take on the likeness of animate creatures to enable public institutions to communicate a dynamic identity to variegated audiences.

3. *Programmatic Plots:* Narrative architecture stages activities and conjures attitudes that invite its human constituents to sus-pend their disbelief and immerse themselves in pocket worlds of interaction. Each of the five Friendly Characters plays host to a new municipal department that combines a transactional clerk's office with pleasurable social amenities, aiming to induce a state of play and instigate mischief among its swarm of civic subjects.

4. *Terrific Tone:* Like a Wild Thing from the picture book pages of Maurice Sendak, narrative architecture features characters that flicker between cute and terrifying: they're terrific per the original connotation of the word. Like the best of non-condescending children's literature, it

proffers a tone of voice that is neither earnest nor cynical, neither naïve nor ironic. Friendly Characters adopt a sensibility of serious fun and cheeky sincerity to directly make government lovable again and more broadly to model how architecture might invest in optimism to operate politically in the world.

FORM AFTER URBANISM: THE POTENTIAL OF GROSSFORM
Martin Haettasch, University of Texas at Austin

As architecture is setting out to (once again) interrogate the object's conditions and constitutions, 'city' and 'object' still remain largely irreconcilable entities. An exception is the concept of the archipelago city, whose urban impact stems not from control over networks or processes, but from establishing architectural counterpoints to these systems. Introduced in 1977 as the outcome of the Cornell Summer Academy led by German architect O. M. Ungers, The City in the City—Berlin: A Green Archipelago was a radical manifesto with contributions by Rem Koolhaas and others.[1] A reaction to the practice of critical reconstruction and Berlin's decline in population, it has over time attained almost mythical status. Consisting of a series of morphologically pure urban islands that float in a metropolitan void, its promises are enticing: A plan after the master plan, the ultimate vision of a pluralistic cityscape, the dialectical image of urban ideologies, Karlsruhe suspended next to Magnitogorsk...

What is easily overlooked is that this model of diversity-within-unity does not so much rely on a dialectical condition between its ideal fragments, but rather between the 'island' and the 'sea'. The neutral grid upon which the islands float acts as the great equalizer, the shared common ground of the urban enterprise as such. When this civic contract falls prey to privatization, unhindered growth, economic depression or any combination thereof (as is arguably the case in many of today's urban environments), little is left to distinguish the islands from gated communities in a field of post-urban entropy. What we are left with is the island as object itself.

This paper sets out to speculate on the role and potentials of the architectural object in this urban landscape "after the grid", specifically through a return to O. M. Ungers' earlier idea of Grossform.[2] Although meaning 'large Form' in German, Grossform is less about size, but about architectural and formal relationships that enable the diversity-within-unity model within the object itself. I will argue that Grossform–through a combination of programmatic neutrality and formal specificity, can serve as the starting point for a contemporary paradigm in which the architectural object carries renewed relevance beyond its bounded form.

This paradigm will be tested against the city where much of Ungers' thinking originated: The case of the decommissioned airport Berlin Tempelhof will serve as a vehicle through which the Grossform idea is explored. Formally finite (ellipse), programmatically indeterminate (airport/military base/event center + park), and symbolically ambivalent (Nazi Megalomania / Berlin Airlift / Leisure Society), it presents the ideal case of a form-object sui generis that acts upon as well as reacts to the city. A speculative project for the future of Tempelhof will provide supporting materials for the argument.

NOTES

MOTION: "Architecture Is No Object."

1   See here particularly the recent re-issue of the text for a very careful and complete tracing of the genesis of the project: Florian Hertweck, Sebastien Marot (eds.), *The City in the City—Berlin: A Green Archipelago*, Lars Müller, 2013.

2   O.M. Ungers, 'Grossformen im Wohnungsbau', *Veröffentlichungen zur Architektur 5* (Technische Universität Berlin, 1966).

FLEXIBLE CITY: ARCHITECTURE AS INFRASTRUCTURE
Farzana Gandhi, NYIT
Matthias Altwicker, NYIT

In his essay, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," K. Michael Hays defines a critical architecture as one that is simultaneously worldly and self-aware. "Form is understood to be produced (culturally) in a particular time and place, but the origin of the object is not allowed to constrain its meaning." By definition, a flexible architecture anticipates change and adapts to the cultural and socioeconomic factors that make it relevant at each moment in time. This paper argues that it is possible for such architecture to simultaneously maintain autonomy by formally transcending a singular time and circumstantial reality.

The proposed adaptive typology is comprised of inhabitable volume and infrastructure, held separate from one another and allowed to change only within parameters set by the other. This allows each element to operate at full potential for easy internal and external reconfigurations. Here, the infrastructure includes both the underlying network that makes an efficient and productive building possible and the literal framework that makes the reconfigurations of the program come to life. Although continually changing in image, a flexible architecture that is also identifiable by the form of its infrastructure makes possible autonomy and authorship. Acting together, this creates a singular and timeless object.

Formally expressed, a separated infrastructure serves as a guiding context for volumes in flux over time. The rich interior and exterior experiences that result are dependent on the wide variety of spatial relationships that are possible between this skeletal frame and the volumes held within. The authors test this typology in an alternative proposal for the Atlantic Yards site in Brooklyn, NY. The developer's outsized program is housed in volumes that shift within an infrastructural framework of wind turbines, solar arrays and rainwater collectors meeting full energy and water demands for a variety of configurations. Programmatic and contextual relationships can be optimized and each scenario (and resulting image) acts as a snapshot of the cultural forces of its time.

The framework's neutrality allows for nearly infinite possibilities of spatial and programmatic invention. In Delirious New York, Koolhaas argues that the underlying Manhattan grid, although evolved from land optimization, building process, and cost, maintains "sites of programmatic invention and fantasy that fostered complexity and difference." Within an analogous infrastructural "framework," the proposed building typology is arguably just as flexible and rich with possibility as the city itself. A flexible architecture is never without context and thus never 100% flexible. Just as a city's growth and the form it takes depends on a framework of water, sewage, electricity, and transportation systems, a building's growth and the form it takes may depend on a framework of its own distribution systems. Through this discussion of architecture's relationship with infrastructure, the authors aim to argue that that this symbiotic relationship can allow for a critical architecture in this contemporary context, acting between the autonomous and the contingent.

CONSTELLATIONS OF THE IN-BETWEEN: URBAN INTERSTICES AND THE TOPOLOGICAL CITY
Lorinc Vass, University of British Columbia

Over the past decades, the efficacy of architecture to address the urban built environment beyond its immediate scale has diminished. The contemporary discipline faces a divestment from the political concerns of spatial production, often exacerbated by the seductive products of digital media and emerging technologies, which, under the pretext of considering context and optimizing performance, remain subservient to market demands. Architecture needs to reconcile its relationship to the city, engage the contingencies of the urban condition, and, through this process, interrogate its disciplinary tools and methodologies. Amidst the renewed debate between autonomy and contingency, this paper advances a view of architecture not as a producer of autonomous objects inhabited by discrete subjects, but as a participant in the process of subjectivization, in other words, in the spatial and temporal organization of a multiplicity of material and immaterial forces that produce impersonal effects and more-than-human encounters.

In this exploration of contingent subjectivity, the paper turns to constellations of the in-between, that is, to conditions of interstitiality found 'at large' in urban space yet often invisible or unseen. Understood as spatio-temporal intervals in the middle of more legible elements of the city, urban interstices necessitate a rethinking of the predominantly representational models of urbanism and architecture, rooted in a topographical conception of scalar space and linear time. Topology is proposed as an alternative approach that foregrounds spatio-temporal relationships and transformations against distinct objects. While topology has been developed in philosophy, geography and social theory as a methodology for precisely describing the relational qualities of socio-spatial assemblages, in architecture its concepts have for the most part been misguidedly captured as rigid formal operations and language metaphors.

Aimed at a rigorous application of the topological approach to architectural discourse, the paper focuses on a sampling of interstitial conditions located in Metropolitan Vancouver, including sites of contested jurisdiction, hybrid land use, overlaid infrastructure, transient flows and unstable ecologies. Constituting multi-dimensional 'manifolds' of spatial complexity and temporal fluctuation, the intention is to 'unfold' the relationalities, movements and intensities present in these urban spaces through an experimental process of drawing. Constellations of the in-between, the re-drawing of such socio-spatial topologies in turn allow for the possibility of re-materializing the relationship between architecture and the city.

MOTION: "The Architectural Object Gains Internal Coherence and Becomes Instrumental Through Resistance"

MODERATOR: KYLE MILLER

In "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," K. Michael Hays proposes an alternative to the ubiquitous chasm between architecture as an instrument of culture and architecture as an autonomous form. Years later, in "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism," Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting claim that Hays' critical position has become quotidian and propose an evolution towards the projective—developing a theory of architecture that exchanges its indexical, dialectical approach for one that is diagrammatic and atmospheric. We now find ourselves in another pivotal moment, looking for ways out of the established divide between the critical and projective, one that led many emerging designers to choose between either/or: either to retreat into the interstice of dialectical opposition or to eschew the critical project in favor of engaged cultural, social, or political correspondence; to choose between autonomous or contingent. Opposed to compliance, this motion proposes resistance against authoritative disciplinary figures and architectural paradigms, and against authoritative cultural habits and nostalgic memory as the most salient tactic for an architectural object that seeks to operate outside of both the dogmatic and the conciliatory.

SCHINKEL-ISH -FRAGMENTED VERNACULAR VERSUS VOID MIMICRY
Maya Alam, Syracuse University

"From whatever side one approaches things, the ultimate problem turns out in the final analysis to be that of distinction: distinctions between the real and the imaginary, between waking and sleeping, between ignorance and knowledge, etc. -all of them, in short, distinctions in which valid considerations must demonstrate a keen awareness and the demand for resolution."[1]

Roger Caillois speculates in his essay "Mimétisme et la psychasthénie légendaire" (Mimicry and legendary psychasthenia) on the occurrence of a psychosis induced by the loss of boundary between an insectoid organism and its milieu. The key to this observation, according to Caillois, are matters of distinction. Through an extensive tendency to assimilate to its environment an organism starts to define itself through coordinates outside of their own and therefore fails to define the boundaries between what it is and what it is surrounded by. Caillois goes even further with his speculation and compares this state with the one someone diagnosed with schizophrenia might find himself in, a state where self-awareness becomes blurred towards an existence of renunciation.

In "A User's Guide to Entropy" Rosalind Krauss refers to this particular essay but stirs the conversation to the erosion of a clear figure-ground condition and its socio-political implication in the discussion of avant-garde practice, such as the call for the collapse of the barrier separating art from life and Greenberg's definition of the Modernist Painting, that would cancel all separations of figures from their surrounding spaces or backgrounds to produce a continuum unimaginable for our earthly bodies to traverse, but into which we as viewers might easily slide or glide-in an effortless, soaring, purely optical movement.[2]

This paper proposes to revisit the concept of blurry boundary generated by mimicry in order to not only criticize the hysteric practice of architectural imitation particularly found in cities like Berlin but to also propose possible alternatives in contemporary architecture set inside of existing conditions -Bauen im Bestand.[3]

The original Bauakademie, designed by Friedrich Schinkel in 1831 and destroyed after WWII, has been defined by some as the onsets of European modernism. The progressive break from rigid concepts of classicism towards an idea of abstraction in Schinkel's work was rooted in an interest for structural rationalism that evolved from an (...) inclusive, liberal perception of history[4] and a reactionary attitude to zeitgeist.

Klaus Heinrich, a Religion Philosophy professor at the Free University in Berlin frames this attitude as a technique of resistance: "When Schinkel built, he always built against something that already existed. He shifted present opinions; changed the environmental light, modified dispositions of buildings, that were hopelessly tailored for only one singular role; created unanticipated awareness of substructures in the history of genres (...)"[5]

In Berlin, which is crippled by fractured memory and distorted identity, the project of reconstruction and lost landmarks is defined by the need for assimilating through the re-creation of resemblance. Supporters of these projects argue against authenticity in architecture and for a reconstruction of a selective, common memory.[6] The original's aura is so far removed from the final outcome that it defines it as void mimicry, where distinction and boundary are rendered nonexistent.

The concept of a fragmented vernacular builds upon the discussion of estranged entity and collage and proposes a third possibility between mere opposition and imitation. The subconscious idea of the unified whole allows a convergence

MOTION: "The Architectural Object Gains Internal Coherence and Becomes Instrumental Through Resistance"

of Schinkel as a permeable figure, an "-ish" appropriation of itself, a blurry boundary between what was and what will be.

NOTES

1   Caillois, Roger, Mimétisme et la psychasthénie légendaire, trans. by Shepley (October: the First Ten Years, Cambridge, 1936, trans. 1984), p. 17.

2   Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, Formless: A User's Guide to Entropy, October Vol. 78 (MIT Press, New York, 1997), p. 40.

3   "Bauen im Bestand" is an explicit terminology defined by the German fee structure for architects to define a project set in existing conditions Resurrection projects like Berlin's City castle (Stadtschloss Berlin) and Friedrich Schinkel's Bauakademie seem to be particularly suitable to establish a definition of void mimicry in contemporary practice.

4   Neil Levine, Modern Architecture: Representation and Reality (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 101.

5   Klaus Heinrich, Der Architektur ein Bewusstsein ihrer selbst zu geben; (Aachen, Arch+ 219, ARCH+ Verlag GmbH, 2015) p. 07 (translated by author).

6   Didem Ekici, The Surfaces of Memory in Berlin; Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review, Vol. 18, No.1, (Hypertraditions: Tenth International Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, FALL 2006), p. 26.

PROCESS THEN POSITIONS (OR OUR HISTORY AFTER HAYS?)
Maximiliano Spina, SCI-Arc
Jia Gu, UCLA

The question of contingency and autonomy inevitably foregrounds the architectural object as a material and cultural construct whose meaning appear after the fact of its contrivance. This is a received dichotomy in which the spatial and material medium of architecture finds two strains: one which understands itself as a concrete resolution to a cultural net of associations; the other which is trying to find an appropriate aesthetic to its own perceived agency. Between the two strains of architecture, contingency and autonomy (aka structure and agency, context and form) there appears a "third way," one which does not seek to close the gap but instead explores the possibilities of mediation within it.

Let us for a moment put aside our position(s) and instead talk about our set of procedures, specifically by foregrounding our history after Hays. Today's reading of Hay's "Contingency and Autonomy" requires the looping in of new forms of information and a new set of questions — across multiple registers — in order to understand architecture as both an aesthetic exercise and a form of production within a matrix of dynamic forces (economic, corporate, social, cultural, political).

The early 1990's obsession with the computer as a source of operational changes such as new tectonics, new formalism and new means of signification underscores the position of the computer within architecture as a disciplinary tool, an instrument whose processual logic lends itself as easily to the making of blobs and folds, as it does to systems theory and aesthetics. In today's complexity complex (to borrow the title of one recent panel session), the computer is not only a tool for addressing design problems, but is itself a problem of design — a dynamic assembly of "hard" and "soft" systems moving in concert with one another. This describes a transformation of the architectural object as not only a material system mediated through representation but is itself a mediation, producing a constant circulation of readings between technical "real" objects and the cultural practices surrounding the making of these objects.

This is a proposition of the architectural object which not only signifies, but multiplies — a discursive notion that architecture (in its multiplicity of forms and formalism, tools and instruments, process and modes of production) contains multiple overlapping technical, visual and discursive effects. Within this new problem of design, we also see the articulation of new modes of production, where the very tools and instruments embedded within the design process become excavated as design problems of their own. To this end, we are producing our own contingencies through our own instruments of knowledge (through processes, scripts, tool paths, instruments, mode of production), which can also be considered a form of autonomy. The paper will present a set of working methods which does not seek to narrow the interface between contingency and autonomy, but instead attempt re-articulate this interface between the two strains of thought as itself a productive instrument of the architectural design process.

SIMULATING PARADOXES
Jason Van Nest, NYIT
Mathew Ford, NYIT

In retrospect, the original discussion of architecture as an "autonomous discipline" and/or "cultural product" resulted from a misreading of architects' medium of ideation. This paper aims to describe that original discussion as the natural byproduct of a doublymediated profession, then describe how a shift in architectural production from Representation to Simulation will relieve architects of that misreading, and finally posit that this relief will reveal the crisis of meaning originally concealed by representations.

Architecture became doublymediated as a result of Alberti's project; he positioned the act of designing a building as separate from making the building.[1] That project situated the act of making drawings (representations) in concert with the act of designing (doing architecture).

Debates about meaning "autonomous discipline" and/or "cultural product" result when architecture was produced as drawings* in the paradigm of Representation. Because the pen is twice removed from the building (and the labor of building), it was impossible to cleanly categorize operations in the medium of architecture from operations in the medium of drawing both were presented in the work.

MOTION: "The Architectural Object Gains Internal Coherence and Becomes Instrumental Through Resistance"

Authors like Sheer[2] and Bernstein[3] convincingly detail how architectural idea production is shifting towards Simulation and away from Representation. With this shift, the (external) tools of cultural influence are immediately recognizable. Daylight Analysis, Cost Estimates, Structural Load Calculation are revealed as accounting data to be harvested in service of profit. So much so, that these "plug-in" tools have become commodities; they are wielded by non-architects; they threaten the livelihood of "practicing architects" by giving this algorithmic control of the designer to client representatives or construction managers.

The shift to Simulation does not just reveal these cultural influences as algorithms and thus allows their denial but it allows fundamental questions of the simulation, like, "What does the 'Wall button' do?" …and… "Why does the 'Door button' work that way?" Thus begins the project of affirming Derrida's statement, "architecture is the locus of the metaphysics of presence,"[4] and demonstrate that architecture cannot mean anything other than itself.

That demonstration begins with the architectural equivalent of Bonini's Paradox.[5] (Architectural) models (read: simulations) are only useful as grossly reduced descriptions of a future building. This multidimensional reduction creates two problems:

1. "As a model of a complex system becomes more complete, it becomes less understandable. Alternatively, as a model grows more realistic, it also becomes just as difficult to understand as the real world processes it represents"[6]

2. "Essentially, all models are wrong, but some are useful."[7] As a model of a complex system is trimmed to usefulness, the more meaning is left to the viewer's interpretation, which allows for the original misreadings from the medium of Representation.

… These quotes are from scientists, but they inform architect's position. Specifically, this spectrum between simulation and reality reveals what Representation never could: that Simulation offers almost all representations simultaneously.

The simultaneous embodiment of all representations creates the crisis of meaning that the "autonomous discipline" and/or "cultural product" arguments could not reach. This crisis is addressed in two ways: either Simulation requires the architect to define the relationships that are used to represent the future project thereby question all types representation, or that Simulation achieves a doubling of the real object, and performs as a simulacrum for architecture.[8] Both remind architects of Alfred Korzybski's important warning: that "the map is not the territory."[9] and we must transition our focus from the page and back onto the building.

The motion statement for our group is: "The architectural object gains internal coherence and becomes instrumental through resistance" and its opposition "compliance". This paper accepts the paradigm shift from Representation to Simulation. Once the "autonomous" and "contingent" in Representation have been decoupled in Simulation, what motivates steps in the design process become clearer: is a design move intended to attend to a contingency like minimizing energy usage or solving a programmatic relationship, or are we creating a spatial relationship of parts (autonomy) that could challenge given expectations? Our response to the motion is: some of both.

A pragmatic combination of compliance and resistance makes an architectural object most instrumental. Compliance with contingencies (like energy efficiencies and cost effectiveness) are needed so the object can be built and visitors able to experience it. Resistance to conventional spatial organizations challenging authoritative cultural habits is one of Architecture's greatest cultural values. For greatest efficacy, the architectural object should leverage both these areas.

*See Perfect Acts of Architecture, Choral Works, etc.

NOTES

1. *De re Aedificatoria*, by Leon Battista Alberti, 1452.

2. *The Death of Drawing: Architecture in the Age of Simulation*, by David Ross Scheer, 2014.

3. "BIM: Practice Context and Implications for the Academy" in *BIM in Academia* edited by Deamer & Bernstein, 2011.

4. "Written into the Void" in *Written Into the Void: Selected Writings* (pg 82) by Peter Eisenman, 2007.

5. "Simulation of information and decision systems in the firm," by Charles Bonini, 1963.

6. *Computer Simulation of Human Behaviour*, by John Dutton, 1971.

7. *Empirical Model Building and Response Surfaces* (pg 424), by George Box, 1987.

8. *Simulacra and Simulation*, by Jean Baudrillard, 1981.

9. "A Non-Aristotelian System and its Necessity for Rigour in Mathematics and Physics", a paper presented before the American Mathematical Society at the New Orleans Conference, 1931.

PROJECTIVE GEOMETRIES PROJECTIVE FICTIONS: READING ROBIN EVANS

Jeremy Voorhees, Temple University

Robin Evans' research on drawing cemented his status as an historian capable of synthesizing meticulous and rigorous studies of geometry toward architecture's imaginative ends. In the P*rojective Cast and Translations from Drawing to Building*, he enlists architectural representations to not only identify geometric possibilities, but to project through them to their potential spatial effects. While considerable contemporary scholarship has revisited these questions of drawing, less well studied is his enlistment of a concomitant speculative device: literature.

Although appearing frequently in his writings, literature is most explicitly deployed in "Figures, Doors and Passages." "Take the portrayal of human figures and take house plans for a given time and place: look at them together

MOTION: "The Architectural Object Gains Internal Coherence and Becomes Instrumental Through Resistance"

as evidence of a way of life, and the coupling between everyday conduct and architectural organization may become more lucid." Leveraging his audience's ability to read circulation, sequence, adjacency, and view from the architectural plan, Evans cites courtesy books, biographies, and novels to describe human figures, their social life, and their respective domestic spaces. In so doing Evans heightens our awareness of the sympathetic affinities between configuration and culture without ever suggesting a causal or positivist relationship.

As explicit as he is in describing his methodology, he is equally clear about the difference between architecture and literature and the conditions for their concerted speculation. Published in 1978, Evans bracketed his use of writings by what he saw as an overt attempt to conflate architecture and literature, via Hedjuk's poetics and Eisenman's semiotics. Conscientious that his work would neither support a romantic or lyrical underpinning to architecture nor a critical self-referentiality, Evans insisted that the coupling of these two different forms of knowledge would provide "evidence of a way of life."

The current resurgence of literature, fiction, and narrative in architectural discourse deserve equally nuanced and compelling parameters.

This paper will examine the contemporary appropriation of literature, fiction, and writing as complementary modes of architectural speculation. Using Jill Stoner's *Toward a Minor Architecture*, Jimenez Lai's *Sociopaths*, and Lindsay Bremner's *Writing the City into Being to identify* three similar yet divergent strategies, it will argue for the construction of conditions, expectations, and qualifications that enjoin the projective to the real through architecture's disciplinary approach to drawing and representation.

While Evans' use of literature is consciously projective (rather than critical), his selection of writings outside of (rather than internal to) architecture was equally deliberate. This matrix of projective/critical and outside/inside will serve as heuristic device to compare the strategies and putative effects of Evans, Stoner, Bremner, and Lai.

NOTES

1   Evans, Robin. 2011. "Figures, Doors and Passages." in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays*. 54-90, London: Architectural Association Publications. Originally published in *Architectural Design*, vol. 48, no. 4, 1978, 267-78.

FRIDAY

MOTION: "In the Digital Age of Architecture, Internet of Things (IoT) and Open Innovation (OI) Are the Future Systems of the Architectural Object"

MODERATOR: WENDY FOK, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Time Magazine, had named the "Person of the Year" to "YOU" (the crowd) in 2006, due to the infinite potentials of the thousands and millions of "you's" who control the media and financing within the new digital democracy. These same citizens of digital innovation create the new platforms—seen in the early beta developments of Kickstarter, Twitter, Wikipedia, and Facebook—and contribute to the manipulation of international exchange of information and power, creating value propositions beyond the traditional product complexity of the market of ideas and commodity, into the sharing economy. Peer exchange and crowd organizational strategy will be used to innovate the built environment, and it is pertinent for architecture and construction industry to recognize and benefit from this emergence. Drawing on computer science, and the Internet of Things (IoT) approach, the field of architecture has much to gain from the aspect of object-oriented programming to collaborative online platforms, to the inherit project and strategic management of deliverable data sets. Relatively speaking, both computer science and architecture have an interrelated nature and historical partnership of conceptually sharing and borrowing from each other.

What are the objectives of Open Innovation in the Digital Age of Architecture? How are these classifications of management systems, open systems, and free (autonomous) movement part of the larger field of architecture and the construction industry? What are the benefits and hindrances of these forms of innovation?

VIRTUAL ARCHITECTURE AS POLITICAL POSSIBILITY
Adrian Blackwell, University of Waterloo

Aesthetic autonomy is a confusing concept because of its two very different uses. In both cases it suggests that the boundaries of a given discipline allow for a pure experiment freed from the social and political boundaries of a given society, but on one hand this implies a retreat from political engagement, a pursuit of art for art's sake, and on the other it promises to experiment with a life beyond the current political conditions and in this sense it acts as a reservoir of hope for a different future. These two forms of autonomy, one essentially locked in the present and the other utopian, have very different functions and stakes. The same is true of the contingent object, on the one hand the contingent object answers a call for management, and architecture becomes a tool of environmental optimization, playing into contemporary business strategy, on the other contingency opens up uncertainty about the contemporary regime of economic governance and opens potentials for resistance to the status quo of neoliberal competition. In the face of contemporary capitalism's growing wealth polarizations and environmental devastation, the terms of the debate need to shifted, from degrees of autonomy and contingency to the relative potential for a given piece of architecture to open up as yet unseen political possibilities.

Gilles Deleuze's concept of the virtual, and Henri Lefebvre's writing on urbanism, together invite speculation on what a virtual object might be. For Deleuze the virtual is real, but not possible, which suggests that the virtual is impossible, something which cannot yet be imagined. Although the virtual is not actual (present), the two are linked in a circuit of actualization and virtualization, reterritorialization and deterritorialization. A virtual architectural object is at once autonomous, as it is disconnected from the present, and entirely contingent, because it exists as pure potentiality. Architecture can engage the virtual at different points in the circuit of actualization/virtualization, loosening the political boundaries and frictions that many examples of both autonomous and contingent architecture produce. Lefebvre's argument that the urban needs to be considered as a virtual object reinforces Deleuze's line of reasoning, arguing that the urban should be seen as a way of thinking about the city, but also that this thinking must engage its possible futures, so as to be able to produce them differently. This paper will interrogate examples of contemporary architecture that act as virtual objects, producing new political and economic potentials in the process.

CRITICAL AUTONOMY: THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT IN THE AGE OF OPEN SOURCE
Jaya Beange, University of Manitoba

My research addresses the democratization of design and production and the implications this has for architecture. An increasingly collaborative approach to sharing information, coupled with the accessibility of new technology, such as 3D printers, CNC machines and laser cutters, has given the general public the ability to generate and straightforwardly translate designs into finished products, giving millions access to a process that has in the last century been restricted to a limited number of designers and manufacturers.

MOTION: "In the Digital Age of Architecture, Internet of Things (IoT) and Open Innovation (OI) Are the Future Systems of the Architectural Object"

"Open Source" has served as a catalyst for a new generation of collaborative and universally accessible design, which has established itself as an alternative to the proprietary approach of exchanging information. Despite its prevalence to this day, I question whether the established, proprietary model is sustainable. The public will naturally be drawn to freely available designs for their cost-effectiveness. Additionally, because this type of global collaboration draws upon a wide range of input, it can be innovative, adaptable, and potentially of a higher quality than what an individual could achieve working independently. This presents a significant challenge to the autonomy of the architectural profession as we know it.

To be sure, Open Source design is not without potential flaws. Ethical questions of neutrality and responsibility will need to be carefully considered. The digital community champions universal accessibility, but does not evaluate its ends or uphold any specific ethical principles. It can offer no serious critique, for example, of Cody Wilson's 3D-printable gun. Open Source designs can be reproduced by a huge number of people worldwide, yet on this scale they become almost impossible to regulate.

There is also the danger that designs will be implemented in a generic manner without properly accounting for context. And yet, shared design could develop in the opposite way, such that it becomes infinitely customizable and adaptable to any context, within a set of suggested parameters. As design software becomes increasingly user friendly, it is growing easier for the amateur to design high quality original work. Digital cameras are an obvious example, wherein the integration of technology and software has allowed the average user to produce work that reflects the nuances of the art form. As the public gains access to highly sophisticated technology and programming, it becomes more difficult to distinguish between the professional and the amateur.

Architecture must recognize that the proprietary approach is not sustainable in this new context and must rise to the challenge by adopting a more collaborative approach and by clearly articulating its unique ability to synthesize existing ideas and act as a regulating body if it wishes to remain relevant in the age of Open Source.

THE PER[FORM]ANCE OF MEDIATED ENVIRONMENTS
Amber Bartosh, Syracuse University

Today's physical world is becoming increasingly informed and shaped by the virtual and the digital. Everyday activities are largely removed from specific edifices or gravity-bound sites and increasingly managed through electronic gadgetry and websites.

Depositing a check in the bank required carrying a piece of paper to a built structure, but now it is simply a matter of some finger taps and a photograph. As virtual reality becomes more pervasive it will progressively challenge the need or desire for distinctive, identifiable and unyielding physical space.

Architectural form in the digital condition will not evaporate but it will increasingly be informed by contingencies rather than individual authorship.

To particularize this condition the term **"Mediated Environments"** is used. As described by Michael Fox and Miles Kemp in *Interactive Architecture* (2009), "Mediated environments intervene, reconcile, arbitrate deficiencies and extend capabilities."

How design and construction tools overlap between the virtual and physical and how space might increasingly be defined through digital media, is the subject of the presented research. To reconsider the relationship between technology and form, a series of research was done utilizing two distinct methodologies.

Method 1 generated prototypes of interactive environments to test how performative and responsive architecture alters the determination of form when the form's physical condition is digitally controlled. Using sensor technology, digital modeling, Grasshopper parametric software, Arduino open source micro-controller, and Firefly as a bridging tool, the prototypes were designed and envisioned through three different scales and mediums: an interactive and kinetically responsive physical model, a dynamically reactive digital model, and a speculative but uniquely sited project

Method 2 explored the more intangible expression of digital media as a material for defining space. Through projection mapping, animation, and virtual reality viewers the clear separation between the physical and the virtual is blurred so that the digital media is as much or more a demarcation of form as the built environment.

This research resulted in an extended awareness of the means by which design concepts might be realized by embracing the digital and virtual not just as tools for designing form, but as a medium for representation, manifestation and interaction with form. Mediated environments extend the aptitude of architectural realization through virtual simulation, immersive animations, and physically interactive environments.

The de-emphasis of the physical environment in favor of a virtual one may initially seem like a cause for concern for architects; however, the more optimistic vision recognizes that virtual environments and digital tools create an entirely new realm by which, for which, and through which the architect may practice. It is a recognition of changing realities that provoke and necessitate innovative, dynamic conditions.

MOTION: "The Contingent Object Has Shed the Dialectical Straitjacket of Architectural Theory by Embracing the Diverse Processes of Practice."

MODERATOR: MARTIN HAETTASCH, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Ever since Vitruvius, theories of architecture have served as justifications as well as guidelines for architectural actions. In a last breath of Marxist critique the project of autonomy positioned the formal object at a critical distance from the networks and flows of capitalism. The contingent object embraces these conditions hoping to have some social impact. Concerned with the processes that make architecture come into existence rather than internal formal rules, its conversations have shifted outside traditional disciplinary discourse. So what–if any -is the place of theory in this new configuration? Does architecture still need theory? Does the freedom from theoretical constraints allow for a much more agile and effective social agency? Are larger frameworks for action still desirable, is architecture even still able to formulate these frameworks? Or is the contingent object itself nothing but a theoretical hoax: the logical disciplinary and dialectic reaction to decades in the attic of autonomy.

INTERSTICE AND SYMBIOSIS: THE AUTONOMY/CONTINGENCY MASH-UP
Ingrid Strong, Wentworth Institute of Technology

K. Michael Hays declares, in his introduction to the *Oppositions Reader*,

"One should not ask whether architecture is autonomous, or whether it can willfully be made so, but rather how it can be that the question arises in the first place, what kind of situation allows for architecture to worry about itself to this degree."[1]

This 'worry', as Hays puts it, recently beset the faculty of the architecture department at the Institute where I teach. When a committee working on revamping curricula proposed to expand the description for a new Adaptive Interventions minor, the phrase "contingent conditions" became a flash point for certain faculty. One member asserted that there "is no such thing as contingency in architecture;" this seemed worth examining further. As a result, I crafted a junior level seminar entitled "Contingency and its Implications for Architecture."

In order to comprehend architecture as an "Instrument of Culture"[2] anthropology and place attachment theory in psychology, as well as the social act of making become key precepts. Architectural agency in response to humanitarian and environmental crises push further into the mainstream now than they did 30 years ago, when Hays wrote *Critical Architecture*. Current architectural tasks of Humanitarian Design and Environmental Resilience respond to global urgencies: Displacement of millions is seen as one of the architect's purviews to resolve, as is environmental stewardship. And yet, beauty as a social value also matters.

I propose that there is a necessary, if tense, symbiosis between the autonomous and the contingent that enlivens the artifacts of architecture. This perhaps updates the 'challenge' of *Critical Architecture* that Hays identifies. As synthetic thinkers, architects are uniquely poised to deal with symbioses; perhaps dialectical thinking between the autonomous and the contingent object is outdated. Instead, a mash-up of the two can navigate between the purported purity of autonomy, and contingency in all of its messiness. In the same way that, 30 years ago, Hays declared a 'Critical Architecture' as a place between the two, now there are

such examples as Landscape Urbanism and Heroic Architecture—a very lofty and socially engaging term--which attempts to redefine Brutalism retrospectively. Humans, which include theorists as well as 'activists', bring contingencies of history, place, meaning, and shelter to the discourse.

Throughout the semester of the Junior level course, the question became, what is NOT contingent, ultimately? By virtue of the relative permanence of the architectural object over time, does that not too become both contingent AND a point on which to generate theories anew?

Ultimately, architecture's strength is in acknowledging potentials in the symbiotic relationship. Hays settled the worry thirty years ago, by positioning culture and form under the umbrella of Critical Architecture. Then as now, critical architecture still speaks certain universal truths: We need beauty and humanity with ethical function; we must 'worry' about it all.

NOTES

1. Hays, K. Michael, ed., *Oppositions Reader*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1998, p.ix.

2. Hays, K. Michael, Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form *Perspecta,* Vol. 21, 1984. p.16.

DESIGNED AND EMERGENT TECTONICS: RESITUATING ARCHITECTURAL KNOWLEDGE
Sophia Psarra, Bartlett School of Architecture

Koolhaas' 2014 Biennale (*The Elements*) posed architecture as authorless production. Focusing on how architecture and the city are developed globally, The Elements suggest that we need to understand them as assemblages of components, markets and infrastructures . Assemblages are bottom-up and blind to the eventual outcome of the design. In contrast, the artistic model of architecture is top-down clear in its intentions but blind to evolutionary process. The exhibition drew attention to the gap between buildings that

MOTION: "The Contingent Object Has Shed the Dialectical Straitjacket of Architectural Theory by Embracing the Diverse Processes of Practice."

are architecturally conceived and those that are dispersed to multiple points of production. From the interaction of planning codes with urban plots and infrastructures to informal urbanization there is a growing gap between the artistic aspirations of architects and the systemic operation of architecture as it happens on the ground.

In the 1970s Tafuri claimed that capitalism stripped architecture of its ideological purpose. Today the split between the architectural avant-garde, land values and profit has turned architecture to 'form without utopia' . But if architecture has social significance, how can we address the separation between mindful buildings and mindless production? This presentation addresses this question through a design studio in Rocinha, one of Rio de Janeiro's informal settlements, exploring approaches to improve life in the favelas and overcome such polarizations . Combining analytical and design-based research, we propose that in order to channel the transformative potential of dwellers we need a different model of architecture. This model is based on negotiations between diverse types of agencies, from architects, users and social groups to socio-spatial infrastructures. Compared with the Albertian model of authorial centralization, this model has less control over production, but gains in reclaiming architectural agency through collaboration and interaction.

ARCHITECTURE OUT OF THE BOUDOIR?
Ole Fischer, University of Utah

After 1968 the Italian Marxist historian Manfredo Tafuri took stock of the potential of modern architectural and urban design to change society with the plan: his negative assessment of architectural design to imagine and provide societal change and his retreat into history as the only legitimate form of criticism has had wide ranging effects on the theory, practice and education of architecture—especially in the United States.

Taking the current financial and social crisis in the West, how can architecture be resistant to the omnipresence of global capitalism and consumerist culture? Since crisis is an existential part of the process of capitalism, critical gestures are internalized, recycled and exploited as formal novelty and comment ("recuperation"), such as urban guerilla tactics for product placement and branding, or Situationist experiments of the 1960s for staging urbanity and creating events. However, if utopian planning, even in actually existing socialism, has not been able to project an architectural and urban alternative to imperialist representations of power and capitalist consumer culture, but instead has reproduced totalitarian environments, does this mean that a critical practice in architecture is as much "falsified" as scientific Marxism? What about El Lisitzky's experimental Cloud Iron, exploring an architecture that articulates communal ownership of the ground and the new economic base of society? Or the examples listed by Tafuri, the "Siedlungen" of the Weimar Republic, the urban workers housing blocks of "Red Vienna", the parks and urban redevelopments of Frederic L. Olmsted, all taking a social stance within the system?

Using the recent critical/projective debate, this paper will discuss Tafuri's examples together with giving a critical re-evaluation of his seminal text "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir", that has been nothing less than a fundamental critique of the self-obsessed formalism and linguistic play of the neo-avantgarde

of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Instead of the autonomy of architecture within the discipline that constitutes a "critical" project in distance from society and culture, this paper will argue for the architecture of autonomy as a form of practice that focuses on social performance, forces and effects.

MOTION: "The Object's Whole Is Nothing Without Its Parts"

MODERATOR: KORY BIEG, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

At what point is an object an object? Or what makes an object a whole or just a part of something larger? In lieu of current theoretical discourse around objects and the detachment of subject from objecthood, one has to wonder where one draws the line. We talk openly about objects, what they are made of, how they are made, what surrounds them, but when it comes to an object's design and more so, its designation, we quickly settle into our camps–the figural or the tectonic. Objects are identified by their form and what they are, or the assemblage of a bunch of parts and the networks that bind them. In architecture, this is even more problematic and, hopefully, more controversial.

CASTING CALL: SPATIAL IMPRESSIONS IN THE WORK OF RACHEL WHITEREAD
Peter Wong, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

For more than 20 years, Rachel Whiteread has situated her sculpture inside the realm of architecture. Her constructions elicit a connection between: things and space, matter and memory, assemblage and wholeness by drawing us toward a reciprocal relationship between objects and their settings. Her chosen means of casting solids from ready-made objects reflect a process of visual estrangement that is dependent on the original artifact. The space beneath a table, the volume of a water tank, or the hollow undersides of a porcelain sink serve as examples of a technique that aligns objet-trouvé wit with a reverence for the everyday. The products of this method, now rendered as space, acquire their own autonomous presence as the formwork of things is replaced by space as it solidifies and congeals. The effect is both reliant and independent, familiar yet strange.

Much of the writing about Whiteread's work occurs in the form of art criticism and exhibition reviews. Her work is frequently under scrutiny, fueled by the popular press and those holding strict values and expectations of public art. Little is mentioned of the architectural relevance of her process, though her more controversial pieces are derived from buildings themselves–e,g, the casting of surfaces (Floor, 1995), rooms (*Ghost*, 1990 and *The Nameless Library*, 2000), or entire buildings (House, 1993). From an architect's perspective, Whiteread offers an unsettling interpretation of architectural space, one that is dependent on filling space to the brim, barring life from entering or holding it in suspended animation from within.

This paper argues that architectural form, whether fashioned from contingencies or autonomous acts, has reached a saturation point in architectural criticism. The work of Whiteread helps forge an alternative reading that embraces the object-oriented methods inherent in design by turning the tables on our fascination of figural form and the obsession of substance. The essay draws upon Whiteread's *Nameless Library* project for Judenplatz in Vienna as well as ideas put forth by Luigi Moretti in his 1953 essay on the "Structures and Sequences of Spaces." It concludes with experimental work that attempts to use Whiteread's method to better understand the figural and material attributes of architectural space.

A MATTER OF TOLERANCE
Genevieve Baudoin, Kansas State University

Tolerance lies at the crux between the contingencies of context and autonomous production. It is, as Vittorio Gregotti states, "…false to think that culture of industry or building…could solve the problem of detailing; this might be convenient or economic to the architect, but lead to the unprecedented downfall of architecture." The problem of detailing lies, in part, on understanding that the detail, from its representation to its actualization, is the architecture: tolerance is what transpires in the transformation. It is a by-product of the disciplinary autonomy of architecture that is created out of understanding contingency: designing with it is the making of architecture. The whole is no thing without its parts.

The tectonic, as Kenneth Frampton writes, "…lies suspended between a series of opposites, above all between the ontological and the representational." The design of details is thus suspended between what it is and its appearance. What is crucial to consider in this relationship is that the construction of those details must be designed in any work of architecture. In the translation from drawing to built work, the design must accommodate reality: the imprecision of equipment, humans, materials, and site. The literal gaps given over to "reality" are what we understand as tolerances.

Tolerance exists between the lines of a drawing, but it is virtually the only way to ensure a building can be created on site. It can also be seen as something outside the control of the architect–a building is contingent on the tolerances supplied by manufacturers and agreed upon with contractors. As Francesca Hughes writes on the Architecture of Error, "Architectural practice is all about serial translation and serial approximation, whose action must nonetheless remain invisible if it is to serve up the seamless correspondence between idea and form, drawn or built, it promises." The gymnastics of designing for or with tolerance is typically done behind the scenes so that the representation of the building (idea) and the building (form) appear the same.

This essay will explore architects with a particular insight into tolerance, and who seek to maintain control of the parameters of variability inherent to the design of construction through details. The work of architects including SHoP, KieranTimberlake, and Frank Gehry will be considered for their

MOTION: "The Object's Whole Is Nothing Without Its Parts"

attitude towards and understanding of the nature of tolerance. Their work will be studied from built object back through the design process, examining the ways in which tolerance is tied to tectonic expression, where the parts (and what lies between them) facilitates the whole.

NOTES

1   Vittorio Gregotti, "The Exercise of Detailing," in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthonology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, Kate Nesbitt ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 497.

2   Kenneth Frampton, "Rappel à l'Ordre, the Case for the Tectonic," in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthonology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, Kate Nesbitt ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 527.

3   Francesca Hughes, *The Architecture of Error: Matter, Measure, and the Misadventures of Precision* (Camridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 12.

EQUIPMENT FREE
Aaron Forrest, RISD
Yasmin Vobis, RISD

"In the film studio the apparatus has penetrated so deeply into reality that a pure view of that reality, free of the foreign body of equipment, is the result of a special procedure ...The equipment-free aspect of reality has here become the height of artifice, and the vision of immediate reality the Blue Flower in the land of technology."

—Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility."

Architecture is in a position now where construction is nearly perfectly seamless. Gone are the days where construction technique determined form, and thus could be a driver of the creative process via the familiar form of constraint.

There are now fewer restrictions on the form of the built object than ever before. And when those objects are complete, they are smooth and nearly perfect. They appear magical, as if they materialized from nothing, and that no sweat was expended in their production. Today architecture is comparable to the state of film at the time that Walter Benjamin wrote his words. Architecture is becoming an equipment-free medium, the height of artifice. And the evidence of its construction is that Blue Flower, the rare discontinuity for viewers to track on IMDB and other enthusiast websites.

Images are not pure deception. They construct new worlds, and leave traces of that construction in their details. The construction, both literal and metaphorical, of these built images has entered new terrain that is pushing us towards a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of the building as both an intellectual challenge and as a highly integrated constructed environment that itself can provide new models for living, for interaction, and for perception.

And though it may seem that this would render making obsolete, making is instead more important than ever. These new ways of working require engagement from the designer with the question of making from start to finish -from project conception through construction. In this model, technical specificity has the potential to be a conceptual generator rather than an afterthought.

With this in mind, we will present a recent pavilion designed and built from Cross-Laminated Timber that exhibits the promise of this new equipment-free reality. Here, heavy timber is transformed from a material overwrought with tectonic significance to something light, monolithic, and abstract. We will show how a fully integrated design, fabrication, and installation process can produce a project firmly rooted in both spatial and technical concepts, without resorting to a fetishization of that process or its material basis.

THE FINITE SET
Troy Schaum, Rice University

This paper analyzes the emergence of a specific logic for organizing architectural form by focusing on the idea of the "finite set," as opposed to the more common understanding of multiplicity as unbounded and unlimited serial-ity. Certain examples in the late 20th-century practices of Donald Judd and Robert Morris make this clearly drawn formal distinction. Yet this paper suggests that the logic of the finite set is not limited to a formal ambition, and investigates how form in architecture and its representations (projective and descriptive) can broaden our under-standing of place as well as reframe the terms for intervening in cities. This is an especially acute question when encountering the contemporary city, often characterized by a disintegration of traditional models of urban organization and local context. Of course, the framing of the city through sets of objects within a charged framework is not an entirely new method; we can look to Piranesi's Campo Marzio or John Hejduk's Berlin Masques to trace its legacy. What is new is that the well-defined city context of Rome or Berlin has been replaced by the extensive, almost end-less urbanism of Taipei and Detroit. However there is an important strategy in those earlier projects that plays the singular moment against the extensive continuity in the city in a way that affords multiple urban subjectivities—each on its own terms. It is this strategy that remains at the core of this paper on form and finite sets. To put the question in other terms, these projects oscillate between global autonomy and local specificity to rupture those distinctions and allow for the emergence of new individuated and collective modes of inhabiting the relentlessly expansive city. In this paper, I trace a history of this tendency to the set by analyzing several examples of this logic in my own work as well as in the contemporary projects of MOS, Aranda/Lasch and Schaum/Shieh among others. By offering an alternative way of thinking about architectural form, the paper also seeks to generate a new definition of multiplicity.

MOTION: "Aesthetics (of Objects and Territories Alike) Will Rescue us From the Determinism of Systems Thinking."

MODERATOR: JANETTE KIM, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Systems thinking has enabled architects and landscape architects to activate the inter-reliant biological and geomorphological conditions linked to climate change. And yet, the dominant logic of self-organization and optimization has left little room for human judgment. Will the turn to aesthetic production recover a role for politics and rhetoric in design, as tools of both persuasion and imagination? Or do systems remain critical to design's effectiveness and influence? In either case, what are the criteria for expression or contingency? Within what world are buildings and territories alike autonomous, and on what are they contingent?"

GEOGRAPHIC OBJECT
Neyran Turan, Rice University

Performance is the new gold. Amidst contemporary environmental, political and economic instabilities, emphasis on performance—evident through the positivistic tone of environmental efficiencies (sustainability) or the prescriptive tendency of techno-natural processes (bio-mimicry of computer generated design)—informs much of architectural thinking today. Presented as a relational aesthetics of processes and data, performance-driven systemic thinking is overtaking us.

Contemporary conceptions of environmental and systemic thinking took their current shape in the 1990s. Despite sharing a similar sympathy with their postwar counterparts for indeterminacy and the dissolution of buildings, the '90s position against the fixity and permanence of objects had a fundamentally different reasoning: it was a reactionary response to the representational and symbolic aspects of postmodern architecture. Rather than a project of representation, which devoted itself to the object, this conception of systemic architecture provided an alternative focus on the fluidity and connectivity of relational systems and flows around the object. The promise was that this approach would not only liberate the material and the performative attributes of the city, but also would provide a more realist and instrumental role for architecture. These ideas have proliferated in architecture discourse since then. And after more than two decades, however, especially with the ubiquity of discussions on sustainability and climate change, a far more positivistic and managerial tone has been applied to the systems of the environment. The material and the performative have mutated into an idea about efficiency, as measures to be met and maintained.

The essay attempts to provide an alternative to the dominant interpretations of systemic thinking in architecture – that which emphasize environmental contingency over aesthetic resolution. It argues that a renewed dialogue for the concepts of environment and object are necessary in architecture and proposes the idea of the geographic as an alternative framework that can provide original interpretations for this dialogue within disciplinary and political levels. Rather than seeing geography as a systemic or managerial phenomenon, the article will elaborate on the idea of the Geographic Object, which aims to speculate on the domain of the object as a political, aesthetic, and material confrontation with the larger forces of the city. Within this formulation, the framework of the Geographic Object will be used to speculate on a new kind of materialism for architecture that sets up renewed relationships between realism and abstraction. The article will end with three projects by the author that deal with these questions through discussions on representation, monumentality and composition.

TOWARD NEW COASTAL FORM
Michael Jefferson, Cornell University

With increased threats brought by sea level rise and climate change, the resiliency of the American coast has rapidly become a territory of architectural and urban debate; effectively, becoming a proxy for the merits of systems thinking and performative design tactics. Yet, surprisingly, the opposite is registered in reality where the utilitarian response of raised housing suggests a priority placed on singular form. Here, the act of elevating serves as the last attempt at securing the architectural object in a degrading environment, albeit in a contorted state. The autonomous nature of these structures, cut off from the ground plane they once inhabited, is pronounced through the obliteration of the site associations they once maintained. The resulting raised house operates as an instrument of aesthetic production, emphatically relinquishing its ground-dwelling contingent relationships in favor of preserving a formal ideal that performs independently rather than as a constituent of a larger whole. Responding to the discordant visions for future broad-scale coastal development and actualized reactionary construction, this paper uses contemporary coastal housing as a surrogate for the critique of the aestheticized object in order to suggest alternative formal procedures capable of performing resiliently.

As an unwitting test-case, coastal housing embodies the criticisms of the autonomous object in behaving as many systems thinkers might fear it would: by absolving itself of its relational responsibilities (and opportunities) and, instead, operating through avoidance. Initially prompted by zoning laws that dictate detachment from the ground, the house is objectified through the act of elevating. The yield is a free floating architecture concerned only with itself and thereby unqualified to deal with any issues outside of itself -particularly those relating to strategies of resilience. Instead, the complexities of resilient urbanism mandate that architectural solutions be imbued with performative function. Such techniques deviate from the self-referential and are typified by infrastructural congruence and co-option as well as resonance across scales.

MOTION: "Aesthetics (of Objects and Territories Alike) Will Rescue us From the Determinism of Systems Thinking."

Rather than generating autonomous (independent) objects that maintain a fidelity to an aesthetic ideal, the field of architecture and urbanism might consider an alternative in revisiting and combining two strategies prevalent in the discourse: the mat-building and landform building. As seen in recent proposals relating to coastal resilience (e.g. Rebuild by Design, MoMA's Rising Currents exhibition, and Structures of Coastal Resilience), architects have chosen to engage the soft infrastructural strategies or couple coastal barriers with social experience. These tactics begin a trajectory towards an ecology of related infrastructures and architectures that form a reliance between inhabitation and defense. Yet these proposals do not yet suggest a syncretic resolution between protective landscapes and the urban experience. Traditionally, the mat-building has offered a technique for negotiating between scales of architecture, transportation networks, and landscape. The weaving of these distinct elements into a heterogeneous fabric develops a porous substrate that operates between architecture and urbanism. This tactic, coupled with resilient infrastructure strategies, magnifies the degree of reliance of the parts to the whole. Can landscape itself begin to weave architecture together, blurring the distinction of above and below and between landscape and built form?

Perhaps the fundamental flaw of the elevated house, and by relation the autonomous object, is that the contingent relationship of architectures of resilience is necessary, but not sufficient. In other words, the raised house satisfies its own preservation but does little to serve as protection for and the fostering of a collective urbanism. Rather, in revisiting mat-building and landform building typologies, an alternative formal model for a performative architecture might be suggested that generates complex associations between dense patterns of urban inhabitation and resilient infrastructures. The essay will conclude with an examination of case studies that demonstrate the formal potentials of the resilient project—those that may arise from the superimposition, negotiation, and intersection of multi-scalar systems and landscapes.

AUTONOMY AND CONTINGENCY IN URBAN CONTEXTS
Jane Wolff, University of Toronto
Derek Hoeferlin, Washington University in St. Louis
Elise Shelley, University of Toronto

This paper will discuss an experiment in urban design teaching that sought to bring together concerns about contingency and autonomy. The endeavour comprised an extended series of architecture, landscape architecture and urban design action/research studios in post-Katrina New Orleans. The goal was to structure conversations among the students (and their instructors) that mediated disciplinary tendencies in one direction or another. It emerged from our observation that the different emphases on technical expertise in design education, which tends to focus on tectonic performance in architecture and on environmental systems performance in landscape architecture, fuels differences with respect to the questions posed by the conference brief: architecture students tend to see design in more autonomous terms, while landscape architecture students feel tied to contextual processes they don't

control. Our ambition was to maintain areas of expertise and to work toward synthetic conversation, since both points of view are essential to the design of urban environments. Post-Katrina New Orleans provided a valuable opportunity for multi-disciplinary conversation because the level of landscape and urban devastation was so high and so comprehensive. Beyond that, significant gaps in information about infrastructure, hydrology and ecology meant that academic research could provide a valuable service. This endeavour involved two multi-disciplinary design faculties and was led by instructors with strong professional connections to the situation.

Over approximately half a dozen years of teaching and research, we observed consistent trends among the students: in architecture studios, products were oriented toward the development of objects at a high level of formal resolution, and in landscape studios, products were oriented toward the choreography of environmental processes. During the analytical phases of the studios, when students all worked from the same base information, the architecture students made physical models—objects representing a moment in time—as visualization tools; the landscape students made narrative drawings— sequences telling a story across time—as visualization tools. Both directions of work were necessary to understanding the site; each illuminated the other; both informed design projects among all the students; and together, they enabled rich conversations among students when they came together for field work. These differences carried through the design phase of the studios. Architecture students tended to make projects that were highly resolved formally but addressed issues of time and environmental processes as abstractions. Landscape students' projects, driven by scripts for environmental processes, represented time and change effectively but were not fully developed formally. The exercise presented an important challenge for teachers who address urban design problems: having acknowledged that the technical concerns of both landscape architecture and architecture are essential to resilient, successful urban environments, how can design schools develop structures that include both disciplines with an equal voice?

MOTION: "Architectural Practice Can Only Shake the Momentum of Today's Political Economy by Focusing on the Careful Reconfiguration of Existing Architectural Objects."

MODERATOR: ADRIAN BLACKWELL, UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

The capitalist economy is a voracious machine, whose ever-repeating foundation is the exploitation of cheap labor and the appropriation of cheap natures. In the face of this violent reality, architecture's fascination with new materials and forms appears as little more than the expansion of demand for these cheap commodities and a tacit acceptance of the appropriation of nature. One way to refuse this process is by reusing existing materials locally. In architecture this means the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the recycling of materials salvaged from older buildings. This simple act of reuse, short-circuits the endless demand for new materials. This move toward autonomy, constructed on the contingent and specific availability of local resources, also entails reconfiguration of architecture's original symbolic meaning, allowing for a new aesthetic, with power to undermine the status quo.

MAT(T)EREALITY
Nikole Bouchard, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Every year thousands of storms strike our cities like a chain saw, toppling our street trees and destroying thousands more in our urban parks and woodlands. Municipalities across the United States make constant efforts to rid their city streets and parks of tree debris and fallen branches. The *BEEbrane* Project, part of my Mat(t)ereality research, proposes to convert fallen urban tree debris and salvaged wood materials into new homes for Urban Flora and Fauna, with a specific focus on the creation of Honey Bee Habitats. This project takes inspiration from one of the old-est (and most natural) forms of Bee Keeping -a hollowed-out trunk cavity called a Bee Gum -for both its formal and conceptual framework. This form of habitat provides an environment that protects the hives from threatening weather conditions, like rain, wind, frost and snow. The *BEEbrane* reduces urban waste, enhances environmental biodiversity and invites people to experience the ever-changing processes within nature. This thrifty method of construction yields an unpredictable, ever-changing material and physical experience throughout the duration of the Project life-cycle.

The *BEEbrane* is an interdisciplinary project that operates in the space between Architecture, Art and Landscape to create productive Placemaking strategies. The material research, design development and fabrication of The *BEEbrane* requires well-rounded, real-world architectural insight and understanding. The research and design process requires contact and communication with various local organizations to identify, locate, quantify and collect wood waste materials. This includes cor-respondence with a number of local groups, ranging from the City Parks Department, to non-profit Urban Wood Organizations, to Local Lumber Mill Owners who capture tremendous amounts of urban wood waste each year. Additionally, collaborations with area Bee Keepers and Ecologists are an integral part of the design development process. These interdisciplinary discussions then inform the 1-to-1 fabrication of prototypes and ultimately, the fi full-scale Placemaking Intervention.

With this said, the design development and realization of The *BEEbrane* is, as Stan Allen would say, "messy and inconsistent" where the design process is in constant "negotiation with reality". Ultimately, the end result is completely contingent upon the availability of local wood waste resources and the interdisciplinary relationships that are established within the community. The *BEEbrane* Project demands that we work with what's at hand. These contingencies inform the materials that we work with, the economies that we engage and the environments that we create.

Working with these real-world contingencies require Designers to think critically and creatively while developing design ideas that are not self-referential, but instead are of interest to wide-ranging audiences, including Architects, Artists, Industrial Designers, Landscape Architects, Ecologists, Environmentalists, Anthropologists and Garbologists. The *BEEbrane* encourages responsible design and strives to positively impact the community through ecologically sensitive, community-based design interventions that are accessible to all, both physically and intellectually.

MATERIAL CONTINGENCY IN COMPUTATION
James Forren, Dalhousie University

Overcoming the estrangement between digital and material environments has led to a number of innovations integrating material data with digital workflows. These projects, however, often overlook–or reject the legacy of orthographic projection in digital environments. This paper proposes that the legacy of projection, inherited from the disciplines of lofting and stereotomy (disciplines structured by strict material associations), sustains its status as a critical tool of tectonic expression. That it can provoke contemporary methodologies bridging the material-digital gap and serve to facilitate the autonomous direction of contemporary material and labor flows. Through two case studies this paper will demonstrate the leveraging of projective techniques in advanced digital practice to facilitate efficient and accurate bridging of digital and material environments outside the private sector

MOTION: "Architectural Practice Can Only Shake the Momentum Of Today's Political Economy by Focusing on the Careful Reconfiguration of Existing Architectural Objects."

market. Moreover, it will demonstrate projection's necessity within digital practice by virtue of its ability to shape the mental capacity -unique to the architectural imagination -of the scalar disposition of material in space.

THE CITY-HOUSE-MODEL
Dennis Maher, University at Buffalo, SUNY

In his essay "Pots," philosopher Vilém Flusser considers the empty vessel as an object that exemplifies the epistemological problem of "pure form." According to Flusser, the pot is a container that both holds and in-forms. It is the archetypal "immutable idea," within the hollow of which content is shaped and phenomena are made apparent. The pot focusses the tension implicit in the relationship between content and container, and substantiates the necessity of an exchange between that which flows—the water—and that which receives in order to be. For me, contingency in architectural production is something like a continuous filling, emptying and re-filling of Flusser's pot. It is the unending oscillation from a state of fluid unity to the form-giving vessel and back again. In this project-based essay, I examine the relationship between a house and its contents with my eye on the ultimate instability of the space in-between. This work engages two of the most sacrosanct of architectural objects: the house and the city. Contingency becomes a catalyst for the imagination of both of these entities and a progenitor of indeterminate formal and spatial possibilities.

House: The house is the private refuge. It is my house—the place where I live, work, sleep and dream. This house appears, on the outside, to be a typical residential Victorian in Buffalo, NY. I acquired the building in 2009, when it was slated for demolition. Since then, I have been living in the structure while simultaneously transforming it. Every action performed upon the house sponsors a corresponding reaction. Interior spaces are shaped through the interplay of continuous excavations and accumulations. Cuts are made into the walls, floors and ceilings in order to intensify the tectonic and historical layers. These subtractions are complemented by the constant aggregation of salvaged materials and artifacts. As floors fall away, new monuments emerge from tables, chairs, lamps and columns, promulgating a hallucinatory cosmology of eerily familiar parts. Acts of collecting, assembling, cutting, covering and revealing elicit ever-present tension between the patterns of daily living and the instabilities of objects.

City: The city is the larger context within which the house is located. It is Buffalo, NY—the movements of which the house re-invents and intensifies. It is also the network of micro-architectures that are created as the house's objects and materials coalesce in densely layered mise-en-scènes. These small-scale vignettes in turn become catalysts for ancillary projects as the doors of the house are opened and the public is invited to engage with the contents. I invite tradespeople, students, teachers, artists, architects and others inside the house in order to participate in collective projects that re-envision the world beyond the house's walls. The city, therefore, is also the unique forum that is created when the house becomes a setting and stage for workshops, choreographed dinners, gallery openings and tours. The drawings, models, collages and films that are generated through such engagements become integral components of a constantly evolving matrix, the multiplicitous residue of matter in search of form.

S.N.A.F.U. (SITUATION NORMAL ALL FUCKED UP)
Jonathan Louie, Syracuse University

It was in front of us all along. Driving along James Street in the east Syracuse sits one of eight existing Honor Bilt Magnolias #2089 in America–the 'crème de la crème of Sears Kit Homes' according to Rose Thornton.[2] A ten room Colonial House in the heart of Syracuse, the Magnolia is the largest, most ornate, and expensive Sears Modern Home. Designed for the 'discriminating builder willing to invest a fair amount for the largest returns in comfort[3] for the mere price of $9,990.00,[4] an 'average' homeowner could purchase a 12,000 piece kit and instruction booklet for the construction of a new single family home.[5] Through the standardization of measurement, repetition in manufacturing, and material optimization,, the Sears Modern Home exploited Balloon and Platform Frame Construction (also known as a Stud Wall, and Light Frame Construction) to manufacture the American Dream.

Marking the point at which industrialization began to penetrate housing, Balloon Framing converted wood construction from a craft into an industry.[6] Unlike modular homes, the Ready-Cut[7] home uses wood studs that were cut to fit within a particular location relative to the gridded layout of house. As a result, precut standardized wood studs (2" x 6" and 2" x 4") were factory cut, pre packaged, and shipped to the consumer. Following the instruction booklet, they are laid out on a 16" or 24" unit grid into 370 different Home Plans. From 1908 to 1940 families could order a piece of the American dream, living in a modern project reproduced across America.

Yet, despite being an important component in the growth of the American West. Balloon Framing and Platform Frame construction has found itself left out as an object of experimental inquiry.[8] From poche to hung textile[9] the Wall has been the subject of architectural investigation through volume or more recently as a point for new technologies in fabrication. Balloon Framing has value through the investigation of the autotelic[10] grid and its disruptions as a formal generator.

Within the conceptual space between the logics of the Frame System and its' individual parts lies a broader set of implications that relate serial arrangements, the indexing of formal disruptions, and their application to novel housing types. Implying that there is disciplinary knowledge found in the intrinsic system that generates the ordinary walls around us. From Muybridges' photographic studies of motion, Jasper Johns' sequence of numerals, to Andy Warhols' 50 Marilyns each with a distinct color combination; the serial attitude is a method

MOTION: "Architectural Practice Can Only Shake the Momentum of Today's Political Economy by Focusing on the Careful Reconfiguration of Existing Architectural Objects."

not a style.[11] Mel Bochner notes that the Serial Attitude takes on systematic terms, order taking precedence over execution, and the completed work being parsimonious and fundamentally self-exhausting.[12] Excluded by Bochner are projects that are closed systems but take on variations on a theme. Not quite a completely serial system the arrangement of a Stud Wall loosely plays within a predetermined logic (some might say typology) while inserting opportunities of chance or disruption. A generic system inwardly referential system that is logically distinct from the world around it.

NOTES

1   Named in honor of Standard Oil Companies addition of 192 Honor Bilt Sears Roebuck Homes in Carlinville, Illinois. Built primarily for Coal Miners and their families, it is the largest cluster of Catalog Homes in America.

2   Rose Thornton http://www.searshomes.org/index.php/2013/07/09/one-of-the-most-incredible-blogs-ive-ever-done/

3   The statement is made by Sears Modern Homes while advertising the Magnolia in their 1922 Honor Bilt Catalogue.

4   Depending on the economy at any given year (between 1918-1922) the price fluctuated between 5,000.00 and 9,990.00. http://www.searshomes.org/?s=syracuse+magnolia

6   According to Rosalind Krauss the Grid is autotelic, or '…its order is that of pure relationship, the grid is a way of abrogating the claims of natural objects to have an order particular to themselves.' Furthermore, grids conceptually extend until infinity, its interruption or disruption becomes an act of willing design. Rosalind Krauss. 'Grids.' The Originality of the Avante Garde and Other Modernist Myths.

7   Built from an annotated set of Studs and Planks, in a written statement to Congress a Sears Reprsentative states that 'A ready-cut house should not be confused with a sectional-portable house, which can be taken down and moved by being unbolted. A ready-cut house is a permanent house and the method of its construction is not different from any other frame house.' 7

8   The invention of Balloon Frame construction is attributed to George W. Snow. Economy and abundance play a large role in the value of light frame construction. The use of minimal structural materials in standardized dimensions allows builders to enclose a large area with minimal cost, while achieving a wide variety of architectural styles. It was also known as Chicago Construction.

9   In der Stil Gottfried Semper deduce the origins of the wall as a device for hanging decorative textiles that communicate program through adornment.

10 The autotelic and the autonomous grid is used by Rosalind Krauss as a point of departure to describe new art works that are no illusory, but horizontal and intrinsic. The grid is about itself.

11 Bochner, Mel. "The Serial Attitude." Art Forum. December (1967). Print.

12 ibid

OF BOTH PROCESSES AND FORCES
Aleksandr Mergold, Cornell University

The debate of Autonomy vs Contingency echoes the great Lilliput vs Blefuscu conflict described by Jonathan Swift in Gulliver's Travels over which end of a hard-boiled egg it is proper to break in order to eat it. According to the great English satirist, the conflict of "Big and Little-Endians" resulted in "six rebellions… wherein one Emperor lost his life, and another his crown". In the profession of architecture, divides form along equally compelling lines and their results can be equally contentions. But in the end, both sides argue about the process of conceiving and producing built form–the question is how to initiate this process.

Instead of advocating for either side, we would like to propose a reflection on a phenomenon that encompasses both concerns–that of the "Autonomists" and that of the "Contingents"–and offers an alternative where both camps could find synergies.

The practice of spolia is millennia old, dating back to Ancient Egypt and perhaps beyond, referring to using scavenged materials for new, and often unintended, purposes in constructed environment. Both extremely pragmatic and symbolically charged, spolia is a complex phenomenon; beyond mere recycling, it also has social, cultural, and political dimensions. Many sites, buildings, structures of antiquity were repurposed into newer edifices, not only to facilitate the production of new form, but also to claim the cultural and political heritage of the donor structures–thus, effectively re-authoring existing context. Spolia is now mostly considered an archaic practice in sharp contrast with today's global mainstream design culture in which the life expectancy of buildings, landscapes, objects, images, technology—and even ideas—is increasingly (and often purposefully) short. Yet spolia has a direct relationship with our current, emerging concerns with our environment, and the resulting interest in adaptive reuse, recycling, life hacking, and the slow movement. It is related, also, to various vernacular phenomena, like jugaad in India, and the extreme design that originated in the former Eastern Bloc. Spolia offers a new perspective on the historic preservation debate around the conservation of particular moments in history versus the preservation of traces of the continuous historical development. Furthermore, beyond a version of recycling, the phenomenon of spolia can be seen as sampling of various manifestations of cultural production, dating back to early antiquity, and consistently present in subsequent history; as such it is a major vehicle of the culture-formation from the ancient times to the present.

We would like to offer the possibility that spolia as a process and a cultural phenomenon embodies both Contingency (having to deal with the given) and Autonomy (the license to interpret freely), by being simultaneously engaged and dis-engaged in its context of physical objects and ideas, and by relying equally on violent innovation and reverent heritage. The paper will trace the practices of spolia in antiquity, recent history and present, where (perhaps under a different name) the idea of both contextual appropriation and interpretation driven by singular authorship can be productively coexistent. The eggshell, after all, can be broken on its side.

MOTION: "There Are Only Contingent Architectural Objects."

MODERATOR: JIM BASSETT & PAOLA ZELLNER, VIRGINIA TECH

"The unpredictable and the predetermined unfold together to make everything the way it is."

—Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia*

The autonomous object can only be an ideal to strive toward, for in the making of the architectural object the situation invariably exerts an influence. As an aspiration, the autonomous takes a position about what should be, where contingency yields to the possible, but uncertain. Could it be that contingency and autonomy present a false dichotomy? It could be more accurate to say that architecture employs both autonomy and contingency in the making of order in an otherwise chaotic world.

FILLING THE VOIDS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING PATTERNS OF URBAN VACANCY

Sara Queen, North Carolina State University
David Hill, North Carolina State University
Andrew Fox, North Carolina State University

For complex problems which plague many of our cities, adaptable architectural and urban design solutions need to take varied and distributed approaches which allow flexibility and customization specific to the local, site-based contingencies and constraints. While built environments often share many of the same challenges, each region, neighborhood, and site has different contributing dynamic forces that cause and perpetuate pervasive challenges; therefore, one solution will not fit all. Rather, distributed architectural and urban design approaches that aggregate to create larger infrastructural networks offer operative solutions and incrementally adapt to contextual feedback. This shift from traditional top-down master planning strategies to bottom-up infrastructural approaches offers long-term resiliency and seeds multiple futures.

As a case study exploring this distributed infrastructural approach to architecture, this paper outlines a process of site-based research to uncover the diverse set of contributing factors, both shared and unique, which compound the complex issue of blight in New Orleans. It argues for strategic and malleable multiplicity rather than bespoke singularity. While this speculative project is generated for and from the specific conditions in New Orleans—namely urban vacant lots, blight, affordability, and impending ecological threats—the process outlined offers transferable methods applicable to a number of problems facing our urban environments. The SHEDDING [b]LIGHT proposal integrates landscape, architecture, urban planning, and ecology in an approach that deploys catalytic infrastructure to transform the city. While recognizing the instrumentality of singular structures within distributed networks, this paper emphasizes the greater agency of contingent developmental strategies across a landscape of varied conditions that materialize in overlapping time frames. The case study embodies Stan Allen's concept of "practice engaged in time" where "the production of directed fields" allow for "program, event, and activity to play themselves out."[1]

Already a national bellwether in re-imagining urban infrastructure, from bicycle transportation and renewable energy production to historic preservation and education reform, New Orleans can harness the multi-dimensional potential hidden in its vacant lands to address the social, cultural, and environmental needs of both its present and its many futures. To achieve this, SHEDDING [b]LIGHT proposes an incremental approach to address all of vacancy's dimensions in New Orleans by first identifying where the challenges and opportunities for re-purposing vacant land are most efficiently aligned, and second by deploying a system of scalable community hubs in those targeted locations throughout the city. Today when nearly half of the city is below sea level, and the social, economic, and ecological systems are trying to repair themselves through rebuilding the physical fabric, there is the opportunity to re-image the dynamic systems of context as a catalyst for new terms of architectural engagement—an engagement of multiplicity which contributes to large-scale systemic transformation.

NOTES

1   Allen, Stan. *Points Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City*. Princeton Architectural, 1999. 52.

ALLES IST DESIGN?: HANS HOLLEIN THE COOPER-HEWITT AND "MANTRANSFORMS" (1976)

Elizabeth Keslacy, University of Michigan

In 1968, Hans Hollein and Walter Pichler published their now-famous manifesto, "Alles ist Architektur" ("Everything is Architecture"). In it, they radically expanded the definition of architecture to the entirety of the man-made environment, including the media environment as an important site of the world's representation and even its creation. Rejecting the physical manifestation of architecture as building, Hollein and Pichler exhorted architects to take on the dilation of human experience effected by the newspaper, the telephone, and the television—mechanisms that extend human consciousness and experience through time and space.

Two years later, Hans Hollein revisited this radical proposition when he began working with the Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Museum of Design and its Director,

MOTION: "There Are Only Contingent Architectural Objects."

Lisa Suter Taylor, on the design of its inaugural exhibition, "ManTRANSforms" (1976). The museum, originally founded in 1896 as the Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration, was transferred to the Smithsonian in 1968, and its historical collections of textiles, architectural drawings and engravings, period furniture, and bric-a-brac was reconceptualized by replacing its old organizing principle of the decorative arts with a new one—design. "ManTRANSforms" functioned to announce the museum's new orientation, and it did so by proclaiming its own manifesto: Everything is Design, and everyone is a Designer.

While Hollein's slogan, "Alles ist Architektur," has been understood as a call for the dissolution of the discipline and a rejection of its autonomy—the "removal of all boundaries between it and other fields" as Liane Lefaivre has argued—this paper suggests that Hollein's most radical position on architecture emerged in his work with the Cooper-Hewitt. While Hollein did radically expand the boundaries of architecture, he also expanded its authority: when "everything is architecture," then its particular logics, techniques, structures and histories become an ordering system to understand the expanded field. In this way, architecture did not dissolve, but became the conceptual lens by which the diversity of the world could be structured.

In contrast, Hollein's work on the "ManTRANSforms" exhibition subjugated architecture as but one of many species of design. Through installations of daily bread types from around the globe, hammers arranged from the most delicate jeweler's tool to the oversized sledge hammer, and a constellation of stars that mixed sheriff's badges and cut-glass bowls with the plans of ideal cities, Hollein and the curators at the Cooper-Hewitt argued that design was everywhere. Eschewing the limitations of "high design," Hollein posited that design was anonymous and quotidian, an activity pervasive in daily life. In this scheme, architecture no longer held court as the "mother of the arts"—it was simply one type and scale of design whose historic importance was downplayed in a newly flattened and accessible field.

This paper will utilize the "ManTRANSforms" exhibition to explore the tensions between the singularity of architecture in "Alles ist Architektur" and its multiplicity as one of many forms of design in "ManTRANSforms". Drawing on scholarship by Penelope Dean and Jeremy Till, this paper seeks to elaborate the forms of contingency implied by Hollein's remaking of architecture as design.

THE DIFFICULT PRAGMATICS OF SANAA'S ROLEX LEARNING CENTER
Cynthia Ottchen, Florida International University

In recent years both autonomous and critical architectural strategies have been questioned and displaced by conciliatory design approaches focused on multiplicities and contingencies through technology, innovation, and pragmatics (Speaks, Somol, Whiting, et al). Proponents of 'new pragmatism' described their agenda as architecture's re-engagement with immediate real–world problems as opposed to theoretical or purely formal projects. As a consequence architectural discourse has had little or no critical distance from the cultural status quo. But the absorption of architecture by the values and market forces of globalized late–capitalism threatens to continue a trend toward homogeneity and reductive efficiency. This paper argues that autonomous architectural concepts can still play a role in developing resistant, new spatial concepts that operate in a culturally critical way, while having positive and tangible real-world consequences.

The Rolex Learning Center in Lausanne provides a case study of a building that is based on a formal and autonomous concept that has contingent benefits. The continuous rolling slopes in section constitute an abstract representation of landscape that focuses our mind on nature and makes us aware of our environment -and by extension the fact that it is one of the major challenges we face today. In addition they provide the phenomenal experience of organic fluidity. The experience of traversing the building is akin to a hike in rolling hills. More broadly, the building causes people to notice a new architectural experience and the need to discover for themselves how to use the space. In effect, it encourages a kind of mindfulness and self-awareness in the user that a merely pragmatic and functional design approach tries to erase for the sake of efficiency and optimization.

The sloping section is the most controversial element of the building's pragmatics: a flat and even section would be the most straightforward and desirable solution for easy disability access. The pragmatics are pushed to the limit of the European disability access code, which allows sloping surfaces of 6%. Yet this is not a gratuitous formal concept but one that has real–world social consequence appropriate to a university setting. The open 'landscape' creates soft boundaries through 'horizons' rather than walls, but maintains an overall unified internal space where impromptu casual encounters between students is suggested and encouraged but not imposed. The pragmatic is redefined as real–world consequences such as social innovation rather than an immediate practical response to pressing tangible issues such as code.

The Rolex Learning Center brings the theme of landscape to our awareness as a critical cultural issue -not through a specific, performative or material relationship with the local landscape but as a rich and subtle 'implicit' representation and experience of 21C fluid space that also has real benefit. In so doing it shifts our focus to a form of critical architecture better suited to our times than an a priori theory–driven critical project and redefines pragmatics not as a straightforward solution to real–world problems but as an inspired yet buildable concept with real-world consequences.

A CONCEPTUAL SPACE FOR ARCHITECTURE: SINGULARITY THROUGH ECOLOGICAL CONTINGENCY
Michelle Laboy, Northeastern University

Site is the circumstance that inevitably ties architecture to the contingencies of a situation. Michael Hays proposed that the autonomous object is produced in "an ideal moment in a purely conceptual space" but that its situation in the world commences a process of interpretation tying it to a specific place and time, thus initiating a loss of autonomy. However, examining landscape as a "purely conceptual space" reveals that architecture can find increased autonomy when assertively engaging with and transforming contingencies generated by landscapes. Furthermore, neglecting formal strategies to engage the landscape can instead diminish the presumed autonomy of

MOTION: "There Are Only Contingent Architectural Objects."

architectural concepts. As Hays points out, there are contradictions in the anti--formalist concepts of Mies van der Rohe's later work, which prioritized pure forms and rejected formal manipulations that conformed to existing configurations of urban space. Recently, Neyran Turan identified singularity and multiplicity in opposing forms of contemporary urbanism; the former found in the "bounded form" of autonomous islands of architectural scale, and the latter in the "endless" city without architecture. As a lens into the state of architecture in current urbanism discourse, this dichotomy between autonomy and contingency, or between new (or old) urbanism and landscape urbanism, disallows the evolving influence of landscape as "purely conceptual space" for architecture.

Interrogating the emergence and evolving concept of landscape (and site), outside and within architecture theory during the last century, elucidates how architecture claimed renewed autonomy from a multiplicity of cultural and disciplinary codes that otherwise influenced form. Just as the modern notion of continuous space with the landscape profoundly transformed the conceptual space of architecture from the dominant codes of classicism, regional expressions of modernism, such as those of Alvar Aalto and Alvaro Siza, later acquired renewed autonomy from the dominant modern doctrine through material and topological engagement with exceptional landscapes. The evolution from the pictorial landscape to ecological landscape finds architecture both culpable for, and vulnerable to, a degraded ecological condition, and at the same time charged with the restorative potential of its ecological performance. Rather than existing in a dichotomy between complete autonomy or irrelevance, architecture's refocus on the ecological and topological contingencies of form--the morphological responses to climate, the performative effects on microclimates, and a decisive connectivity to a complex set of networked systems that make up urban ecologies--is not only an increasingly critical form of engagement, but also generative of new autonomy.

Examining recent architecture that is engaged in constructing the conceptual space of contemporary landscapes reveals critical practices achieving renewed autonomy through architecture's topological and ecological engagement with newly produced or restored urban and exurban landscapes. This type of practice produces both singularity and multiplicity through ecological performance coupled with retesting formal strategies of continuity, inflection, variation, thickening and layering. They operate between resistant authorship of singularity, what Michael Hays called the "persistent rewriting of a few themes," and contingent responses to the nature of the specific site, heightening the ecological integration and cultural significance of both the architecture and the landscape with which it is generated.

MOTION: "Right Now, We Are Making Ordinary Objects Again"

MODERATOR: BENJAMIN FARNSWORTH

"(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction"

"FUCK THE WORLD… AND FUCK YOU IF YOU DON'T LOVE IT."

Robert Venturi once declared: "I am an exhibitionist: I go around exposing my doubts." In the shadow of the digital turn and so-called return of the real, the discipline remains prone, exultant, in a state of gorgeous agnosis: Ready to succumb once more to exquisite sorts of skepticism. This decreative impulse conjures a renewed scrutiny of the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, and the habitual. To borrow (again) from Perec, the sorts of questions to ask may include: "How are we to speak of these common things, how to track them down, how to flush them out, wrest them from the dross in which they are mired […]" But we might also refigure Perec's implorations and wonder at such objects' untrack/unflush/unwrest/ ability -at the ordinary's embeddedness alongside the odd, uncanny, weird, strange, and extraordinary.

WROUGHTEN

Jean Jaminet, Mount Holyoke College

She could never bring herself to trim [the fabric] to any pattern; so she shifted and fitted and mused and fitted and shifted them like pieces of a patient puzzle-picture, trying to fit them to a pattern or create a pattern out of them without using her scissors, smoothing her colored scraps with flaccid, putty-colored fingers.

—William Faulkner, *Sartoris*

Current architectural discourse has provoked questions about the coherence of the architectural object and how its boundaries are defined. Notions of surface that pervaded the discipline over the last decade began to dissolve the physical and disciplinary boundaries of architecture into a landscape of external contingencies.

Architecture's disciplinary concerns were addressed through a new subjectivity of immediately consumable surface effects. As a critical response current thinking has prompted a return to ideas of autonomy and process, allowing architecture to recover its formal and disciplinary distinction.

This project questions the idea of the subdivided surface in architecture, reinterpreting it as a constellation of objects. This patchy composition does not become a continuous field as Deleuze and Guattari established in, "1440: The Smooth and the Striated" (*A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 476); rather, is defined by multiple and distinct boundaries. The resultant 'crazy' configuration is an assortment of discrete objects relating in strange and diverse ways.

The unique expression of form, developed through various 'wrought' techniques (e.g., stuffing, nestling, packing, thickening, etc.), does not obey a single surface logic -is neither smooth nor striated -instead expresses both hard and soft edges. Each object maintains definition of shape by anticipating its neighbor. The relationships between the objects are articulated as a series of tight or loose-fitting joints, adding a level of complexity to their interaction. This kind of composition lacks a certain continuity and predictability.

Objects are arranged on a flat panel with an irregular boundary that is offset from the wall. This 'un-grounding' allows the composition to maintain objecthood, separating itself from the architectural frame from which it is viewed. According to Siegfried Giedion, figure-ground became the fundamental configuration of aesthetic experience when ornament and furnishing began to be incorporated into the wall (*Mechanization Takes Command*, 303). To challenge this thinking, the subtle distinction between the panel and the wall works to further deny the legitimacy of architecture as the all-encompassing field.

Wroughten refers to the role of the tactile in contemporary form making. Descriptively, the term encompasses that which is carefully formed or worked into shape. Conceptually, Wroughten references Adolf Riegl's study of medieval metalwork and its role in the early history of aesthetic production. Christopher Wood has noted that "Riegl's model of a universal haptic approach to artifacts was superseded or concealed by a universal optical relationship" (*Res 46*, p. 168). Consequently, some time around the Renaissance, a shift occurred that favored a subject-centered view of the world over a discourse relating to the perception and manipulation of objects. This project denies the authority of the architectural field (continual space of communication), permitting the strange and unexpected interaction of multiple and heterogeneous objects (diverse space of coexistence). This suggests that contemporary aesthetic production is now on an inverse trajectory.

MOTION: "Right Now, We Are Making Ordinary Objects Again"

POSTMODERN COMPUTATION: PROCESSING AUTONOMOUS OBJECTS

Marc Manack, University of Arkansas

To constitute itself as a field, architecture has to have autonomy. If there is clearly a body of knowledge made of histories, techniques, and theories necessary to delineate one architecture from another and to distinguish architecture from not-architecture, then to work on architecture (or any field for that matter) one needs act on that knowledge with the aspiration of transforming it in order to make a contribution to it. The means by which architects do (and have always done) this is through the development of theories, which take the form of processes, that in turn produce things –buildings, drawings, texts. While architecture is full of theories and things, articulating the process in-between is a relatively recent (post-war) development, with unfinished business remaining. By explicating the design process, attempting to reveal the means of production under which architecture is brought into being, architecture constructs its autonomy, but it has yet to do so in a convincing way. The objects of architecture's autonomy are the representations that act to produce, analyze, and reproduce forms, directing one's Project successively through multiple projects.

Challenges to architecture's seemingly evident claims of autonomy persist due to the architect's inability in establishing legible and comprehensive relations between project and object. As John McMorrough has noted "…architecture's history and legacy—maybe its very meaning—is to be found in the creation of reasonable explanations for its existence, its raisons d'etre made in the midst of a series of preservative justifications, in leaps of faith and defensive postures."[1] In effect, architecture's autonomy has always used the contingent as, at most an alibi, and at least a compromise. To be architecture, the object must have autonomy that situates it beyond the singular building, and in relation to other architecture. The architectural object can exist without the contingent, but not the other way around. Contingency and forces must be attached to, and effects must result from, the pursuit of an autonomous architectural object.

This paper will reveal Postmodern Computation as the process under which architects systematize autonomy within a discursive framework and design methodology. The argument will begin with a brief and biased history of architecture's attempts to reveal its processes through partial discourses, totalizing systems, acts of retreat, and a post-war progression from internal to external validation. For the purpose of this paper Postmodern is defined as a contextualized heuristic, giving architecture autonomy without universality. Computation will be thought of as a pseudo-mathematical function, a machine or method for processing, transforming relations between contingencies and disciplines. By combination, Postmodern Computation is architecture's means and methods to act autonomously amidst the contingent in the production of objects. To support the argument, four built projects (with extreme constraints and contingencies) by the author will be used to demonstrate how representations contextualize arguments and process relations between project and autonomous object.

NOTES

1   McMorrough, John. *Perspecta Vol 40* (2008) Ru(m)inations: The Haunts of Contemporary Architecture p.164.

WEIRD FUNCTIONALISM

Adam Fure, University of Michigan

Since Peter Eisenman declared death to function in his seminal essay "Post-Functionalism," the absence of the human subject has been a precondition of formal autonomy. At the time of its publication, Eisenman's dogmatic position polarized the debate between conceptual and phenomenological architects, setting up two seemingly irreconcilable positions. For the conceptualists, the essence of architectural objects is found in its constituent elements, devoid of context, program, or any other human consideration. For the phenomenologists, an objects value is solely constituted through subjective experience. On one side are objects without subjects, and on the other, objects serving subjects. Despite being four centuries old, these views still influence contemporary architectural discourse. In light of the recent disciplinary return to objects, these outmoded positions need to be revisited.

This paper will present three accounts of subject-object relations after phenomenology and autonomy. Through examples of recent work from a number of contemporary practices, it will describe the complex ways subjectivity is altered through engagements with objects. Crucial to these arguments is a non-centralized account of the human subject. Phenomenology places humans at the center of the world by defining principles of space that echo structures of perception. Architecture's role in this line of thought is to reproduce these humanistic spatial principles in order to affirm the centrality of "man" in his environment. In phenomenology, subjects are a given and the objects of the world conform to their needs. Autonomous approaches to form remove humans from the center of the world, but also from the conceptual space of architecture all together, alienating subjects from their environment.

Denying the either/or mandate set up by this debate, this paper will outline a contemporary account of subject-object relations called weird functionalism. This account highlights the importance of both subjective and objective concerns, while denying the centrality of either. It describes contemporary subjectivity as a complex process where subjects co-occur with, follow, or deflect off of objects in a dynamic process of becoming. Far from universal, these various accounts express an inherent ontological multiplicity of both subjects and objects. If autonomy and phenomenology speak of essence and truth, weird functionalism high-lights contingency and flux.

Architecture constructs weird functionalism through design. This paper will highlight three approaches: object embrace, projected subjectivity, and radical imitation. The first approach, object embrace involves the design of objects to solicit bodies into direct and exaggerated forms of contact. Formal articulation becomes a means of seducing subjects into unexpected encounters and

MOTION: "Right Now, We Are Making Ordinary Objects Again"

altering preconceptions of how to engage objects. Projected subjectivity imbues architectural form with qualities typically reserved for people and animals. These qualities construct a sociality between objects that humans view from afar, like wallflowers at a party. Lastly, radical imitation establishes relationships between objects that confuse human forms of understanding, such as blurry lines between nature and culture or alive and dead. On the whole, these approaches expand notions of contemporary subjectivity and serve as guideposts for a renewed disciplinary focus on objects.

ECONOMIES OF MATERIAL EFFECT
Lonn Combs, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

In the discussion of the Autonomous and the Contingent in architectural discourse, no architecture can be considered outside of the effects 'contingent' flows and forces. Perhaps more importantly the parameters of the historical debate between the contingent and the autonomous are flawed in the face of a 21st century reality. The autonomous has perhaps only ever existed as fantom image in a far-reaching multilayered texture of contingent forces. In other words, autonomy as a concept, as an independent territory for the existence of the architecture can only exist due to the favorable composition of contingent forces. Autonomy in essence is an illusion that is sustained by a confluence of contingent forces, intellectual, cultural and economic.

This position is argued through a series of analytical and generative studies based on investigations into historical precedent and speculation towards contingent futures. With the examination of building systems developed by master builder Pier Luigi Nervi in the 20th century, this argument is articulated through an analytical decoding of the contingent forces and effects that critically situate a historical architectural practice with claims rooted in autonomy and process. A central argument of this research focuses on the embargo of foreign materials in the Italian pen-insula during the Mussolini era that drove in general an artificial or political economy setting the conditions (or resistances) that lead to specific innovations in P.L.N.'s ferrocemento and novel construction practices. These practices then set the stage for a larger scale application in the post war reconstruction period in Italy that is largely understood through process and autonomy. It is exactly the space of this tension that this project / argument seeks to explore, one where conditions are set by force and effect, where the political drives the technical and creates a cultural space for what might appear as the autonomous to emerge.

Through this analysis, both a critical understanding of the contingent forces giving rise to specific material innovation and their application with new structural experiments, a system of material economy and material innovation emerge. The second stage of this research / argument seeks to speculate on contemporary analogs in lightweight folded structural systems. These systems may then be understood as expressing a contemporary artificial economy in the use of materials and emerging low-cost techniques of fabrication.

Innovations in the production techniques of flat sheet material in large scales in combination with techniques of CNC cutting, folding and mechanically fastening have opened possibilities for structural efficiency, architectural performance and aesthetics within emerging architectural applications. Through the critical lens afforded by the historical research this aspect of the project seeks to exploit the potential of CNC fabrication techniques through the close analyzation of techniques rooted in the in the history of P.L.N.'s material and process oriented innovations.

MOTION: "Object Specifics: New Figures but Still Old Problems"

MODERATOR: KYLE REYNOLDS, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE

"New work always involves objections to the old, but these objections are really relevant only to the new. They are part of it. If the earlier work is first-rate it is complete. New inconsistencies and limitations aren't retroactive; they concern only work that is being developed."

— Donald Judd, *Specific Objects. Arts Yearbook 8.*

With a return to the well of figural form, have any of the inconsistencies or limitations of past autonomous form making informed the seemingly infinite variability of today's shapes and figures? Are we still on the same road or is it really different this time?

FROM CONTINGENCY TO AUTONOMY: THE "LEARNING FROM" MANIFESTO AND THE AMERICAN MIDWEST
Stewart Hicks, University of Illinois at Chicago

The "Learning from" manifesto is a unique piece of architectural production. It identifies design tactics that are particular to a place and time and packages them for import into the discipline. Here, they become timeless, placeless and autonomous. This essay will present an examination of the "Learning from" genre of texts, including but not limited to: *Learning from Las Vegas, Made in Tokyo*, and *Delirious New York*. This short analysis will serve to set the context for a set of original research on Midwestern institutions, or Learning from the Midwest. If Las Vegas provides lessons on communication and Tokyo and New York on collectivity, the Midwestern institutions included in this essay combine these to form collectives around figural amalgamations. Examples such as the Corn Palace illustrate this phenomenon, adorned with minarets, onion domes, and murals of corn; the building puts everyday elements on display for everyone to ogle. The building provides an identity for the town of Mitchell, South Dakota and, as such, has an impact well beyond its physical footprint. The building even has a festival in its honor every year. The essay will deploy the term "projective character" to describe buildings like the Corn Palace.

Projective character is the quality to which we are referring when we say something "is in character." This phrase has a double meaning. Someone who is 'in character' is playing a role, impersonating a human being within fictional context. Secondly, if an action or object is 'in character' with something, it is in line with our expectations for it. On the flip side, if someone is out of character, they are themselves despite possessing the ability to not be themselves. And, if something is out of character, it does not meet our expectation for normal behavior. This dual understanding of something both participating in a fiction while simultaneously acting in accordance with the constitution of its expected context is fundamental to the concept of projective character.

Objects imbued with these contradictory qualities cast new narratives on their surroundings. In the Midwest, techniques for projective character developed as a reaction to the perception that the region lacked distinguishing characteristics. In contrast to other forms of collectivity such as the Parisian square, where a distinct boundary in a recognizable shape produces collectivity, the Midwest has too much space and too few boundaries. Therefore, people rally around catalytic characteristic objects in the landscape. Projective character is achieved through techniques that defamiliarize the everyday as a means to remove it far enough to see it anew, with restored admiration and revelry.

Buildings with projective character make use of their role as social fictions with inauthentic spectacles. They simultaneously uphold a fiction while clearly revealing its artifice. By intentionally incorporating inappropriate social and physical forms, projective character becomes an act of self-conscious culturing. These constructions offer no instructions for perceiving the work and reveal no inscriptions indicating what they mean. Instead, they are dreams on display, activated through interaction with a willing public.

A HOTEL IS NOT A HOME: STRANGE SITES AND SHAPES
Max Kuo, Harvard University

In Frampton's tectonics, construction comes first, then surface, volume, and plan. The foregrounding of aesthetic craft claims to resist homogenizing tendencies of globalization as well as the reduction of building to glib scenography. This sect believes that the eternal task of mooring shelter to ground reveals the phenomenological dimensions of the *genius loci*, or uniqueness of place. Within such a tectonic paradigm, architectural value and singularity privileges part-to-part clarity, environmental perception, and cultural practice. However, in such an increasingly financialized world where generic buildings often leave no room for architectural experimentation or activism, should we as architects divest from the typical urban fabric as an impenetrable landscape of brutish development? As *Maison Domino* anticipated, we are increasingly immersed in a world of best practices that seek efficiency and known quantities. If we are to engage the majority of buildings as (value) engineered units, can we look to other paradigms outside of tectonic exceptionalism? Perhaps architectural figuration and shaping can provide a double-edged blade of both expediency and estrangement that hacks the generic underbrush in order to uncover the strange bedfellows of affordability, iconography, branding, and weird urbanism.

In this paper, I will explore two recent hotel proposals by ALLTHATISSOLID located in Kuala Lumpur: one is a renovation, and the other is all new construction.

MOTION: "Object Specifics: New Figures but Still Old Problems"

Facts on the ground do not bode well for tectonic innovation. Both hotels are narrow urban infill lots with a cellular grain of resistant space planning, where profit margins of the hospitality industry resist encroachment and modification of floor space. And yet, market branding is optimistic and omnivorous, ready to consume formal exuberance that vaguely smells of demographic identity. The hotel is not a home, but a home away from Home, forever built upon a displaced ontological ground. Therefore, against tectonics, we offer an alternative set of techniques: urban silhouettes, typological ambiguity, vestigial meanings, and inverted figures. In HJH, a facade renovation devolves classical order, both indexing the hotel unit while also obstructing it, resulting in multiple inter objective relations between the room and city. In CBB, the constraints of site and program quickly impose a full and turgid bodice of hotel rooms. To invent new public spaces, two figures become imbricated, an opaque hotel stack sandwiched between its floppy public spaces on the ground, core, roof and air wells. Modeling figures becomes an urban and architectural strategy of opening up new possibilities rather than fixing authenticity. By distorting the legacies of generic building types new subjects are produced that both fulfill the fast dietary trends of urban consumption as well as the slow burn of ineffable qualities.

ORNAMENT AND THE SUBLIME: YAMASAKI
Joss Kiely, University of Michigan

"We should bring more warmth and richness to modern architecture, but the addition of these qualities must never compromise the beliefs of our technical age."

—Minoru Yamasaki, "The Morality of Modern Architecture," 1956

Detroit-based architect Minoru Yamasaki (1912-86) is best known for designing two of architecture's most famous disasters: the World Trade Center (1970-71), which met an untimely demise on the morning of September 11, 2001, and the Pruitt-Igoe Public Housing development (1952), whose demolition Charles Jencks' infamously asserted marked the failure of Modern architecture. Pruitt-Igoe, an orthodox modernist tower-in-the-park that failed to deliver on its manifold promises, was an outlier among the large body of work Yamasaki produced over nearly four decades. Indeed, the vast majority of his buildings employ an architectural language that sits on the cusp between Late Modernism and Postmodernism.

Following Pruitt-Igoe, Yamasaki's practice took quite a different turn, aiming to find "serenity and delight" in modern forms and seeking to enhance the built environment at the human scale. This desire led his firm to move away from the hard lines of modernism to embrace an aesthetic that often employed proto-Postmodern abstracted historical motifs. At times, these expressive forms were based on structural efficiency, and yet at others, they were purely formal. Many of the elements he employed were abstracted Islamic and Gothic forms, which Yamasaki incorporated into the fenestration and ornamental detailing. This kind of visual excess set Yamasaki apart from both the purity of the High Modernists and yet also the playful and ironic approach taken by Postmodern architects.

Riding the line between structure and form, this paper argues that Yamasaki's incipient "humanist modernism" is a branch of figurative formalism, even

though at times it is exhibited through tectonic expression. To make this case, I will examine a set of projects, each of which exhibits a different approach to figurative form. First, the Lambert-St. Louis Air Terminal (1952-56) blends historical references—the Baths of Caracalla (212-16)—with modern construction techniques (thin shell concrete) in order to create an aerial expressionism reminiscent of flight. Secondly, set in the middle of a reflecting pool, the Reynold's Metals Regional Sales Office's (1959) gold anodized aluminum screen provides a rich element in an otherwise drab Detroit suburb that recalls the gilded ornamentation of Japanese temples. And lastly, the World Trade Center's (1971) lobby level glazing took its cues from the immense Gothic (1100s) cathedrals of Europe. The use of historical reference in these projects is neither Postmodern nor revivalist. Rather, the projects express a referential figurative form, a non-literal translation of form and culture, which the architect intended as an enrichment of the everyday.

THINKING BACKWARDS: STRATEGIES OF ERASURE IN ARCHITECTURE
Stefano Passeri, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

In 1975 Gordon Matta-Clark appropriated a Parisian house due for demolition. He then carved out a large slanted cone extending outward from the house's interior all the way to its façade. The result, a work titled *Conical Intersect*, bound two objects drawn from opposite regions of architectural thinking into a single project. The cone, an object belonging to the realm of geometric abstraction, is revealed as a negative in the elliptical cuts through the masonry of the structure's mundane interior. Entirely choreographed through a subtractive process, the irreducible tension in the legibility of the cone/house intersection generates a contradictory but cohesive totality. The dual ability of *Conical Intersect* to reconcile such traditionally opposed realities, and to do so by simply removing material from an existing condition, provides an instructive example for dealing with the current tension between autonomy and contingency in architecture.

Thirty years of oscillating debate on the place of autonomy and contingency in architecture have produced a rich discursive lineage. Out of the many positions that have been crafted within this dialectic framework, the most influential ones have been able to move beyond a dichotomous interpretation of the problem. These theories rejected both an understanding of architecture as a form of detached speculation and as a passive cultural product. Instead of retreating to either side of the dichotomy, they focused on bridging gaps between contingent and autonomous aspects of the field.[1] But today the conversation seems to have swung again too far in one direction and the field finds itself tangled in what could be regarded as an extreme manifestation of contingent form making.[2] In what appears to be an increasing state of disarray, there is a clear need to reestablish a middle ground for the conversation. The search for an alternative posture can only start from a reflection on the current overcrowded and confusing milieu. Rather than retreating to old notions of autonomy,[3] or trying to achieve a middle ground through yet another kind of hybridization, this paper proposes that a more productive way to tackle the problem might be through subtraction.

MOTION: "Object Specifics: New Figures but Still Old Problems"

Drawing on *Conical Intersect*'s ability to reconcile an incongruous dichotomy through an act of calculated demolition, this paper will tease out a history of architectural erasure from within the discursive lineage of contingency vs. autonomy. From Piranesi to Cedric Price, the field has long employed techniques of strategic subtraction as a means of reconciling opposite extremes. This paper proposes that such methods may be usefully applied to the pursuit of clarity within the currently oversaturated debate. First, it will investigate the history of projects that have employed these techniques of subtraction. Second, it will explore how an update of that history may inform the current discussion of contingency and autonomy. Rather than asking: how can we escape from this state of extreme contingency into autonomy? We should ask: how can we use autonomy to understand and overcome this state of affairs and regain a more comprehensive perspective on architecture?

NOTES

1   See Hays, K. Michael (1984), "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta*, Vol. 21, pp. 15-29 and Somol, Robert & Whiting, Sarah (2002), "Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Methods of Modernism," *Perspecta*, Vol. 33, pp. 72-77

2   As Michael Meredith recently put it, "the field of architecture has become a landscape of archipelagos of smaller and smaller groups, mediums, histories, etc." Meredith, Michael (2015), "Formula No. 5B," *Project*, Issue 4, p.4-8.

3   A counter-tendency to the wave of "extreme contingency" emerged in the form of an equally extreme manifestation of unilateral autonomy. Such counter-tendency is most clearly articulated in Rem Koolhaas' curatorial intentions at the latest Venice Biennale titled *Fundamentals*.

THE ABSURD ALIBI
Joseph Godlewski, Syracuse University

The project of autonomy was originally premised as a radical critique of architectural ideology. With its roots in the political writings of Marxist historian Manfredo Tafuri and others, the position of autonomy posed a challenge to capitalist modes of production and a critical reflection of the place of architects within them. Instead, the term "critical" was hijacked by designers and theorists such as Peter Eisenman. It slowly transmogrified into an elitist, self-interested (and often self-referential) formalist discourse hell-bent on preserving "the discipline". Axonometric projections of cubes supplemented with turgid Deconstructivist prose masqueraded as "criticality" pitted against the status quo of the profession and capitalist instrumentality. Meanwhile, architecture became increasingly disengaged from emerging discourses on race and gender, technology, socioeconomics, and the environment. In the years leading up to the millennium, and perhaps due to globalization and a more robust market environment, autonomy faded and an interest in "projective" practices (purposely misnamed "post-critical" by detractors) emerged. Realizing how flimsy the proposition that architecture could ever operate autonomously is, projective practices were conceived as adaptive syntheses of architecture's many contingencies. Rather than balling up and hiding from the world-at-large, projective practices creatively grappled with materiality, program, politics, and economics. In short, projective architecture dealt with force and effect. Despite this, decades later, the "project of autonomy" has been resurrected. Perhaps spurred by the crushing ennui of the so-called death of the "digital project", the new project of autonomy acts as a kind of throw-back theory, nostalgically recreating the mistakes of an earlier generation. Blithely unaware of the utter failure of the earlier project of autonomy to catalyze any meaningful change, the new criticality parrots the aesthetics of an earlier generation with the help of updated tools (and minus the prose). "Autonomy", rather than a radical challenge to architecture, serves as an absurd alibi for a "yolo" (you only live once) shape-play. Is such a position tenable? This article reflects on projects of autonomy (new and old) asking what they contribute to architecture as a discipline and profession. What, if anything, is at stake in such projects? What exactly is "critical architecture" critical of anymore? Ultimately, what makes autonomy such a seductive proposition?

MOTION: "The Architectural Object Is Not a Reliable Model for Urban Activism"

MODERATOR: LAWRENCE CHUA, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

The architectural object has its own political arrangements and can not serve as a reliable prototype for activism on an urban scale. Beyond its material applications, the interest in performance has renewed an emphasis on social practice and the reception of the architectural object. While the performative turn has led to critical place-making that attempts to subvert the power hierarchies inherent in built form, the social bonds it seeks to foster often result in turgid, standardized artifacts. As artists who have taken up Nicholas Bourriaud's call for a "relational aesthetics" have discovered, the performative mode is not innately emancipatory, but comes with its own order and representational consequences. What is the order of the open object? If, as K. Michael Hays suggests, the architectural object "tears a cleft in the continuous surface of reality" and takes its place alongside the real world, in what ways can it intervene on the space of social relations? At what scale is it possible for the object to generate relationships with the world?

THE SUBJECTS OF PERFORMANCE
Neeraj Bhatia, California College of the Arts

The residual tensions between the Enlightenment and Romanticism are perhaps most pronounced when discussing performance. Contemporary architectural discourse is primarily rooted in the quantitative aspects of performance—the measurement of efficiency, optimization, or endurance that aligns itself more closely with the evaluation processes of the engineering disciplines. At the same time, the etymology of the term performance as an "accomplishment," "a thing performed," or an "action of performing a play" situates performance through how forms of expression engage with a collective audience. Evaluation does not reside within the seemingly objective metrics of quantitative data but rather on the subjective judgment of the qualitative aspects of a performance.

Subjective expression and the dynamic qualities of the physical environment engendered in these two simultaneous readings of performance embody larger characteristics that we are witnessing in the contemporary contingent urban territory. Increasingly we are realizing the futility in attempting to control these indeterminate characteristics, and acknowledging that this messiness is in fact a productive asset. We must remember that through individual expressions of action and speech the politics of pluralism and the public sphere is secured. Further, it is only by engaging the dynamic qualities of the physical environment that an ecological reciprocity between form and the environment can be established. Mobilizing these indeterminate human and environmental factors re-centers the conversation of performance on who the subject of performance is, and how formal design can engage this subject.

This paper will focus on Umberto Eco's notion of the open work to understand how to reconcile design determinism with indeterminate and possibly conflicting factors. Eco's open work characterized various works of art (poetry, film, music) as either 'closed' or 'open' depending on the relationship crafted between the subject (the viewer), the object (the work of art), and the author (the artist). For Eco, the 'closed conception' was a work of art wherein the subject was to see and interpret the object in a singular manner, which was prescribed by the author. In contrast to the closed work, Eco speaks of the emergence of the open work, a work of art that has been strategically designed by the author to have a degree of 'openness', allowing each individual subject to project the final missing pieces to complete the work. From musical compositions by Stockhausen and Boulez to metaphors of Kafka and puns by Joyce, the open work inserted the subject as an active agent in the production of the work. While the open work allowed for the possibility of numerous personal experiences and interventions, it still maintained its status as a 'work' through being framed within the world intended by the author. The power of Eco's concept was that it allowed for the simultaneity of both an underlying order and an openness for indeterminate acts. Straddling the fine line between the individual and collective, the chaotic and the ordered, and the informal and formal, within this framework of choreography, the subject becomes an integral part in the completion of the work through performance.

GILDING SPARKLE AND POLISH: TOWARDS A NEW AESTHETIC OF SOCIAL PRACTICE
Anya Sirota, University of Michigan

One notable contemporary cultural development in economically challenged urban scenarios has been the ascendency of interventionism, tactical urbanism, and place-making as institutionally sanctioned, philanthropically-driven emblems of collective resurgence. Often discussed as the disciplinary convergence between social and spatial practice, this body of work generally positions architects and planners as agents of social change, while championing the notion that "bottom-up" tactics can combat a city's decline where "top-down" policies have failed. Contributing to the current proliferation of socially engaged, interventionist practices is an admittedly commendable drive to renew architecture's impact in the public realm. Despite its fundamentally decent intentions; however, the approach has drawn equal measures of criticism: questions continue to hang, for instance,

MOTION: "The Architectural Object Is Not a Reliable Model for Urban Activism"

about architecture's disciplinary intersection with social need, its capacity to problem-solve for the common good, as well as to generate outcomes in direct dialogue with multiple and disparate constituencies.

Yet while the tiff about tangible consequences festers, little attention has been paid to a seemingly innocuous set of routinely deployed aesthetic conventions, which have surreptitiously come to represent and instrumentalize contemporary social practice. With economic insolvency and coming-un-done-ness as the standard narrative backdrop for socio-spatial interventions, attention to aesthetic demeanor seems frivolous at best. Consequently, it is not surprising that both institutions and designers are reluctant to get involved in issues of 'taste' culture, siding instead with what art historian Claire Bishop refers to as 'visual indiscernibility' (Artificial Hells, 2012). In the pervasive scenario, where social practice feigns not to have an aesthetic agenda at all -objects and spaces are naturalized and unassuming. The result is a strategic predilection for low-fi tectonics, fragmentation, DIY gestalt, and other aesthetic qualities related to deskilling, where design, as a tool for both empowerment and pacification, is tasked with soothing some very real anxieties about inequity in the material world.

Confronting and evaluating the aesthetic conventions of social practice, this paper will consider if the self-conscious appearance of things matters, despite or more precisely on account of the complexity or austerity of a given context. Looking to recent work in the city of Detroit, this assessment will explore how constructed visual and material frameworks can operate in opposition to the makeshift, and anti-authorial aesthetic regimes associated with social practice. In the process, the investigation will speculate on potentials of aesthetic provocation as a mode of public discourse.

MEGAFORM: FORM AND PERFORMANCE OF THE LARGE-SCALE ARCHITECTURAL OBJECT
Tulay Atak, SCI-Arc & Dragana Zoric, Pratt Institute

If the architectural object is to be reconsidered today between autonomy and contingency, form and performance, criticality and projection, there may also be a need to acknowledge that the status of the object has changed. This paper will address "megaform," or large-scale urban interventions, as architectural objects. It will situate architectural theories of megaform in relation to contemporary philosophy of "hyperobjects."

Timothy Morton describes hyperobjects as "things that are massively distributed in time and space, relative to humans"(2013). They are viscous and non-local yet have local manifestations. They undulate over time, phase in space and are interrelated. Hyperobjects are tangible and physical, but they do not have perceivable boundaries. Their legibility requires different tools and instrument to read. Morton's example of a hyperobject is global warming. If the object has become hyperobject, then there is a need to recast the positions in relation to the object. What is autonomy in relation to global warming? What is form in relation to Deepwater Horizon oil spill?

In this context, we would like to revisit the question of megaform, or large scale architectural interventions on a territorial scale. Before the theory of the hyperobject, architecture was developing a theory of the megaform, a term which comprises ambiguities in implication, and is situated between form and performance. The history of the word goes back to the writings of Fumihiko Maki and Oswald Matthias Ungers. Most recently, Kenneth Frampton revisited the term in "Megaform as Urban Landscape" and expanded it to a broader context by considering a wide array of projects that respond to urban conditions (1998). Detached from the technological utopia of megastructures, megaform became a project that provided an alternative to masterplanning. Frampton identified its context as the "megalopolis" or "the suburbanized form of limitless land settlement." He articulated the characteristics of megaform in a series of recent and contemporary examples which span from large architectural interventions to landscape design. Frampton wrote a manifesto at the end of the text, suggesting the speculative and projective potential of megaform as a theory and practice of architecture, and specifying it as a particular response to territorial transformation.

Addressing the architectural object is important today because, not only has the architectural object changed, but also the status of the object is being redefined beyond architecture. Can megaform be a way to respond to hyperobjects? How would we define or describe form as a way to relate these two concepts? In other words, can form and scale mitigate a hyperobject? Moreover, can architecture of the megaform precede and neutralize the hyperobject?

With this paper, we will present a reading of Kenneth Frampton's essay, considering it in relation to other texts on megaform and bigness. We will also present our own analysis of selected case studies of megaform, including our own drawings and models of existing projects. This paper is part of our ongoing research project on megaform.

THE SPECTER OF SYMMETRY
David Salomon, Ithaca College

Ideas are like ghosts. They plague your mind. They show up unexpectedly. They don't leave when you want them to. They don't appear when you want them too either. They can spook entire disciplines. Architecture is one big haunted house. Composition. Function. Structure. Beauty. Autonomy. Some ideas never seem to go away, yet their presence cannot be confirmed either.

Symmetry is a particularly uncanny phantom. It was allegedly exorcised in the 20th century for its indifference and inflexibility to use, context and climate. Symmetry was standoffish, so it was cast off. And yet … it never really went away. Reflections, rotations, translations are ever present in modern architecture. Today symmetry is even more common. Even simple mirror symmetry can be easily found. Look up and you'll find it on the façades of Reiser and Umemoto's O14 and 51N4E's TID towers. Look down and you'll see it in the plans of MOS' element house, UN Studio's Mercedes Benz museum, and OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen's Villa Buggenhout. And these are just from a recent top 10 list.

While symmetry may haunt architecture, symmetry itself is haunted by its association with "Essences" and "Order." It is precisely these qualities, however, that make it valuable to science. In fact, while architects were busy trying to kill off symmetry scientists were using it to produce new knowledge about the physical world.

MOTION: "The Architectural Object Is Not a Reliable Model for Urban Activism"

When architects hear symmetry they think Vitruius, Palladio, proportions and bi-axial Beaux-Arts plans. They think of the past. They think of it as isolating, ideal and obsolete. In contrast, when scientists hear symmetry they think of Einstein and Feyerman; they think of reflections, translations and rotations; they think of particle colliders and group theory. They think of big unsolved questions that symmetry helps them ask. They think about learning and progress. They think about the present and the future. They think of the links it makes with many disciplines. Far from autonomous or inactive, it is promiscuous.

Architecture is inherently promiscuous too. It is connected to an ever-growing list of partners, each begging for its attentions. How can it resist? Might symmetry–with its exhibited capacity to cross borders without losing its identity–help architecture avoid having to make the false choice of autonomy or engagement? The most common definition of symmetry today is "an invariance despite a transformation." By looking at historical and contemporary objects–some of which are mentioned above -this paper seeks neither to bury nor resurrect symmetry once and for all. Rather, it hopes to put this ghost to good use.

…

What's that? What uses are good ones? Can symmetry be counted on to make (or resist) change? For whom is it an agent? Traditionally it houses kings, priests and autocrats. Loved by power for its absoluteness, does it have it in itself to promote and enact social change? Not by itself perhaps, but maybe with the help of its many partners, and, from a more nuanced understanding of its surprisingly plural nature.

SATURDAY

MOTION: "No Architecture Without a Theory of the Relationship to Context"

MODERATOR: SOPHIA PSARRA, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LONDON

Architecture is usually defined through intent while cities come into being out of multiple human actions over a long period of time. This seems to trap us between a view of architecture as authored object, and a view of the city as authorless, evolutionary process. The debate about the autonomous and the contingent object thus, goes back to the separation of architecture from its skill base in craft and building practice that took place in the Renaissance. This separation also includes the operations through which buildings and cities are produced by designers, clients, users, regulatory codes, markets and infrastructures. The resurgence in the debate on the competing claims of autonomy and contingency testifies that since the Renaissance we have failed to develop theories and techniques that address the relationship between authored architecture and authorless context (urban, sub-urban, peri-urban, landscape or infrastructural context). As a result, coupled with commercial forces, recent advancements in digital technology and complexity theory claim architecture and the city as self-organization, dismantling architecture and depriving it from relevance in shaping social capital. For architecture to reclaim its scope as a social discipline it needs to theorise its relationship with the social, political and economic processes of context.

SINGULAR VS. MULTIPLE MODERN AESTHETICS IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD
Yutaka Sho, Syracuse University

K. Michael Hays maintained that, when faced with the options of either remaining autonomous or serving the dominant culture, architecture must assume a critical position. Before we can begin the project of critique, however, we must define our terms. In this paper I will focus on modernity and development, terms that are morphing and gaining complex meanings in the globalized world. Although architects in high-income countries strive to create original and diverse aesthetics, those practicing in the South may notice that the modern aesthetic is understood, produced and consumed as if it is singular. When regionalism claims to take on climactic, material and practical characteristics that reflect the local environment, at first it allures us to celebrate multiple modernities, hybrids of industrialization and traditions that are appropriated by ground-up movements. However, both in the North and the South, certainly in Africa, a modern package of technology, free-market economics and aesthetics becomes a universal code for development. International standards of economic measurement create hierarchy among nations. In turn they influence whether cultures are considered to be modern or under-modernized. Therefore it is difficult to imagine a true multiplicity of modern aesthetics unless its twin, the system of global economy and what it means to be developed, can be multiplied as well. I argue however that is not the case today.

For example, wealthy houses in Rwanda have gabled roofs that are taller than the walls. Steep like those from snowy regions, they are called "ArchiCAD roofs" because they are ready-made and downloaded from software. The walls may be made with adobe blocks but the cement plaster camouflages them as concrete construction. Orthogonal windows and doors appear machine produced, yet closer inspection reveals slight dimensional discrepancies because in fact they are made by hand. It is easy to dismiss these houses as poor imitations of the Northern modern. But the aesthetic embodies an aspiration for a better life and it is no imitation. Northern funding organizations such as the UN, World Bank and numerous NGOs prescribe who and which nation qualifies as developed, citing standards such as minimum income, nutrition and education levels and the type of houses and cities they live in. The aesthetic comes with them.

On the other hand, multistory houses are difficult to build in rural Rwanda, and not solely because of the lack of construction materials and techniques. The unpopularity of condominium living and preoccupation with land ownership is grounded in the uncertainty of real estate speculation controlled by the global free market economy. In Rwanda, to reject condominium living is to critically resist global exploitation, however passively. Rwandans may build an ArchiCAD roof but they reject living on the second floor.

Despite the long tradition of regionalism, we do not yet know if regional and multiplied modern aesthetics is attainable in the globalized world. In order to contribute to the research on architecture and globalization, first the relationship between modern aesthetics and the singularly dominant global economic system must be debated. The debate will allow us to realize the potential of architecture to affect aesthetic decision making processes currently monopolized by the dominant culture of economy.

ADAPT OR DIE! A SELECTION OF OPPORTUNISTIC WORK IN NYC
John Locke, Columbia University

Adaptation as an architectural strategy can encompass multiple meanings, from the profession itself pivoting to remain relevant, to a built intervention

MOTION: "No Architecture Without a Theory of the Relationship to Context"

symbiotically adapting to its new environment. The work presented here re-asserts architecture as a transformative, pragmatic discipline with the capacity for renewed social and environmental relevance. Through the re-appropriation and re-imagining of existing urban conditions, I have designed and fabricated a series of working prototypes that embrace the messy reality of my city and promote community involvement. All of the work pushes the notion that learning occurs primarily through making, doing, and interactivity; while giving primary focus to the design of experiences in lieu of objects. In opposition to the smart city initiatives, in which top-down, authoritarian inputs are forced upon existing neighborhood in the name of technological process, I strive to learn from and adapt with those intangible qualities of history, texture and character that make each New York site unique. It is that quality of initial observation which makes the work inherently pragmatic, the striving for opportunistic adaptation of the on-the-ground-reality, rather than the imposition of a fully-formed narrative. Implicit within the work is the assumption that without this new, radical street-level presence, the discipline of architecture will continue to spiral into irrelevance as it is superceded by other more adept, flexible design agents.

The work presented ranges in scale from that of a single occupancy phone booth up to the interior space of a surprisingly spacious construction dumpster. In all instances I try to find neglected opportunities in radical juxtapositions, such as combining bookshelves with obsolete phone booths, or inflatable learning laboratories sited within street construction dumpsters. Regardless of the size, all projects begin with a guiding thesis idea and the core challenge is to convert that idea into physical reality, something to be observed, tested and documented. Ultimately the work has a healthy respect for two core concepts: first, an increased skill in the use and applicability of the fabrication skills we have at our disposal for solving design issues using unorthodox materials in unconventional settings; and second, that there is an opportunity for architects to regain lost relevance by inserting themselves through unsolicited proposals into the public consciousness as steward's of urban well being.

In addition, I have led a course titled: "Hacking the Urban Experience" at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. This course has drawn interest from throughout the University, not only with, architects and urban designers, but also economics majors, structural engineers, and government and public planning students. A selection of research and student initiated work that has been generated in the class from the last five years will be explored.

AUTONOMY OF PERFORMANCE
Chris Meyer, Harvard University

Autonomous vs. Contingent

Autonomous: Freedom from external control or influence; independence, isolation

Contingent: Existing in the nature of circumstance; interaction within a set of actions or forces

Form vs. Performance

Form: The visible shape of configuration of something as an expression of forces

Performance: The evaluation of an action or process of carrying out or accomplishing a specific task or function

From the text on the pages of the *Harvard Architecture Review* 1984 vol 3(1) one thing is clear, architecture of autonomy is a quest for form, an ideal form. However, the quest must expand its boundaries in order to continue the discussion on the autonomous object.

The search for autonomy in architecture has a long history and to move the discussion forward, the understanding of performance must come to the fore. 'Autonomous architecture continues the concern of the modern movement for an architecture of essence, one that transcends style and personal taste.' (Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*[2]). The search for ideal form needs to expand its boundaries by pursuing a 'contingent architecture' within a framework of performance. Vitruvius established an argument for a "contingent architecture' when he wrote, 'We must begin by taking note of the countries and climates in which homes are to be built if our design for them are to be correct.'[3] The intent of the paper Autonomy of Performance is to investigate the agency of performance within the debate of the autonomous discipline and cultural product (architecture in search of form).

TRANSPLANTABLE URBAN DESIGN FOR POLYNUCLEAR CITIES
Kory Bieg, University of Texas at Austin

Conventional master planning techniques limit the effectiveness of design by not acknowledging the temporal and immaterial realities of urban life. To better patch a new urban plan into an existing cities fabric, the design must include an outward reaching framework while supporting autonomous and discrete building projects. Such a method rejects concepts of typology and vernacular in favor of variability and asymmetry. The successful design of a discrete urban package as a system of collected entities within a variable framework, has the advantage of embedded potentiality and the capacity for the design to be reused at another site. This paper tracks the master planning and design effort by seven architectural offices for an expanded city center in Accra, Ghana and the subsequent transplantation of the design to Cape Coast, Ghana. The proposal includes the design of a new district with external agency and internal autonomy that anticipates its own transplantation from one city to another.

Modern cities are polynuclear and multiplicitous in nature and can be understood as hyperobjects;[1] objects that are more than the sum of their parts and exist as a mesh with all its interconnectivity and gaps. The introduction of a new patch in such a city must have the capacity to affect and be affected, but also retain and function autonomously. If the purpose of urban design is to invigorate an area that is lacking in some way, only the introduction of something different from what is already there will have such an affect. Likewise, it cannot in and of itself be wholly different from

MOTION: "No Architecture Without a Theory of the Relationship to Context"

the context, as such a condition would detach the new patch from its host entirely. As Manuel DeLanda notes, "the danger…is that the mere production of heterogeneity may result in isolationism (a high diversity of small cliques, each internally homogenous)."[2] The design must offer something new, while acknowledging the energy collecting at its borders. If buildings are designed as objects dependent to the internal workings of the patch, the gaps then are what allow for fusion between the new collective form and an existing territory.

The relocation of the plan from Accra to Cape Coast posed obvious challenges. External contingencies were severed when the patch was transplanted to a new host. However, the resilience of the plans internal autonomy paired with its latent capacity to connect outward was sufficient for the plan to engage the new context successfully, and still work as an expanded city center. A building that is designed as an autonomous object does not reconstitute what already exists at a place, but instead adds something to a site that is beneficial and new. Urban designs can offer the same service to a city. By designing a patch as an autonomous entity with the capacity to connect outward, we can reconsider the role of urban design and place-making in the world today.

NOTES

1   Timothy Norton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 82.

2   Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 68.

MOTION: "Contextualism Is a Slow Death Wish for the Objecthood of the Discipline"

MODERATOR: LYDIA KALLIPOLITI, RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

The term "contextualism" has been abandoned since the early 1980s. After Ernesto Roger's ambiente (surrounding pre-existences) in Casabella Continuità and most famously Aldo Rossi's collective memory in *The Architecture of the City*, the term has been associated with a nostalgic need for seamless sympathetic integration with place, both visually and culturally. However, the same need for integration is resurging in the eyes of architects who now see "context" as an environment of material flows, an ecosystem of energies and movements of matter. The ecosystemic equation requires a new form of naturalization for the architectural object. Allegedly, context is no longer an issue to consider, but the architectural object cannot be unrooted from the energies of place. Material performance cannot be overlooked as it has replaced the modernist ethos of function. Is this direction radical or conservative? Is it opening up the discipline's "black box" to a series of productive environmental questions or bringing a slow death for the discipline out of profound boredom? Stay tuned.

FAST AND FURIOUS
Joyce Hwang, University At Buffalo, SUNY

How might nimble and expeditious implementation processes make a significant impact on the discipline and profession of architecture, one that relies traditionally on iterative development and lengthy time-scales? Indeed, "Pop-up" and pavilion-type interventions–seeing an increase in both academia and practice today[1]– demonstrate tendencies instead toward quick, activist agendas in social, economic, and environmental terms, but have arguably been less direct in addressing 'core' disciplinary concerns such form, space, and structure–in other words, conditions that directly address firmitas, utilitas, and venustas.

This paper will argue for the potential of small-scale interventions to advocate not only for socio-political positions, but also for the field of architecture itself. Specifically, I will discuss the process and impact of the Hive City Bee Habitat Competition–a student competition organized by faculty at the School of Architecture–in bringing public awareness to the critical importance of urban species, as well as shaping the perception of architectural possibilities in an economically-depressed post-industrial city. In cities that lack substantial municipal funding and private investment, the notion of implementing less-familiar aesthetic agendas is often met with skepticism. Referencing this tension, I will discuss the public reception of the Hive City project, from its initial media coverage (and its revealing public commentary) during its design process to its post-installation perception, both locally and internationally.

My position is not to argue against the importance of autonomous processes in architectural exploration in the pursuit of commodity, firmness and delight, but rather to argue for the potential impact of ecologically and socially responsive interventionist practices–those that directly confront the dynamics of temporal contingencies as principal drivers. Certainly, in the case of the Hive City project, one could criticize many design qualities of the student competition entries–for example, the easy metaphorical references, the arguably superficial use of parametric tools, and the relative lack of formal exploration–and attribute them to the relentless pace of the competition calendar. However, I will argue that the fact that the winning project was designed quickly, coordinated effectively, and installed expeditiously (and within budget) was critical to producing its resulting design integrity, and ultimately made a difference in the project's public impact.

In cities where a chronic lack of funding perpetuates widespread acceptance of an architectural 'status quo,' it is vital for architects to instigate action to palpably generate alternative effects in the community. In order to stimulate advancement and foster integrity in the discipline, I contend that it is the responsibility of the architect to move beyond our disciplinary comfort zone and embrace external resistances and contingencies as part of the exploratory process.

NOTES

1 Well-documented in the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale's U.S. Pavilion exhibition, "Spontaneous Interventions."

DARK ECOLOGY: AN ARCHITECTURAL FOLLY FOR THE ANTHROPOCENE
Chris Perry, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Cathryn Dwyre, Pratt Institute

In 2000 Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen announced that the world had entered a new geological age, what he termed the Anthropocene; a period characterized by the "anthropic" effects of human activity as a new geophysical force on Earth. Timothy Morton's recent book, *Hyperobjects; Philosophy and Ecology* after the End of the World, argues that this new age marks a fundamental shift in human-nonhuman relations, the end of one "world" and the beginning of another in which human social, psychic, and philosophical space has been infiltrated by the nonhuman, bringing with it a new period of environmental anxiety and existential uncertainty.

This proposal for a permanent installation at OMI International Arts Center seeks to engage this new period of anxiety and uncertainty by raising the question as to whether architecture should embark on establishing new affiliations beyond

MOTION: "Contextualism Is a Slow Death Wish for the Objecthood of the Discipline"

the human; a fundamental redefinition of the discipline as something no longer significant for us alone. If the Anthropocene has ushered in a new era of existential threat for human civilization, whereby the illusion of an "outside" as separate from an "inside" has been revealed as such, in both physical and philosophical terms, how does architecture not only rethink conventional forms of "program," privileging nonhuman alongside human forms of "use," but a new formal and spatial aesthetics of environmentality as well, in which conventional distinctions between human and nonhuman space become increasingly ambiguous?

In his introductory essay to *Follies: Architecture for the Late Twentieth Century Landscape*, Anthony Vidler writes that, "as a vehicle for all sorts of fashionable literary notions, from the sublime to the picturesque, the folly exhibited them in a kind of museum of meditative objects." Whether deployed in the late eighteenth century Garden at Erme-nonville or two hundred years later at Parc de la Villette, the folly, an historical typology situated between the disciplines of architecture and landscape, provides a unique space for design experimentation and theoretical inquiry unfettered by the practical constraints of "building." This proposal seeks to reactivate the architectural folly as a means of exploring the philosophical and aesthetic questions of our time, namely architecture and landscape in the Anthropocene.

Situated within OMI's sprawling sculpture park, this proposal for a contemporary "land folly" seeks to evoke in material, formal, and spatial terms the environmental anxiety that characterizes the age of the Anthropocene. An ambiguous object located somewhere between human and nonhuman space, the land folly privileges neither, but rather seeks to engender a paradoxical condition of simultaneous proximity and displacement between the two. In this way, the human occupant's experience reflects that of society in an era of global warming and climate change; an experience characterized by the qualities of ambiguity, uncertainty, and the uncanny associated with new forms of intimacy between the human and the nonhuman.

QUASI-OBJECTS / SIMULTANEOUS RESONANCE AND CONTRADICTION
Jonathan A. Scelsa, Rhode Island School of Design

Is it folly to create an architecture that aims to both contradict pre-existing space and simultaneously resonate with context? This inquiry searches for a formal and experiential paradigm against and between these two overarching assumptions prevalent in contemporary architectural production—of architectural form originating from autonomous object oriented concerns or from the externalities of surrounding fields. The resultant 'Quasi-Object' emerges from the tension of its contrary autonomous and contextual persuasions.

An Architecture which includes varying levels of meaning breeds ambiguity and tension...Simultaneous perception of a multiplicity of levels involves struggles and hesitations for the observer, and makes his perception more vivid.[1]

The Quasi-Object is born out of a desire for double-readings, wherein architectural form "doubly functions" to exist as an alien while simultaneously producing clues of its contextual desires. As a methodology for developing Quasi-Objecthood, this presentation and paper will examine Anamorphoses as

a methodology for adapting the object to its surrounding site or in turn the site to the architectural object in order to develop a curious and schizophrenic architectural contextualism.

Two Sevententh century monks, Jean Francois Niceron and Emmanuel Maignan, pioneered the study of the distorted perspective of Anamorphosis. While Maignan's focus was more aimed at the construction of imagery on given surfaces to meet a specific vantage point, Niceron's book published in 1633, *La Perspective Curieuse*, in reverse began to examine the distortion of the form of three dimensional objects to meet the perspectival optics of a singular vantage point. While today, Anamorphosis is used more as an two dimensional artistic parlor trick, Niceron's findings suggest possibilities of this approach as a tool to both define form based on context and in term re-cast the context through the agency of autonomous form.

The goal of the example project herein, The Anamorphic Hut, is to create an architecture that exhibits tension as an architectural object created a priori to a given situation, and simultaneously one which is driven by the specifics of its surroundings. The hut, a borrowed geometry and traditional construct of enclosure, is thrust into the ground; thus depriving the viewer of its full silhouette. An Anamorphic projection inscribes the ground, delineating the submerged geometry and creating an apparent completion of the form from particular vantage points. The result, is the creation of architecture that exhibits ambiguous object-hood, one which resonates with its site while creating other moments where it is seemingly an alien form with no relationship to that very context.

In lieu of seeking 'a contextualism of seamless sympathetic integration' with the pre-existing visual place, the Anamorphic Hut seeks to re-make its context into one that exists in harmony and contrast with it at selective moments.

NOTES

1   Venturi, Robert. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2011. p. 23.

MOTION: "Objects in the Rear View Mirror May Be Closer than They Appear"

MODERATOR: STEWART HICKS

Appearance and typology is back, baby. Well, sometimes it can be about babies. Anyway, finally we can talk about what buildings look like again and we since discovered that looking like buildings is one option of many. After years of hiding our aesthetic judgements behind pseudo rational process-based explanations, we're struggling to make sense of the uncomfortable subjectivity that inevitably follows from a dialogue. The motion: subjective classification is the only means to maintain a discipline. In order for something to look like something, we must operate analogically. We must wade through the multiple exchanges between subjects and objects, audiences and performances, similarities and differences. What potentials emerge when buildings start communicating with us again, albeit with a slightly newborn impediment? What dead-ends do we hit when we're simultaneously looking to group things into families while also appreciating their individuality? Let's see what we can do to help qualify buildings and architects in these terms, with a penchant for things that are slightly off, humorous, grotesque, and idiosyncratic.

PLEASE DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS!
Whitney Moon, University of Wisconsin

Please Don't Feed the Animals! proposes a reexamination of an alarming contemporary trend towards the prolific production of architectural objects which, in their cuteness, furriness, colorfulness, and sometimes grotesqueness and viciousness, are here-to referred to as "animals." How might these animals be categorized, classified, and named, such as to curate and put an end to their current state of running rampant in architectural circles? In galleries, websites, publications, and schools, animals are everywhere! Is this a passing fad, or should we be making plans for a future frontier of animal-mania? Should we consider building a zoo, to contain, domesticate, and exhibit these curious creatures? Or, are these animals merely operating as decoys—simulating the real as a means to subvert natural systems of order and classification? Perhaps cute is actually sinister? Is this an operative project, aimed to revolutionize the architectural object, or is it a fetishization of the non-building? Is the answer a zoo or a circus? Or, have we already given the animals too much attention? This paper argues that by placing animals (currently operating as autonomous objects) in habitats (i.e. galleries and museums), we can simultaneously display their architectural attributes, whilst exposing their deliberative lack of interest in performing as contingent objects. In other words, we should let the animals be objects, instead of asking them to literally perform as architecture. How then, might a close analysis of these objects offer a new critical lens through which to see (and question) the role of the autonomous object in contemporary architecture?

LEARNING FROM THE GOLDEN GLOVES: CHARACTERS CAMPS AND CONTINGENCIES
Julia Sedlock, NJIT

In 2013 the New York Golden Gloves amateur boxing tournament moved its venue from Madison Square Garden to the recently constructed Barclays Center. On most days the singularity of Barclays Center presence is undeniable. The arena and its adjacent towers represent an urban upgrade of the next degree, bringing unprecedented urban density, as well as an often-maligned corporate presence to Brooklyn's historically low-rise urban context. However, on those nights that the Golden Gloves are in house, the monolithic Barclays image gives way to a different kind of cultural milieu. The tournament is fed by a network of independent boxing clubs, reminding us that New York City is still composed of a layering of neighborhoods, small towns and local loyalties; a city defined and strengthened by its multiplicity of characters and collectives. This juxtaposition of the multiple contained by the singular begs the question: how does architecture create a new legible image of civic and cultural collectivity that can simultaneously address and generate multiple audiences and identities? In other words, if the Golden Gloves were the client what would its new urban typology look like?

The unified image of the Golden Gloves is defined by its aggregation of smaller parts. The smallness of an individual moment of glory in the ring at the Golden Gloves is strengthened and amplified by its simultaneous allegiance to multiple masters–the neighborhood of a boxer's club, the authority of the trainer, the grandeur of the arena, the swagger and style of the individual fighter, and most importantly by the discipline of boxing. The experience and reading of the event is one that flickers between these varying scales of association, with a shifting legibility of identity, form and effect that is bound by the sport itself. Learning from the Golden Gloves as an analogy and an ideal, this paper asserts that architecture's contingency depends on subjective aesthetic judgement as

MOTION: "Objects in the Rear View Mirror May Be Closer than They Appear"

the basis for its disciplinarity, and analyzes selected architectural projects for formal and programmatic attitudes and strategies that illustrate this reciprocal relationship between what something looks like and how it operates in the world. Selected projects (including Neil Denari's Keelung Harbor Service Building, WW's proposal for the Kaohsiung Music Center and Cosmo Design Factory's Murphy Monsters) are to used to illustrate several (or all) of the following strategies:

1. **One and many masters:** Dispersed forms that accommodate several simultaneous events

2. **Shape shifting:** Moments of legibility interrupted by a flicker of undecidability

3. **Character reference:** A penchant for the suggestive qualities of the figure, especially the zoomorphic and friendly

4. **Rules of engagement:** Formal parameters of project push against and transform contextual constraints.

CROWNS
Kyle Reynolds, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Jeff Mikolajewski, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

We're seeing cities from the top down. The peaks, in the past only glimpsed in the distance from the street, are front and center on our screens. Our new view of the city is all tops, while the bottoms, the lobbies and entrances we know and love, are lost deep in shadowed canyons.

As it turns out, tops are a good way to gauge the truest desires of a city. The building bottom has too many obligations to really get a feel for what an architect is thinking. The bottom needs to accommodate signage, entries and exits, program, loading and unloading, setbacks, lighting, and visibility. Meanwhile, upstairs, the top just gets to look pretty. Sure you need to make allowances for mechanical rooms, elevator overruns, air handing, etc. but all of that is small ball compared to what's at stake downstairs. The bottom is a matrix of functions and requirements; the top just needs to keep the rain out.

From the ground, the Chicago architecture tour is a beige and black history of realty speculation and skyscraper innovation. It shuffles the usual characters of Sears, Fields, and SOM alongside the evolution of the tall building from stone masonry to steel frame to bundled core to lateral brace; things done for logical economic reasons coupled with modernist design intent, the story of reasonable actors, a nice Midwestern city, with well-groomed lobbies, decked out in Miesian rationalism, and dark suited businessmen. All the while, high up above, it's roof top gardens, formal extravagance, and bikini-clad socialites.

From the top, Chicago's not a modern city but a post modern one. For all it's Miesian posturing, there are more ornamented Mansard roofs then anything else; Parisian airs drifting over the rigid Jeffersonian Grid.

There are a whole lot of swimming pools up there, more than expected, a bit foolhardy considering the three-month summer; a sizable population of brazen optimists who've sprinkled bits of Miami over snow-capped summits.

There are penthouse cabins and towers built over monotonous office buildings, small idiosyncratic retreats and grand gestures located on a second Midwestern plain, a loose band of rugged individualists shacked up over the business of land speculation below.

There are buildings with hats, strange geometric oddities at their apex, the last gasps of architectural intention escaping the straight jacket of economics and clients below, a happening of scene of architectural formalism.

Viewed from the top down Chicago is a city of odd-balls and irrational dreamers, who, out of view of each other and the public, have created a fantasy world of form and program which serve none of the masters below. Chicago's tops reveal an unexplored wilderness, a beach above the sidewalk, a place for naiveté and bliss.

SURFACE RELIEF: AN ARGUMENT FOR THINGS IN THE ROUND
Ellie Abrons, University of Michigan

This paper argues for a turn to "things in the round" as the primary focus of investigations in architectural form. Specifically, the paper counters the role of the graphic and the profile to reveal a potential in three-dimensional form to cultivate an engaged architectural audience. In 2004, R.E. Somol eloquently laid out the merits of "shape" and graphic immediacy as an alternative to "form."[1] More recently, Joseph Altshuler described twelve counterpoints to Somol's that argue for character and modulated profiles as an alternative to shape.[2] This paper, "Surface Relief," interrogates elements from these texts—the graphic and the profile, that prioritize the surface—to argue for a turn towards things conceived in the round. Here, "things in the round" are defined not simply as forms viewed from multiple angles—although that is important—but also those that are conceptually in the round through an entanglement of associations, sensible qualities, and ineffable effects. The paper centers on three related points:

(1) Things in the round allow a new conception of abstraction.

Historically, abstraction liberated architecture from representation through a stripping away of associations and attributes. As such, it strove to create a universal language of expression that could be read, like a text, into form. The myth of essentialism has been largely debunked, but the literal and conceptual thinness of the surface do not allow for an alternative project of multiplicity to emerge. Things in the round offer an opportunity to reconceive of abstraction as a means to multivalence. Their forms allude to familiar entities—such as animals, babies, or rocks—and thus approximate articulated objects with known associations. However, they never resolve those associations into one discernible entity; they layer associations across scales and through volumes to produce multiple readings, conceptions and images.

MOTION: "Objects in the Rear View Mirror May Be Closer than They Appear"

(2) Things in the round allow architecture to communicate differently.

Architectural surfaces tend to deliver a single message. Kenneth Frampton's tectonic surfaces communicate the essentialist poetics of their construction; Peter Eisenman's abstracted planes index the process of their formation; Marc Fornes' intricate assemblies speak of continuous change. In contrast, things in the round embrace the possibility of unintended meaning, misreading, and obfuscation. This refusal to overtly communicate one message allows them to engage in more informal conversations where their role moves fluidly between objects of contemplation and subjects in dialogue.

(3) Things in the round counter the immediacy of the graphic with more prolonged forms of attention.

Things in the round anticipate an architectural subject. They do not attempt to control the circumstances of viewing but are invested in elongating the timespan of subjective engagement through specificity and extreme attention to morphological and material details. This counter-intuitive combination of vague forms with extreme surface articulation provokes architecture's participants towards more intimate and meaningful engagement with the objects and forms of our creation.

NOTES

1   Somol, R.E. "12 Reasons to Get Back into Shape." *Content.* Eds. Office of Metropolitan Architecture and Rem Koolhaas. Köln: Taschen, 2004: 86-87

2   Altshuler, Joseph. "Animate Architecture: Twelve Reasons To Get in Character." *Log* 33 (2015): 127-35

OF-FIGURES VS. LIKE-FIGURES
Kelly Bair, University of Illinois at Chicago

Figure is back. This comeback is neither a strict rehashing of figure's historical lineage from the late 70's through the late 80's nor does it stand in opposition to it. In most cases history has shown that a figural project tends to choose idiosyncrasy over elegance, legibility over obscurity and humor over sobriety. Precedents, to name just a few of these idiosyncratic, obscure and humorous figures, can be found in John Hejduk's early Masque figures, Aldo Rossi's scientific autobiography sketch characters, and Stanley Tigerman's early houses (i.e. *Little House in the Clouds*, 1976). However, a quick study of these precedents suggests that the figural is not literal in that figures are not exact replica's of original referents nor do they recycle their source material as is the case with much of Postmodernism's figural examples. However, we cannot say these figures are strict abstractions of other architectural moments either, leaving us with the notion that the figural project cannot be categorized as literal nor as abstract. To position Figure in the exact middle of the two doesn't always work either.

Instead, this paper will consider figures as "like" or "of" their references, occupying the broader spectrum between: from legible to abstract but never resting firmly on either end. One might say that being "like" or "of" something else is a matter of perception. As Mark Linder eloquently states in his *Log* essay "Literal: There's no Denying It" that "when we locate that moment of seeing, things get wild."[1] It is in this moment of seeing that a contingent relationship between figure and the perception of that subject's figure emerges. This paper will consider these two figural types that have emerged over a relatively short architectural history: Like-Figures (or towards the literal) and Of-Figures (or towards the abstract). This paper will further define Like-Figures and Of-Figures through a graphic catalog of project precedents presenting both types as well as attempt to answer the question: Can the figural project find escape velocity from the autonomous to the contingent by existing between the literal and abstract?

NOTES

1   Linder, Mark. "Literal: There's no Denying It" *Log* 5 (Spring/Summer 2005), pp. 82-86.