

Staging Architecture: The Early Performances of Diller and Scofidio

In January 1989, Koji Itakura, a Japanese real estate investor, commissioned Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio to design an oceanfront vacation home on Long Island.¹ Intended as a domestic retreat from urban life, the *Slow House* capitalized on the picturesque potential of its waterfront location. Although anatomically inspired by a snail, and subsequently called a “banana,” the *Slow House* was actually an architectural performance.² As described by Rem Koolhaas, who served as a juror when the house won a P/A award in 1991, “the house itself is a kind of *mise-en-scène*.”³

MISE-EN-SCÈNE

Significantly, the *Slow House* was structured as a machine for viewing nature. In this image, we see a tableau, or *mise-en-scène*, staged by the architects at the project site to explain the concept behind the *Slow House* (fig. 1). In the right foreground are two hands, one holding a shutter release cable trigger and the other a small color video monitor, connected to a video camera on the lower left of the frame. In the distance, the ocean and horizon are intercepted by a landform on the left, obscured by a large ship. A smaller object, presumably a nautical vessel, lingers in its wake. The video monitor on the right side of the frame displays what appears to be a real-time view of the scene, in turn intercepting and interfering with the picture window view of the horizon. Although the camera capturing this scene is not pictured, the large hand holding the shutter release implies it. With this carefully composed tableau, Diller and Scofidio suspend the viewer in space and time.

A configuration of virtual and technological windows superimposed upon the landscape, Diller and Scofidio’s tableau is an analog for the real. Neither drawing nor model proper, it is a conceptual staging of the relationship between architecture and performance, where architectural representation occupies the threshold between script and scenography.

If, according to Hans Hollein, “Architecture is a medium of communication,” then what is this image saying?⁴ What themes does this image expose, and how do these themes relate to architecture and performance? In other words, how does this photograph serve as a staging device to better understand the role of performance in the architecture of Diller and Scofidio?

WHITNEY MOON

University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee



The first theme that comes to mind when looking at this image is presence. Through presence, the photograph transports us to that moment in time when the tableau was performed. It suggests both absence and presence: even though we weren't in attendance for the event, the photograph allows us to be there virtually. Two different hands imply the existence of at least two distinct bodies, documenting the presence of objects through technological means (i.e. camera and video). Here, objects are rendered visible through corporeal engagement. As viewers, we are not actually present, but our presence is implied.

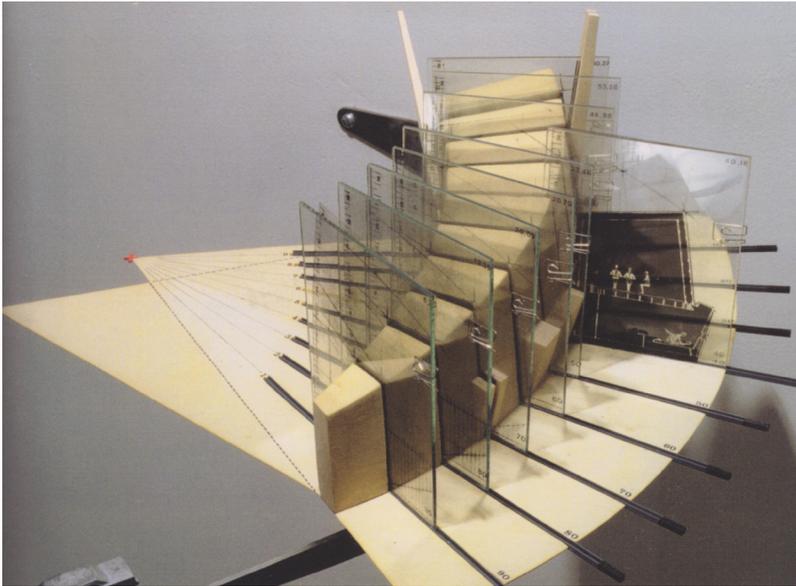
The second theme that comes to mind when looking at this image is movement. In effect, the scene is never constant. Rather, it is in a state of perpetual motion. The ship and vessel out on the water serve as registers for mapping movement across the horizon. Within the frame, two hands are connected to two different means of capturing movement: one triggers a shutter release connected to a 35mm camera, the other positions a video monitor connected to the video camera on the opposite side of the frame.

Implicated in presence and movement is also the theme of duration. A strung together series of moments, or presences, duration is the suspension of objects and bodies in space over time. In this tableau we observe not only a frozen moment in time, but also the persistence of time. As viewers, we are suspended in a time-space continuum, where past, present, and future collapse into the photographic frame.

As this tableau suggests, the *Slow House* operated as a *mise-en-scène*. A mediated domestic performance, it staged the body, space, and time in a performance of presence, movement, and duration. Not unlike a theatrical stage set, the *Slow House* was comprised of a series of smaller sets and props inhabited by actors (fig. 2). As one moved through the space, the script not only unfolded, but the set continually changed. Here, the rituals of domesticity were rendered as discrete spatio-temporal episodes, or sets, within an architectural performance.

Diller and Scofidio's staged photograph is a spatio-temporal slice, suggestive of architecture's role as both a generator and index of performance. The tableau suggests not only physical movement, but also virtual movement, or the ability to be transported to a different moment in space and time. In other words, this *mise-en-scène* is not merely a representation of the picturesque; rather, it

Figure 1: Diller and Scofidio, *Slow House*, 1989-91. Image published as "Broken Horizon, rendering, 1989" in *Scanning: The Aberrant Architectures of Diller + Scofidio* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2003) 103. Image republished in Guido Incerti, Daria Ricchi, and Deane Simpson, *Diller + Scofidio (+ Renfro). The Ciliary Function* (Milan: Skira, 2007) 80.



suggests architecture's capacity to alter how we see and experience space over time. As viewers of this image, we begin to move not only our eyes, but also our bodies within and beyond the space of the frame. By inhabiting the frame, we inhabit the architecture of Diller and Scofidio.

But how did Diller and Scofidio arrive at this idea for the *Slow House*? What previous works of theirs informed this architectural performance, and how did the cultural context of New York City in the 1970s and 80s influence the early years of their practice?

PERFORMANCE

By the mid-eighties, *People* magazine had called performance “the art form of the eighties” [5]. RoseLee Goldberg identifies that this turn towards performance allowed artists to break free of traditional modes of representation and expression [6], resulting in a “new theatre” — a hybrid between fine arts and theatre crafts [7]. As an “open-ended medium,” performance became indistinguishable from other forms of theater [8]. In effect, performance was no longer relegated to the stage proper. Its infiltration into the everyday proved to have a profound effect on the visual and performing arts, and subsequently architecture.

Significantly, New York City served as a post-war laboratory for experimental performance, merging the visual arts, theater, dance, music, video and cinema into multi-sensorial events. Whether staged as a small make shift Happening, or a large operatic production, performance was intrinsically theatrical and blurred the lines between art, the everyday, and theater. Notably, architecture was often implicated as a site in these performances, serving as both frame and canvas for artistic experimentation.

For example, Trisha Brown transformed the urban environment into a performative landscape. By equipping her dancers with ropes and harnesses, Brown allowed them to defy gravity by walking up and down the walls of buildings and gallery interiors. For instance, in works like *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970), *Walking on the Wall* (1971), and *Roof Piece* (1973), Brown subverted the conventional notion of performance as that which is contained to the ground plane or stage. Through inversion, Brown and her dancers challenged

Figure 2: Diller and Scofidio, *Slow House*, 1989-91. Image published as “*Slow House (Woodblock Model with X-rays)*” in *Scanning: The Aberrant Architectures of Diller + Scofidio*, 110. Image republished in Incerti, Ricchi, and Simpson, *Diller + Scofidio (+ Renfro). The Ciliary Function*, 83.

spectators to see and experience the urban environment in new ways. Here, architecture served as a canvas for artists to appropriate the built environment through a series of staged performances.

By performing building cuts on abandoned and/or derelict structures, Gordon Matta-Clark violated the distinction between floor, wall, and ceiling. In *Splitting* (1974), Matta-Clark dismantled a house by cutting it completely in half. He writes, “I feel my work intimately lined with the process as a form of theater in which both the working activity and the structural changes to and within the building are the performance”.⁹ The result of Matta-Clark’s performative cuts was a new way of seeing and experiencing the built environment. By releasing architecture from its medium specificity, Matta-Clark allowed it to perform in new ways, both materially and conceptually.

Appropriating spaces of display, Dan Graham installed surveillance cameras, video monitors, and mirrors in a variety of spatial configurations, implicating viewers as subjects in his installation-based performances. In works like *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974), Graham employed video to experiment with presence, movement, and duration. He often questioned the real versus the mediated, and through delay, distorted the conventions of spatio-temporal experience and its representation. As a result, architecture played an integral role as both subject and performer in Graham’s works.¹⁰ He explains, “I took that white wall, I turned it into a window. And then it became architecture”.¹¹

What these three artists — Brown, Matta-Clark, and Graham — shared in common was not only their relationship to performance, but also their use of indexical operations to make visible the presence of time. Outfitted in suspension apparatuses, Brown and her dancers deployed their bodies as notational devices, mapping movement onto otherwise static and overlooked spaces. By dismantling abandoned buildings, Matta-Clark’s cuts not only called attention to architecture’s inevitable neglect and decay, but also notated its (and our) presence and impending absence. Building upon these indexical operations, Graham physicalized the continuation, or persistence, of time by implementing glass, mirrors, video, and audio into his performance-based installations.

A crossing over of disciplinary boundaries, postmodern performance redefined what constituted a work of art.¹² Disciplinary poaching led to new ways of creating and experiencing form and space, blurring the line between the visual and performing arts, as well as architecture. It comes as no surprise then, that Diller and Scofidio were drawn to the world of performance art and experimental theatre.

By the late 1970s, when Diller and Scofidio formed their practice in New York City, performance had become the go-to strategy for artists to explore conceptual ideas, suggesting that through disciplinary trespassing and collaboration, new forms could be generated. Whereas postmodern architecture primarily aimed to resuscitate the corpse of modernism through historical pastiche and parody, postmodernism in the arts aimed towards interdisciplinary practices and performance. Rather than retreating into disciplinary autonomy, Diller and Scofidio opted to redefine architecture through direct engagement with the material world.

In the first decade of their practice (1979-89), Diller and Scofidio differentiated themselves from other architects by creating built works in the form of dynamic constructions for theatrical productions. These works, which I call performances,

were not scaled representations of buildings. Rather, as full-scale constructions, including costumes, props, and stage sets, they served as building experiments to test out ideas about the relationship between architecture, the human body, space, and time. Their first three forays into set design — *The American Mysteries* (1983/1984); *Synapse/The Memory Theatre of Giulio Camillo* (1986); and *The Rotary Notary and His Hot Plate (A Delay in Glass)* (1987) — in turn influenced architectural projects like the *Slow House*.

For Diller and Scofidio, performance offered a new interdisciplinary lens through which traditional forms of architectural representation could be subverted. By interrogating a series of strategies ranging from kinetics to illusory devices, I argue that Diller and Scofidio pursued performance as a means to release architecture from its static objecthood and disciplinary autonomy. By seeking out this expanded field of performance art, they not only exposed themselves to a variety of artists and techniques, but also aligned themselves with theater and dance collectives, with whom they collaborated to design stage sets. As a result, Diller and Scofidio redefined how architecture was created and experienced through performance.

THE AMERICAN MYSTERIES

A play written and directed by Matthew Maguire, *The American Mysteries* (1983/1984) was first performed on February 20, 1983 at La Mama E.T.C. in New York, and the following year at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis. For these productions, Diller and Scofidio designed a kinetic stage set-apparatus: a seven-foot hinged plywood cube, painted grey, and operated by pulleys and counterweights (fig. 3). Responding to the nine-part structure of the play—nine acts in nine sites—the set-apparatus oscillated between a completely unfolded box and a contained cube.¹³ Like the dynamic set, the play—a hybrid between the American detective thriller and the ancient Greek Mysteries—unfolded in a space-time continuum.

Diller and Scofidio's set complimented Maguire's action-packed mystery. Like the script, the set continually unfolded, creating an air of mystery and suspense. Hinges and a pulley system, operated by the actors themselves, allowed the nine-sided cube to spatially and formally reconfigure itself to accommodate the nine different sites generated by the script.¹⁴ Hence, the set rendered itself as a four dimensional diagram, mapping time and space through continual movement. Just as Trisha Brown's dancers inverted the relationship between wall and floor, Diller and Scofidio's hinged plywood cube allowed performers to appropriate space in multiple dimensions. Hence, the performative landscape was not contained by the cube, but rather exploited its limits.

The pulley and counterweight system of the hinged plywood set allowed the cube to continually change. The three sequences were subdivided into three configurations. In Sequence 1, the cubic volume unfolded into plan, revealing itself as a nine-square grid. In Sequence 2, the plan folded up into a semi-cubic volume. In Sequence 3, the semi-cubic volume unfolded into a continuous elevation. At both the beginning and end of the performance, the set returned to its fully closed position. These nine stagings illustrate a metamorphosis, challenging the formal notion of a cube as a static and/or fixed object.¹⁵ As the plot of the play unfolded, so did the cube.¹⁶

In the rear panel of the set, Diller and Scofidio created a virtual "window" by

ENDNOTES

1. Koji Itakura, a Japanese real estate investor, approached Diller and Scofidio in early January 1989 to design a vacation home in North Haven, Long Island. The client, who resided in Manhattan, consulted with the architects on not only the house's design, but likewise the purchase of the waterfront property.
2. In a 1991 lecture at Columbia University, Diller explains how the house was well received by a rather perplexed design review board. She adds, "The *Southampton Star* called it the 'banana house.'"
3. Rem Koolhaas, who served as one of eight jurors for the 38th Annual P/A Awards, describes the *Slow House*: "It's not that easy to design a good house on a superb site. Many architects have the weakness of having an incredibly obvious relationship with a view, and what I like here is that the house itself is a kind of mise-en-scène. It manipulates the view: The house blocks and finally exposes the view, and I think that's probably itself an experience, and probably a way of avoiding boredom and monotony once you live in the house." See "The Slow House" in *Progressive Architecture*, January 1991, 88.
4. Hans Hollein, "Everything is Architecture" (1968). Reprinted in Joan Ockman, *Architecture Culture 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993) 460.
5. RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art since the 60s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004) 195.
6. "[A]rtists have turned to performance as a way of breaking down categories and indicating new directions." See Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art since the 60s*, 7.
7. Goldberg adds, "[P]erformance came to fill a gap between entertainment and theatre and in certain instances actually revitalized theatre and opera." Goldberg, 196.
8. Ibid, 199.
9. Gordon Matta-Clark, "Building Dissections" in *Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark: Pioneers of the Downtown Scene*, New York 1970s (Munich: New York; Prestel, 2011) 107.
10. Architecture features prominently in Graham's work. For example, in *Homes for America* (1966), a taxonomy of suburban vernacular architecture, Graham exposes not only the apparent generic seriality of the constructed landscape, but its capacity to produce difference and intrigue. His implementation of various forms of media, and specifically video, produced a new way of seeing and interacting with the physical and virtual world, as well as each other.
11. Dan Graham, as quotes in "Interview with Dan Graham by Rodney Graham" in *Dan Graham: Beyond* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and MIT Press, 2009) 97.
12. In 1967, Michael Fried published "Art and Objecthood," a critical essay on presence of "theatricality" in Literal, or Minimalist Art. An advocate for object-based modernism, Fried argues that the privileging of viewer experience results in an inability to distinguish the work of art from its surrounding environment. Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
13. *The American Mysteries* was divided into three acts: The Obvious, The Mysteries, and The Ecstasies. Within each of these three acts, three distinct scenes took place – each with its own room configuration.
14. "As the actors manipulated the structure on a system of pulleys and counterweights, their choreography caused the installation to implode and explode like an infinite series." Matthew Maguire, "Architectural Performance" in *Midgård* (Volume 1, Number 1, 19XX), 136.

inserting a small square screen onto which they projected films.¹⁷ By incorporating film into this performance, Diller and Scofidio extended the space of the set beyond the limits of the hinged plywood cube. In effect, the filmic window operated as another character in the performance, communicating presence, movement, and duration.

Similarities can be drawn between *The American Mysteries* and the *Slow House*. The house was conceived as a series of section cuts taken every ten feet along a slowly decelerating curve. Like the set apparatus in *The American Mysteries*, the *Slow House* unfolded in space and time, adapting to various performative acts. Each section cut along its spine revealed a different scene. Here, the program of domesticity—everyday acts like eating, sleeping, and socializing—unfolded as a theatrical script.

Similar to how *The American Mysteries* utilized filmic projection on a rear window screen to extend the set into other space-time continuums, the *Slow House* employed video to capture and mediate its relationship to context. Diller and Scofidio designed the entirely glass rear façade of the house as a giant picture window looking out onto the ocean. Interrupting this 40-foot wall of glass was a small video monitor, which had the ability to display not only a live feed of the ocean view, but likewise the capacity to record and playback previous footage. As a result, the video monitor operated as both entertainment (TV) and surveillance (security camera). A remote control allowed occupants to reposition the camera and monitor as desired.

In addition, the clients, who resided in Manhattan, could "tune in" at any time to observe the ocean view from their vacation home. Not only did the video monitor interfere in the physical frame of the picture window, it also had the capacity to distract one's view away from the real.¹⁸ Through technological mediation, the prized picturesque view of a vacation home was rendered as anything but fixed or static. Rather, like *The American Mysteries*, the *Slow House* was a continually unfolding performance.

SYNAPSE / THE MEMORY THEATRE OF GIULIO CAMILLO

In 1986, Diller and Scofidio collaborated with Maguire on another theatrical performance entitled *The Memory Theatre of Giulio Camillo* (1986). Located in the Anchorage of the Brooklyn Bridge, Maguire's play was based on the sixteenth-century architect/philosopher Giulio Camillo. Camillo, an Italian philosopher known for his explorations of human memory, constructed a "memory theatre" that purportedly contained magical powers. Created exclusively for the King of France, Camillo's memory theatre, a large wood box filled with images, was intended to provide the world's knowledge to those who stepped inside.¹⁹ For this site-specific production, Maguire invited several artists and architects, and asked each of the eight teams to design a set for one of the Anchorage's eight chambers.²⁰ Collectively, the sets accommodated Maguire's script, leading spectators through a performative labyrinth.

Diller and Scofidio's contribution, entitled *Synapse*, was a bridge-like construction that attempted to weave together the three successive chambers of the Anchorage (fig. 4). Their stage set was comprised of two discrete cantilevered structural units that terminated in a swivel chair at both ends.²¹ Because the two structural units approached one another, but never met, a physical gap was created. Whereas Matta-Clark deconstructed a house by splitting it into two, Diller

and Scofidio constructed a bridge that was already cut in half. Both explored structure at the point of collapse, suspending viewers in a state of disbelief.

Representing a synapse, or lapse in memory, the physical gap between Diller and Scofidio's two cantilevered forms — suggestive perhaps of the right and left sides of the brain — was to be bridged only by the movement of performers. Likewise, the use of tension cables allowed the cantilevered wood beams of the bridge to appear as though they were, like our memory, suspended in time and space. As Diller and Scofidio explain, "The center of the bridge marks the existential moment that is no longer here but not yet there".²²

Similarities can be drawn between *The Memory Theatre of Giulio Camillo* and the *Slow House*. Like Diller and Scofidio's *Synapse*, which attempted to bridge the gap between two neighboring chambers of the Anchorage, the *Slow House* mediated between two different framed views: that of the car's windshield, and the living room's picture window.²³ Additionally, as demonstrated in the floor plans, the *Slow House*'s so-called "knife-edge" entry wall cut the space into two distinct paths of travel: to the left, a hallway led to the first floor bedrooms, and to the right, a stair led to the second floor kitchen, dining, and living room.²⁴ As one moved up and through the house, the ocean view slowly revealed itself.

Yet, rather than presenting a pristine and unobstructed view of nature, the picture window was interrupted by a video monitor displaying a representation of the scene. Remotely connected to a live video camera, this view could be adjusted and manipulated by the user. Even as a live feed, there was always a synapse, or technological gap between the real and mediated present.²⁵ Not unlike Camillo's memory theatre — a large wood box filled with images that intended to provide the world's knowledge to those who stepped inside — the *Slow House* became a repository of recorded images.

THE ROTARY NOTARY AND HIS HOT PLATE (A DELAY IN GLASS)

In 1987, Diller and Scofidio collaborated with writer and director Susan Mosakowski, the partner of Matthew Maguire, on an experimental theatre work entitled *The Rotary Notary and His Hot Plate (A Delay in Glass)* (fig. 5). The performance, for which Diller and Scofidio designed the set and body constructions, was based on Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* (1915-23). Since its inception, Duchamp's *Large Glass* has served as the subject of numerous artworks and performances, including three plays, written and directed by Mosakowski in the 1980s.²⁶ *A Delay in Glass*, the third and final work in this trilogy, was commissioned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, in honor of Duchamp's 100th birthday. It premiered in the summer of 1987 at La Mama E.T.C. in New York, prior to its fall debut at the Painted Bride Art Center in Philadelphia.

The *Large Glass* is an assemblage of elements — the upper half being the domain of the bride, and the lower half dedicated to the bachelors. In re-staging Duchamp's *Large Glass*, Diller and Scofidio worked with Mosakowski to animate this "hilarious picture" of nine bachelors in endless pursuit of their bride.²⁷ The primary objective was to create a spatial and temporal separation between the bride and bachelor. The set was organized into two parts — a semi-opaque taut rubber panel that rotated 360 degrees, and a Mylar mirror suspended 45 degrees above the back end of the stage.²⁸ A dashed line that bisected the stage into two equal halves defined the Field, or performance area: one was for the bride, and

15. According to Edward Dimendberg, the kinetic set "injects geometry with the fourth dimension of time and makes space malleable and indeterminate." Edward Dimendberg, *Diller Scofidio + Renfro: Architecture After Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) 31.
16. According to Diller and Scofidio, both the "characters and the architecture undergo dimensional changes." Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, "The Rotary Notary and His Hot Plate / The American Mysteries / Bridge" in *AA Files* (London: Architectural Association, Number 14, Spring 1987), 58.
17. The films for this performance were created by Marita Sturken. Dimendberg recently called attention to this as the first project where Diller and Scofidio incorporated "moving images." Dimendberg, *Diller Scofidio + Renfro: Architecture After Images*, 31.
18. It should be added that Diller and Scofidio were also interested in the dialogue between the fireplace and television — addressing theoreticians such as Marshall McLuhan who explained that the television had, by the 1950s, replaced the fireplace as the hearth or center of the American household.
19. As described in an invitation to the performance created by Creative Time, "THE MEMORY THEATRE is based on 16th Century mystic and philosopher Giulio Camillo's explorations into memory and on the 'Memory Theatre' he constructed for Francois I, King of France. Camillo's 'Memory Theatre' was a large image-filled wood box which he claimed would impart on those who entered, all the knowledge in the world." Courtesy of Creative Time archive at NYU Fales Library.
20. According to Dimendberg, Diller and Scofidio were one of eight teams of architects invited by Maguire to design sets for the Anchorage production. See Dimendberg, *Diller Scofidio + Renfro*, 32. Creative Time lists the contributing artists and architects as follows: Elizabeth Diller & Ricardo Scofidio, Joe Fyfe; Laurie Hawkinson; Kristin Jones & Andrew Ginzler; Kit-Yin Snyder; Allan Wexler; Elyn Zimmerman & George Palumbo. As noted on a postcard mailed by Creative Time for the production. Courtesy of Creative Time archive at NYU Fales Library.
21. For the set, Diller and Scofidio used the following materials: Wood, steel tube and pipe, steel cable and fittings; 2 ft. wide x 50 ft. long x 27 ft. high. As stated in an early professional portfolio found in the office archives of Diller Scofidio + Renfro.
22. As stated in an early professional portfolio found in the office archives of Diller Scofidio + Renfro.
23. As Georges Teyssot notes, "The association between motor (automobile) and sight is the basis of D+S's *Slow House* (1989). In a manner similar to Marey's decomposition of "animal movement" into frozen and abstract images, the *Slow House* is the product of the final slowing down of the drive from New York to a (commercialized) view of a bay on Long Island. Speed is itself frozen and decomposed—first slowed down, then frozen." Georges Teyssot, "The Mutant Body of Architecture" in *Flesh*, 27.
24. "There is no front façade, only a front door. The house is simply a passage, a door that leads to a window; physical entry to optical departure. Beyond the door, a knife edge cuts the receding passage in plan and section, always advancing toward the ocean view at the wide end." Diller and Scofidio, "Slow House, 1991" in *Diller + Scofidio (+Renfro): The Ciliary Function*, 80.
25. Ashley Shafer describes the effects generated by the mediated view. She states, "While the camera is oriented toward the same view as the window, its location 40 feet above the ground slightly shifts the perspective, dis-aligning the horizon on the screen with the one in the window. Even when the playback is "live," the electronic transfer produces a slight delay in reception." Ashley Shafer, "Designing Inefficiencies" in *Scanning: The Aberrant Architectures of Diller + Scofidio*, 98.

- 26 Interested in the intersection between theatre and the visual arts, Mosakowski's performance trilogy – *The Bride and Her Extra-rapid Exposure*, *The Bachelor Machine*, and *The Rotary Notary and His Hot Plate (A Delay in Glass)* – was performed in conjunction with the centennial celebration of Duchamp's birth.
27. Duchamp often referred to his *Large Glass* as a "hilarious picture."
28. The set was comprised of seven animate elements, four of which were actors: The Field; The Apparatus; The Female element, the Bride; The Male elements, the Bachelor; The Mechanical Bed; The juggler of Gravity; The Oculist Witness. Utilities—water, gas, and electricity—were additional elements employed, in direct reference to Duchamp's *Large Glass*.
29. "The line of accordance becomes a revised proscenium that divides male and female, actual and illusory, physical and pataphysical." Diller and Scofidio, "The Rotary Notary and His Hot Plate" in *AA Files*, Architectural Association School of Architecture, Number 14, Spring 1987, 54.
30. Like Duchamp, Diller and Scofidio sought to transform the viewer into a voyeur. In *Delay in Glass*, the suspended mirror divided the stage into two distinct spaces—real and virtual, or front and back—similar to Duchamp's division of the *Large Glass* into top and bottom. Diller and Scofidio, "Delay in Glass" in *Architecture and Urbanism (A+U)* 1996: 04 No. 307 (Tokyo: A+U) 80-83.
31. Although the stage was divided into two different parts, one for Bride and one for Bachelor(s), the rotated mirror provided the audience with visual access (or glimpses) into different worlds and times. Here, common modes of architectural representation – plan and elevation views – were simultaneously deployed to create theatrical illusions.
32. "The apparatus will project to the audience the bride and the virtual image of the bachelor, or, conversely, the bachelor and the virtual image of the bride. The male and female elements will always be separated physically, but connected virtually, by the apparatus. This allows their simultaneous performances to be dialectical." Diller and Scofidio, "The Rotary Notary and His Hot Plate" in *AA Files*, Architectural Association School of Architecture, Number 14, Spring 1987, 54.
33. "Section cut and perspective were components of Duchamp's inquiry into dimensionality. His pursuit of the fourth dimension was based on the logic that if a shadow is a two dimensional projection of the three dimensional world, then the three dimensional world, as we know it, is a projection of an unimaginable four dimensional universe." Diller and Scofidio, "A Delay in Glass" in *Daidalos*, No. 26, 15 December 1987, 93.
34. This project also marked the introduction of video technology into the work of Diller and Scofidio. As Edward Dimendberg explains, "Transforming a static visual art object into a time-based stage production with dialogue, actors, sets, and music suggests a fundamentally interdisciplinary approach that Diller called 'ignition' rather than translation." Dimendberg, 40.
35. Rotation or hinging played a dominant role among Duchamp's dimension-altering operations. In his notebooks, he describes the extrusion of a point into a line, which is hinged around a point to generate a plane, which is hinged around a line to generate a volume. As Diller and Scofidio explain, "The hinge is used by Duchamp as a generatrix to add and subtract dimensions" and "Duchamp used hinging as a reprogramming device in his Readymades." Diller and Scofidio, excerpt from a lecture delivered at the Architectural Association in London (198X) and reprinted in *Flesh* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1994) 114-115.
36. "By virtue of its obscuring and revealing capacity, the apparatus presents either the actual Bachelor and a virtual image of the Bride, or the actual Bride and a virtual image of the Bachelor.

one for the bachelor. Here, the division between male and female in Duchamp's *Large Glass*, or a/b, was transposed from elevation to plan.²⁹

A re-enactment of Duchamp's *Large Glass*, the upper half of the work was represented in the illusory space of the mirror, whereas the bottom half was controlled by a rotating translucent panel.³⁰ Although the bride or bachelor was always concealed by a 180 degree rotation of the panel, his/her image was made visible to the audience via the mirror.³¹ This deliberate play in absence and presence not only supported Duchamp's themes of pursuit and desire, but also called attention to the presence of the viewer as an active agent in the construction of the work.³²

Diller and Scofidio identify Duchamp's simultaneous use of multiple forms of representation in the *Large Glass* — section, elevation, perspective, etc. — as part of his "inquiry into dimensionality".³³ Likewise, through the simultaneous architectural views of plan and elevation, Diller and Scofidio mapped movement through the exchange between real and virtual. Here, live performance was mediated through the implementation of mirrors and video projections.³⁴ Borrowing from Duchamp's common strategies of hinging and rotation, Diller and Scofidio reconstructed eroticism and desire through movement.³⁵ As hinged spaces, the mirror and the panel animated Duchamp's *Large Glass*, suggesting perpetual motion and an infinite quest of temptation and denial.³⁶ Diller and Scofidio's kinetic set added to the dreamlike qualities of the performance, where space and time were always hinged somewhere between the real and illusive.

In addition to the set apparatus, Diller and Scofidio also constructed desire through body constructions for the Bride and Bachelor. For example, the Bachelor's suit was constructed and deconstructed around his body. In an early study, Diller and Scofidio divided the Bachelor's body into nine fractions, in homage to the nine bachelors in the lower half of Duchamp's *Large Glass*.³⁷ Similarly, the Bride wore a prosthetic contraption, reminiscent of both a chastity belt and the abstract costumes designed by Oskar Schlemmer for the Bauhaus theater [38]. In addition to this body armor, she also wore a veil that rotated around her head, oscillating between the roles of bride and widow.

Delay, a strategy also employed by Dan Graham, allowed for a dialectical relationship between performers and spectators.³⁹ The implementation of mirrors by both Graham and Diller and Scofidio (re)presented space as malleable and elastic. As a result, space extended beyond its frame, revealing other spaces and times. This play between real and illusory ignited the staging of desire through multidimensionality.⁴⁰ *A Delay in Glass* offered a fluctuating dimensionality.⁴¹ In the spirit of Duchamp, who was particularly interested in the fourth dimension, Diller and Scofidio both sped up and slowed down time.⁴² At the end of the performance, the 45 degree mirror was lowered to reflect the audience into the space of the stage.

Similar to *A Delay in Glass*, inhabitants of the *Slow House* were in hot pursuit. In this case, the object of desire was not the Bride, but rather the ocean view. As plays between actual and virtual, both performances concealed and revealed, producing desire and suspense through acts of temptation and denial.⁴³

* * *

In a recent lecture, Diller commented that like a performance, the *Slow House* "happened, although it wasn't executed physically".⁴⁴ Yet, not unlike Duchamp's *Large Glass*, the house has subsequently become an enigma. Although

construction stopped as the foundations were being poured, in January 1991 the *Slow House* graced the cover of *Progressive Architecture*, and won a P/A Award. Subsequently, it has been featured in countless magazines, journals, and books, and resides in the permanent collection at the Museum of Modern Art. Significantly, one of the most famous houses of the late 20th century lives on as an architectural performance.

The male and female elements are always separated physically but connected virtually through the apparatus. Because the Bride and Bachelor will never be at the same place at the same time, they may be suspected of being one and the same person. Their separate performances are simultaneous, often frictional and sometimes fluidly aligned." Diller and Scofidio, "Delay in Glass" in *Architecture and Urbanism (A+U)* 1996: 04 No. 307 (Tokyo: A+U) 83.

37. Although there is one bachelor, his body is divided vertically into nine segments—each referring to Duchamp's nine bachelors in the *Large Glass*. The Bachelor takes a deconstructed suit, comprised of patterns, and begins to construct it around his body. When assembled, the suit also serves as a vessel to contain gas—an element deployed by Duchamp in the *Large Glass*. Hints of alchemy, expressed as a blue light, are revealed as they seep through the neck, wrist and ankle regions of the suit. As Diller and Scofidio describe, "He [the Bachelor] is introduced as an apparition, one fraction at a time." Diller and Scofidio, "The Rotary Notary and His Hot Plate" in *AA Files*, Architectural Association School of Architecture, Number 14, Spring 1987, 56.
38. Diller and Scofidio describe the Bride's prosthetic devices as a "chastity armor with modesty mechanism" and a "rotating veil." Diller and Scofidio, "A Delay in Glass," *Daidalos*, 99-100.
39. "Delay was one of the temporal ideas that emerged from Duchamp's interest in photography. Conversely, he was interested in the extra-rapid. Duchamp considered a snapshot to be a section cut through time, one which preserved a given spatio-temporal moment." Diller and Scofidio, excerpt from a lecture delivered at the Architectural Association in London (198X) and reprinted in *Flesh* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1994) 109.
40. "Nonconsumation signaled by the "delay" in its title and the paradox that despite their elaborate machinery and pathways, the bride and bachelors remain in their separate spheres, obtaining pleasure through onanistic self-sufficiency rather than coupling, finds its analogue in Mosakowski's staging of their elaborate flirtation and the layering of space enabled by the sets." Dimendberg, 41.
41. In a description of *Delay in Glass*, Diller and Scofidio state that two of Duchamp's works, *The Large Glass* and *Etant Donnés*, challenge medium specificity through their "fluctuating dimensionality." They write, "As the *Large Glass* violates the spatial principles of painting, *Etant Donnés* denies those of sculpture. Both have a fluctuating dimensionality. Both serve to thwart their respective medium. The modifier in the *Glass* is a window, the modifier in *Etant Donnés* is door." Diller and Scofidio, *Daidalos*, 87.
42. Diller and Scofidio call attention to Duchamp's interest in the fourth dimension, describing his *Large Glass* as "a section cut through time and through space. Specifically, they identify Duchamp's interest in temporality, where strategies of "delay" and "the extra-rapid" allowed him to manipulate time. Ibid, 93.
43. "The apparatus always permits the audience to see one character actually and the other virtually. The panels produce a spatial prophylactic and desiring mechanism, offering both temptation and denial." Diller + Scofidio, *The Ciliary Function*, 66.
44. Elizabeth Diller, November 9, 2014, "Elizabeth Diller: Beyond the Blueprints," *Chicago Humanities Festival*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=NyQ3kuxGU3A> (December 08, 2014).