Atria Fatigue

Atria Fatigue is onset by architects looking at too many atrium typologies within a short amount of time. Rarely a serious condition, Atria Fatigue, subsides after a few days of rest, although there is currently no known cure for the disease. A cool, dark room and the application of cold compresses tend to aid in quick relief. But before tending to treatment strategies and disease prevention, we must first briefly familiarize ourselves with the three viral strains associated with this fatigue presently circulating various schools of architecture: 1. Analytic Project, 2. Precedent Project and 3. Primitive Project.

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ILLNESS DEFINED

Symptoms associated with the Analytic Project strain (those related to ABABA diagrams) come on more gradual and may not be evident at first.[1] Through careful, methodical, and rigorous analysis of canonical architecture, fatigue builds up sequentially. And just as the architect starts the design, she appears overtly exhausted from the rules and systems outlined in those black and red diagrams. A more progressive disease, the Precedent Project strain is hereditary and originates with a historical gene. Mutation of the disease is unmistakable in the strain's formal after-effects where newly designed architecture bears a strong resemblance to its ancestors.[2] The architects affected by this strain of the fatigue are plagued by a weighty history before them where tiredness is directly linked to architectural disinterest in the prior generations' work. Lastly, the Primitive Project strain cannot be easily confirmed or ruled out through a simple laboratory test. It takes time to tease out which symptom is caused by what problem. To make things even more confusing, symptoms of the Primitive Project might come and go over time. A very recent discovery, this strain of *Atria Fatigue* lacks conclusive information due to a deficiency in market research.

For the purposes of this paper, the first two strains of the virus, the Analytic and Precedent Projects, will serve as the "standard" model of the disease while the latter, the Primitive Project will be considered as a deviation from these known standards in architectural discourse. Distinguishing the Primitive Project strain as an alternate line of inquiry, the work to follow argues for welcoming *Atria Fatigue* as an infectious diseases within the discipline.

PREVENTION AND SCREENING

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Atria Fatigue Association (AFA) have recommended screening guidelines to combat prevention and awareness. Specifically, the AFA recommends that architects be screened for *Atria Fatigue* if the following symptoms persist:

Any known atrium with a body mass index higher than 25, regardless of building lifespan, who has additional risk factors, such as high floor area ratios, a sedentary program,

a history of polycentric bulge syndrome, a history of fortress-like tendencies, high levels of generic flexible spaces, a history of anti-urbanity disease, and having close adjacencies with another infected atrium.

And

Any atrium older than age 45 is advised to receive an initial formal screening, and then, if the results are normal, to be screened every three years thereafter.

Additionally, it should be noted that heightened cases of *Atria Fatigue* have been linked with the workshop format where instructors, critics, and students undertake rapid-fire pedagogical discussions around a singular typology. The following case study argues for *Atria Fatigue* and the specific symptoms associated with the Primitive Project strain of the disease.
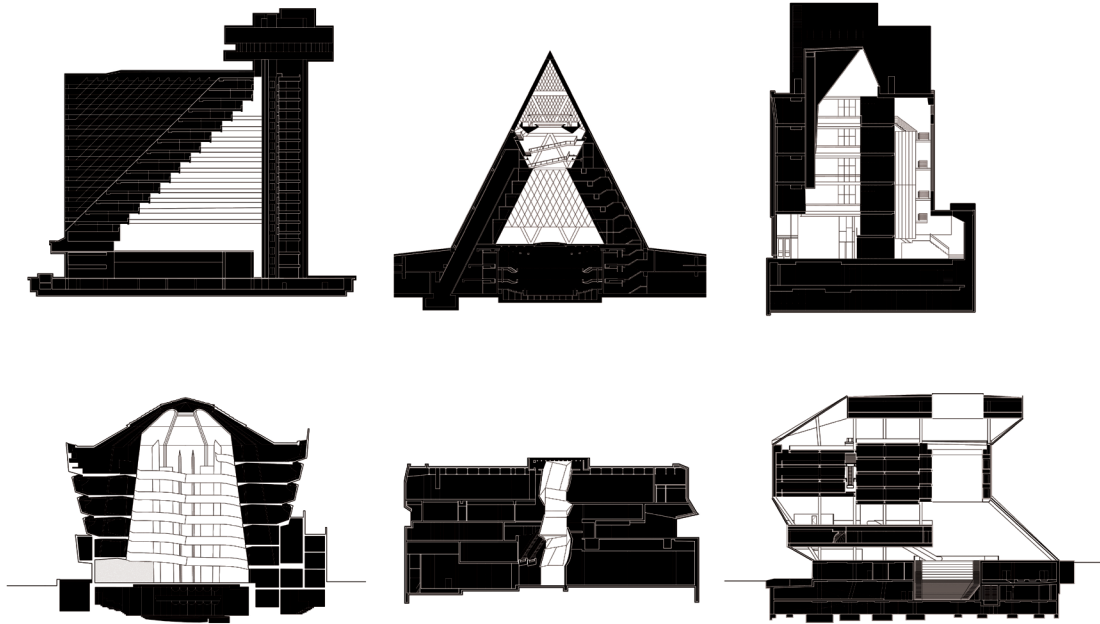
1

CASE STUDY: FLAVORED ATRIA

In June of 2015 Professor A organized a sequence of workshops at OOO University titled, "Architecture Itself: Four Workshops on Architectural Problems."[3] As a curator, Professor A strategically invited four individual instructors from other institutions, Critic W, Critic X, Critic Y and Critic Z, to frame a series of core issues within the discipline of architecture.[4] Following Critic W's workshop on the figural mass, but before Critic Y's full-scale mock-ups on the corner problem, the workshop led by Critic X pursued an inquiry into combining the problem of seriality in architecture with the atrium typology. The four-day charrette titled, "Flavored Atria and Architectural Convictions" resulted in the previously mentioned *Atria Fatigue*.

Combinatory Acts

Sixteen students in teams of two were given a list of atrium projects ranging from John Portman's Hyatt Regency to Foster + Partners Palace of Peace and Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim to Preston Scott Cohen's Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Instead of a close formal analysis, the students were asked to read the figures of the primary section resulting in a more primitive understanding of the volume. (Fig. 1) Slightly sloppy and admittedly, less rigorous than the high-standards set by those working in the realm of the Analytic Project, students moved quickly into grouping unrelated atria. This combinatory act forced three or

Figure 1: Sectional drawings of atrium typologies. Top left, clockwise: *Hyatt Regency*, John Portman; *Palace of Peace and Reconciliation*, Foster + Partners; *Folk Art Museum*, Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects; *Guggenheim*, Frank Lloyd Wright; *Tel Aviv Museum of Art*, Preston Scott Cohen; *Seattle Public Library*, OMA

Student Drawings by Carlos Restrepo, Colin Hoover, Tong Zhao, Yangluxi Li, Yang Song, Zhe Wang

more buildings together instantaneously regardless of scale, history, or geographic location something the Precedent Project Purists would shun. Methodology for these exercises are most closely associated with techniques attributed to Piranesi's Campo di Marzio (imaginative reconstruction) and Robert Venturi's Complexity and Contradiction (comparative study of the vernacular and disparate histories). It is also important to note that these primitive groupings were produced serially, never did one object become elevated as a favorite, but always described as a collection of multiples. Slightly recognizable, yet strange forms, hundreds of atria emerged. Encouraged to wear-down the original, promoting unrecognizable figures, students used basic three-dimensional tactics such as Boolean, revolve, project, and shear. Tackling questions of authorship and binary conditions between the old and new, workshop participants located their work in a neutral volume. A range of work began to pile on the center table of the studio and took on the following topics: figural projection, false symmetries, revolution of profiles, and obsessive halving. (Fig.2,3,4)

2

Post-rationalization

If the text for an Analytical Project is laborious and wordy (usually written before the design process begins and with total control), the Primitive Project proudly engages post-rationalization, where text cuts through the work, leaning more towards validation tactics. The Analytical and Precedent Project strongly disagree with post-rationalization, but the Primitive Project engages a post-justified explanation of architecture. The Primitive Project is also at liberty to reshuffle formal manipulations to better suit the newly rationalized narrative. To put it simply, the Primitive Project relies on making things first and reads the results post-facto. Rather than a systematic approach harbored by those who still execute the Analytic Project, the participants of the Primitive Project think rulesets are a bore.
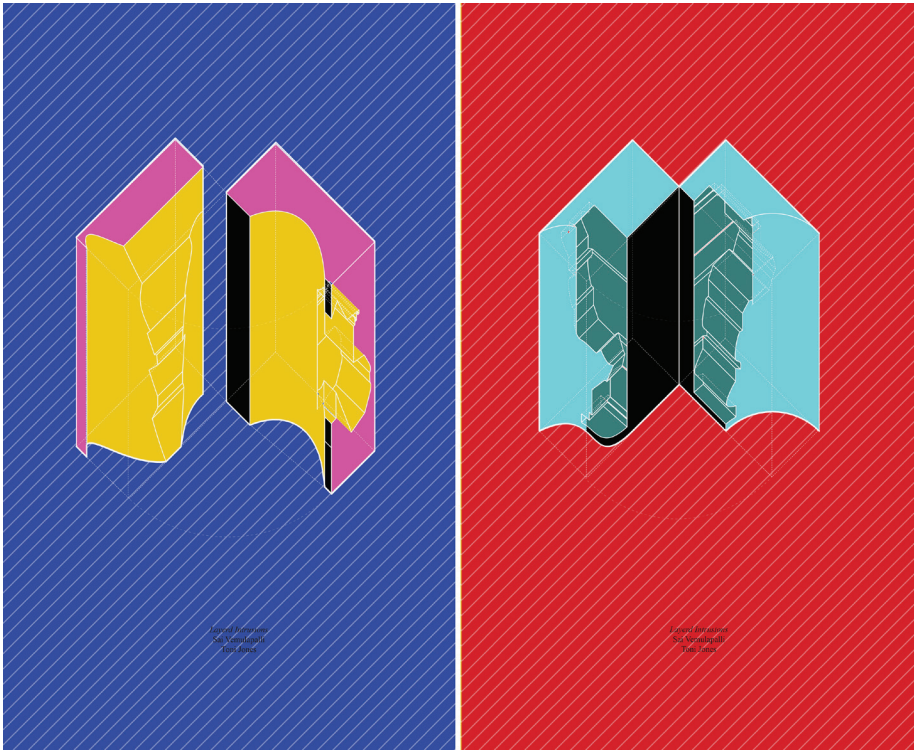
Taste and Representation

The promise of seriality in architecture is that architects have an opportunity to become skilled at talking about taste, something previously been frowned upon in the discipline. Analytical and Precedent Projects would never deal with "taste"—a real faux-paus. Equipping the workshop participants with a way into forming opinions about taste students engaged taste and desire through Dave Hickey's text "Pirates and Farmers: Essays on Taste":

Figure 2: Flavored Atria *drawings by students Yang Song and Yuchi Kuo.*

Folded #1
Tong Zhao
Yangluxi Li

Folded #2
Tong Zhao
Yangluxi Li

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"Warhol began with his soup-can paintings and his "Flavored Marilyns"—trademark desires produced in individual flavors to suit your taste… But we all have personal kinks, so Andy painted fifty-two Campbell soup-can paintings, each slightly different in its configuration and one painting for every flavor of soup: Cheese, Mushroom, Tomato, Clam Chowder, Bean and Bacon, etc. He painted about a dozen Flavored Marilyns—or Lifesaver Marilyns, as they were called at the Factory, since the candy provided the colors. All the Marilyns are identical in these paintings, but the backgrounds come in lime, orange, lemon, strawberry, pineapple, and licorice, to suit your taste while fulfilling your desires."[5]

4

Flavored Atria drawing
Sai Vemulapalli
Toni Jones

Flavored Atria drawing
Sai Vemulapalli
Toni Jones

Figure 3: *Flavored Atria* drawings by students Tong Zhao and Yangluxi Li.

Figure 4: *Flavored Atria* drawings by students Sai Vemulapalli and Toni Jones.

ENDNOTES

1. Peter Eisenman, *Ten Canonical Buildings 1950-2000* (New York: Rizzoli, 2008) 43. Eisenman creates a series of analytical diagrams by closely reading Luigi Moretti's *Casa Il Girasole*. The result as described by the author is an "ABABA rhythm that suggests a compression at the back of the building and a sense of extension at the front."

2. Architects infected with the Precedent Project strain might be those operating in a legacy-practice-model such as SO-IL (whose ancestors are SANAA), BIG (whose ancestors are OMA) or Adjaye Associates (whose ancestors are David Chipperfield Architects). The author makes no judgment on the value of these works in contemporary architecture, but merely points out the various lineages related to the viral strain of the Precedent Project.

3. "Professor A" is Kyle Miller. "OOO University" is Syracuse University. More information on the pedagogical intention of the workshops can be found here: http://www.kylejamesmiller.com/index.php/architectureitself/ 4. 09_Endnote Text: Text box should be flush all the way to the edge of the page, left or right depending on what page your paper ends on.

4. "Critic W" is William O'Brien Jr., "Critic X" is Jennifer Bonner, "Critic Y" is Erin Besler and "Critic Z" is Alex Maymind.

5. Dave Hickey, *Pirates and Farmers: Essays on Taste* (Ram Publications, 2013) 11.

Aimed at borrowing representational techniques from Andy Warhol's "Flavored Marilyns" and the soup-can paintings, each participant in the workshop was asked to stake out an architectural conviction in regards to the atrium typology. Ultimately, the atria project hoped to be bright and optimistic with a representational agenda aligned with Hickey's flavored example, denying the representational standard diagrams set out by the architects of the Analytic Project. Colors were directly sampled from Warhol's paintings in an attempt to situate the representation as far as possible from standard drawings as observed in the other two viral strains. The axon reappears (orthographic drawings originally championed by the Analytic Project), but this time around, the Primitive Project utilizes the corner and unfolds the drawing to best illustrate the deep interior atrium.

DIAGNOSIS

The bad news first: a group of educators and practitioners have been diagnosed by the CDC and AFA with *Atria Fatigue*. Recent studies emerging from MMM University, have specifically linked the viral strain directly to the Primitive Project. The good news for architecture is that the illness is multiplying quickly and the symptoms appear much different to the standard strains of the disease. As far as infectious diseases go, *Atria Fatigue* is awfully optimistic, cheerful, and full of humor.

CONCLUSION

Atria Fatigue or Architectural Fatigue is probably in its most productive state when looking at seriality in architecture. It is the moment when one can exhaust a process, a type, or a representational agenda. Seriality used to mean—make options for clients—and lots of them. Only then was the architect able to decipher the client's tastes or preferences and rework the scheme until everyone was happy. Oftentimes, two schemes would become bastardized, it's the design-by-committee model, where the original intent is diluted as a result of a client having too many options in front of her. By working on the problem of seriality in architecture, architects are abandoning a multiple "options" discourse. It seems there might be big benefits to "tiring oneself out" over a collection of types. We will have to wait to see if the Primitive Project strain gains strength as we observe a group of architects becoming connoisseurs at roofs, atria, arches, corners, and square plans.